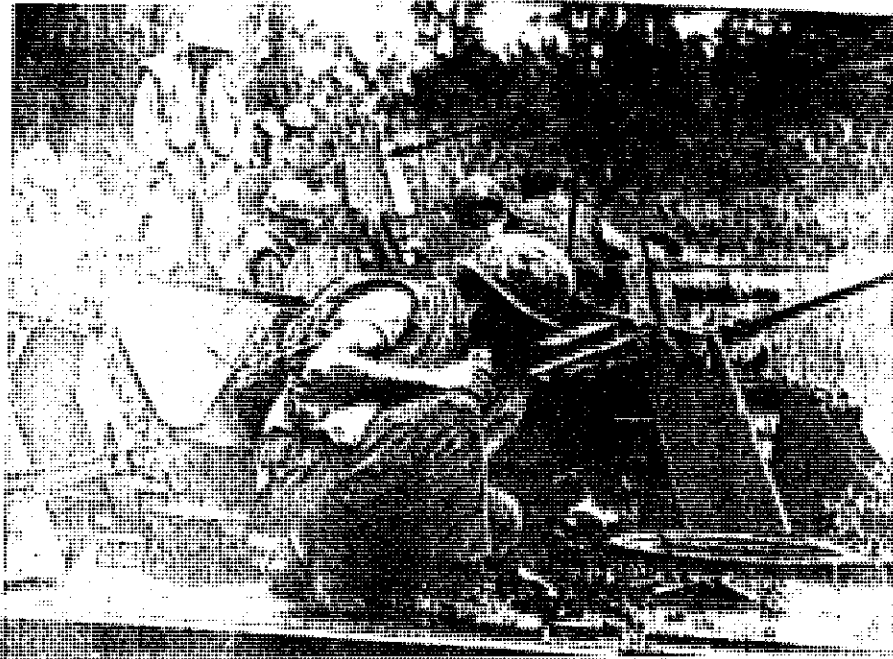


RIPCORD REPORT

A Newsletter

NO. 24, June, 1989

For Friends and Survivors of FSB RIPCORD, RVN



"REFLEXES AND REFLECTIONS"



= INSIDE =

= FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS =

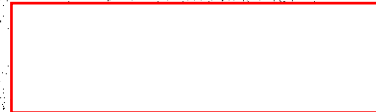
= FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS =

(To Treasurer)

- * Art/Photos
- * Incoming
- * Sit/Rep
- * VVAG
- * Hamburger Hill
- * The Big Lies
- * The Screaming Eagle
(Feb. 18, 1970)

- * Bill Laurie
- * Jim Fairhall
- * Jim Griffin
- * Richard Green

- * Ripcord Association
c/o John Mihalko



= EDITOR =

- * Ray Blackman



NEWSLETTER INTENTIONS

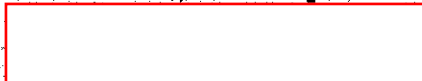
The intention of this Newsletter is to bring those of us together that are interested in FSB Ripcord, RVN. The events, the people, the humor, the memories of that time are being written by those that served there. We want this to be a healthy experience for the Veteran, his or her family or friends. 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.

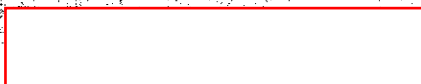
CONTACTS/NEW FACES

ADDRESS/AO CHANGES

Sonny Caughlin
(2/17 Cav., C Troop)



Richard Green
(C Co., 101 Avn. - Black Widows)



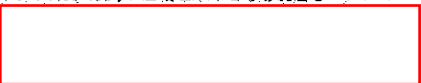
Bill Laurie
(Cyclo Dap Archives)



Marc Leddy



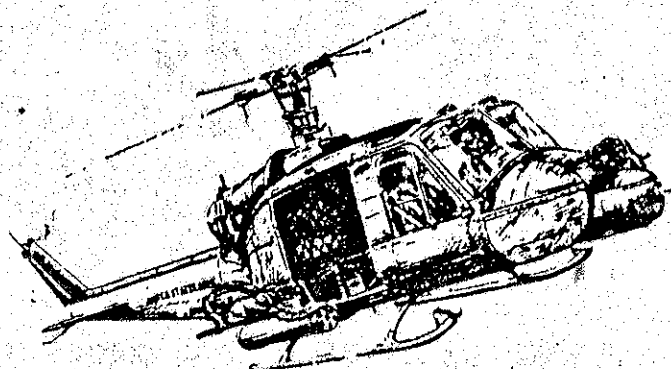
John M. Del Vecchio



Rod Soubers
(D, 2/501)



LTC Jerry Rodgers
(Eagle Dustoff)
HHC., 15th. Ordnance Bn.
APO, NY, 09175



INCOMING

John,

I have read a couple of the news letter Ripcord Report and really enjoy them. I spoke to Ray Blackman by phone today and asked to be placed on the mailing list. I look forward to future news letters.

I flew a lot of missions as a gunner on a LOH-OHGA to and around Ripcord.

C Troop, 2/17 CAV
101st Airborne Division
APO SF 96383, 69-70

Best regards,
Sonny Caughlin
Elkton, KY

April 16, 1989

John,

Just a note to let you know that my address has changed. We moved to Germany last June and I took command of a Battalion. We are enjoying our tour here, our second tour to Germany.

I really enjoyed doing the Newsletter article with you. You are very good with words. Keep up your good work. I hope the Newsletter continues.

Hello from Luci and Holly. Take care and let me hear from you.

Sincerely,
LTC Jerry Rodgers

p.s.

I have met two Ripcord veterans here. Leroy Smith is the manager of our officer's club. He was with an Arty. outfit which served there. Then I met another guy, whose name I can't recall, I'm sad to say, who was there. I gave them info on the Association. Amazing how strangers open up to you when they discover we share a common bond. RIPCORD was such a bond.

May 5, 1989.

John,

It's been a long time since a Ripcord Report has come out. Whats going on?

Enclosed is a interview done by NEA in New York and it has been sent to 650 newspapers across the country (about 1/2 are expected to run it). If you want to use it just put at the end "Reprinted by permission of NEA".

Art Wiknik
Higganum, CN

May 28, 1989

Dear John,

I can't tell you how pleased I was to get the last issue. I had begun sorting thru my mind where the issue might be in our Byzantine but effective process.

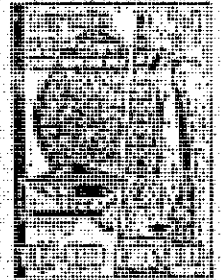
Re-running my old "April Fools" piece made me wince again at all the mis-spellings and misuse of words that particular piece is rife with.

I've always intended, but never gotten around to going back and cleaning my stories up. When I wrote "Fools," I was so intent on just getting the story out that it suffered otherwise.

Sorry to hear about the recent calamities you've been thru, but it sounds like you've had some solid folks to help you sort thru them. I hope Kathy stays fine and your new point-man (point-person) arrives without difficulty.

I really miss the close contact we were all able to maintain for a couple of years. It would be nice having a cold beer at the VFW with you and Chuck, Blackie, Jim and all the others right about now.

It looks as if the Association will survive all we've been thru these few years, although getting a higher level of direct participation will always be difficult.



Let me know if you are ever in a crunch for a story. Now would probably be a good time for me to release again some of those pent-up feelings about 1970.

Take care of yourself and stay in touch.

Luck,
Chip



May 30, 1989

Blackie,

Thanks very much for copy of 'Ripcord Report', and even more so for putting me on your mailing list.

Enjoyed the newsletter, both new stuff and reprints from past. Very good mix. Informative and interesting. Keep it up, and please accept enclosed donation for courtesy of receiving newsletter.

Will definitely pass on word to any Ripcord Vets. Will file 'Report' and keep on hand in case anyone has further interest.

Info included for your review/files/birdcage lining. You might want to advise your members that some bona fide opinionated propaganda is being injected into school system, under guise of 'teaching' about VN. I can handle anyone's opinion Blackie, but if VN is to be discussed than everything has to be on the table, good/bad about everyone, everywhere, throughout the war. Presently, it is not. It's not good. People still think SVN fell to peasant guerrillas, never stopping to wonder how it is these 'peasants' came across the T-54 tanks and 130mm/122mm arty (both of which shoot farther than all our arty except 175mm).

Still hear people say 'all VN people were VC'. No question about there being areas in which villagers actively supported VC, but if all VN people had been VC I would not be here, writing this, and would have long ago rotted away in the bottom of a canal or in midst of foliage. All I'm asking for is straight poop, and this is not what is being spoonfed to our children.

I think we've come to know each other via the mail Blackie, and you can understand I do not wish to whitewash anything, or excuse our shortcomings (many) in VN. Again, just straight poop, not some refined and sculptured line of nonsense.

Sorry to blow off steam, but I'm getting very fed up with this garbage, especially after hearing what some of my son's 7th grade friends have to say about VN ('We were getting our asses kicked so we left').

OK for now. Will try and send some more graphics up your way in next few weeks.

Stay well, take it easy, and keep up the fine effort.

Vạn an cho bủ quyền
Bill Laurie
Mesa, AZ



June 1, 1989

Ray --

Holy Bazoo-ga-la gagas! Just got your last newsletter with the copy of the Screaming Eagle from Feb. 2, 1970. Ray, I've been looking for the guy who wrote Boonie Rats for 15 years. I received the lyrics from Charles E. Bell, who was a medic with 2/502 in late summer or maybe in the fall of 1970. When I wrote 13th Valley I tried to contact him. Without looking it up now (pressed for time) I seem to recall he was from Omaha. I contacted every Bell in the Omaha area in about '76. When 13th was in production in '81 Bantam tried again. I set up a fund for 'Boonie Rats' which I kept for about four years. It didn't amount to a lot but maybe was about \$150. Sometime about '86 I withdrew the money and sent it to 2/502 as a donation for the memorial to the 450 brothers who were killed in Viet Nam. It's been a while now, since I've thought about it. According to Doc Bell, the composer was KIA. Anyway, I'll try to reach him with this new infor.

Also, met a guy last month who was on Ripcord until the last day. I gave him my last issue of Ripcord Report. I hope he's joined up. Name is Dan Thompson from

Massachusetts. If he hasn't contacted you, would you send me a second copy of RR that I can forward on to him.

Sorry I'm in such a rush today, but I had to get this off to you. I'll write more later.

Go Well, Stay Well
John Del Vecchio
Newton, CN

Editors note:
John would very much appreciate hearing from anyone who might know the whereabouts of Ronald W. Jordan (1/327), composer of 'Boonie Rats'.

June 6, 1989

Dear Ray,

I'm flattered that you wish to reprint my Gallery article. I hope it is well accepted by your readers! I wrote it to relieve my frustrations about all the negative things being said!

A few days after getting your letter I also heard from Larry Moak, mentioned in

the article, a man I consider to be one of the unsung heroes of Viet Nam! His actions saved a lot of lives, on many separate occasions!

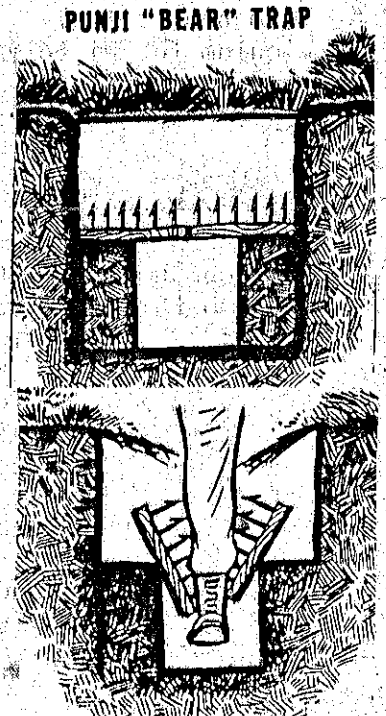
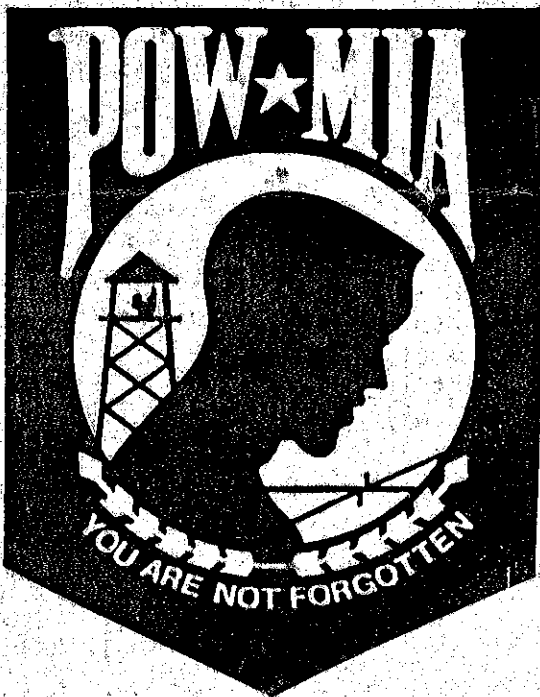
Anyway Larry advised me that there will be a "convention"/reunion of Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago during the period 30 June through 4 July, 1989! If any of your readers are interested they can call now for reservations, if this letter doesn't arrive too late.

I also talked to Fred Behrens tonight. He provided me with some great information on their reunions that are going on!

"RIPCORN" - When was it established! It sounds familiar. After my stint with the Black Widows, I was in the Ashau for 4 months as Aviation LNO with the 3rd Bde. Maybe I just heard of plans to establish the base?

Good luck to all,
Richard Green
Lake City, FL

p.s. Hope this small donation helps get another news letter out!



SIT/REP

For the past year or so John Mihalko has been speaking to the High School students in his area about his experiences in Vietnam. Well, I'm proud to announce that I will soon be doing my part in bringing the truth, as I know it, to the classrooms of America's young and impressionable minds.

It seems that a friend of mine, who has a copy of the Delta Video, let his son show it to his Social Studies teacher at Lincoln High School. The teacher called me to ask permission to copy the video for their Audio/Video Library at the school. He wants to show it to his class next year and have me come in to give them a grunts 'face-in-the-mud' viewpoint of the war in Vietnam.

We talked for quite some time and both agreed that there should be a Vietnam Veteran in every classroom to insure that these young people are not sold on the idea that the clinical text book version of that war is the absolute truth.

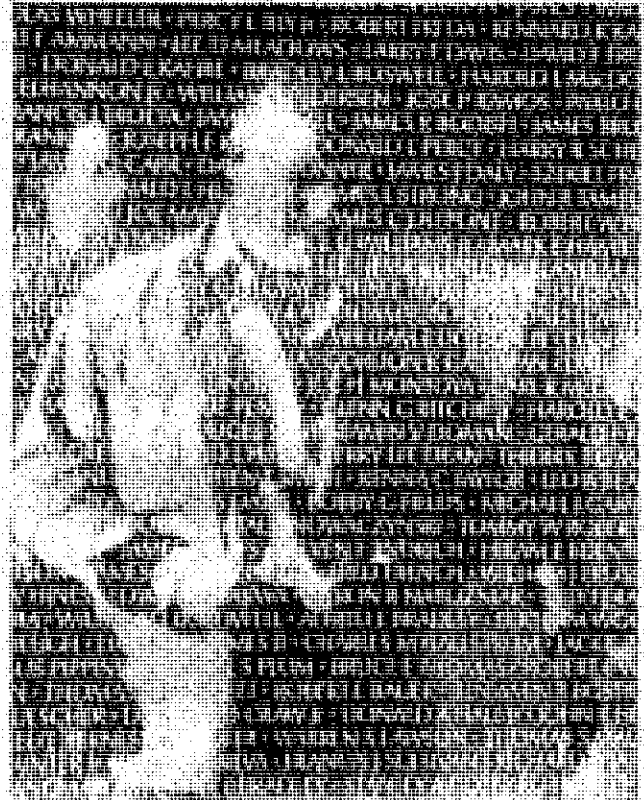
He also wants to show the Delta Video at the next Board of Education Meeting in Lincoln Nebraska. He said that it should put some excitement in an otherwise boring meeting. He has hopes that the Board will agree to make the Delta Video a permanent tool in the regular curriculum for History classes in the whole school district, available for use by all teachers in this area.

I have been asked to work with Rod Soubers on the D, 2/501 Photo History project so this will be the last issue of Ripcord Report that I'll be putting together for awhile. This was a very difficult decision for me to make because I love what this newsletter and the Ripcord group stands for.

Chuck Hawkins has agreed to take over the duties as Editor of the Ripcord Report during my absence. As most of you know Chuck was the Company Commander of A, 2/506 from 30 May to 17 Nov., 1970.

There is no doubt in my mind that the quality of this newsletter can only get better with Chuck walking point.

On Oct. 24, 1987, during the Ripcord Reunion in Washington DC, Kathy Mihalko took one hell of a photograph of Chuck Hawkins' reflection in the Wall.



With Chuck and Kathy's blessings the Ripcord Association has donated an 8 X 10 reprint of that fantastic photograph to the Vietnam Veterans Arts Group.

The Art Group has collected over 400 paintings, sculptures, drawings and photographs from over 60 different Vietnam Veteran artists in three countries to form a traveling exhibit called 'Reflexes and Reflections'. This International collection of Vietnam War Art is currently at the Columbia Museum of Art in South Carolina.

I am a member of the VVAG and six of my drawings (all have been seen in Ripcord Report) are on display with the collection at the museum.

Blackie

SIT/REP FROM FIREBASE WHIPPANY



John Mihalko - Hill 902
May, 1970

Greetings once again from the "heart" of Whippany. I am very pleased and proud to announce that this issue of the newsletter was done entirely on the Association's copier. After four years we are finally self sufficient.

My sincere thanks go to American Legion Post-#155, here in Whippany, for the use of their copier over the last few years. Without the welcome support of The American Legion and VFW-post #5351, also in Whippany, there wouldn't have been a newsletter.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank my wife, Kathy, for all that she has done for the Association. The last few issues were done by her, at work, putting in late hours, to get the job done. Thanks, Babe.

The copy paper for this issue was donated by my friend and fellow comrade of VFW Post #5351, Charlie Schopper. Thanks, Charlie, the paper was a welcome sight and came in the nick of time. I'll be looking for more donations in the future.

Many thanks to all of you who phoned, to wish Kathy a speedy recovery from surgery. Kathy is doing fine and will be going back to work tomorrow. Your phone calls were greatly appreciated. If things proceed without a hitch, the newest member of the Mihalko team will C.A. into the "world" sometime in October. We'll keep you posted.

Special thanks to Bill Laurie, Jim Griffin and Richard Green for their generous monetary contributions to the Association. Jim Fairhall's contribution was noted in the last issue and deposited last month. The cost for this issue of the Newsletter comes to \$83.50. We had a net loss of \$23.50. The difference was made up from our general-fund.

Welcome aboard to all the new members of the Association. We are glad that you enjoy the newsletter and look forward to your input. The same applies to the rest of the membership. Retrospectives and material are always needed and welcome. Get involved, it's your newsletter.

In closing, I must commend Blackie for his willingness to impart his knowledge and share his Vietnam experiences with high-school students in his area. It's the greatest feeling in the world to share gut feelings with a generation that is eager to know and try and understand what it was like for us. Blackie, I must also thank you for everything that you've done for the Association since its humble beginnings. Like every task that you undertake, I know the Photo History will be dynamite. Speaking for the Association, we wish you luck and success. I also know that you'll always be there to help whenever you can.

That's it for this month. Enjoy the issue.

John Mihalko

VIETNAM VETERANS ARTS GROUP

"REFLEXES and REFLECTIONS" • INTERNATIONAL COLLECTION OF VIETNAM WAR ART

The Vietnam Veterans Arts Group, with its internationally acclaimed exhibit, REFLEXES AND REFLECTIONS, has as its stated purpose, to collect and preserve the art, photos, letters, and other documents of the Vietnam Veteran. Its ultimate goal is to see these artistically important and historically significant works housed in a national archive.

The Vietnam Veterans Arts Group developed in Chicago in 1981, when a group of Vietnam Veterans, most of whom were artists, and other interested volunteers, came to the awareness that the American public had been shown the war through the eyes of professional observers, rather than by those who had directly participated in the conflict. This collection is unique in that it is art by the participant.

Political criticism and negative feelings against the war were often directed towards the survivors, thus denying them free artistic expression of their war experiences. Artistic achievement, related to what were possibly the most significant incidents in an artists life, had no outlet for exhibit. Art works lay buried in attics and basements until the formation of the Arts Group.

The awareness that a forum was needed to exhibit these works, coupled with the knowledge that this art, and other documents needed preservation, as they recorded a yet to be written history, was the basis for the Arts Groups foundation.

The Vietnam Veteran realized that the documentation of the war had often been left to those working in an environment that opposed the war, thus limiting their objectivity. Photojournalism was orchestrated with an effort made to avoid offending readers or commercial television. Yet no war in the history of mankind could equal Vietnam in the numbers of soldiers armed with cameras recording the war from a reality not meant to fit into a six minute spot between television commercials.

Officers were elected and a plan devised to seek out soldiers who had created artistic works and others who had retained slides etc. The collection presently contains the works of men from three countries.

The Vietnam Veterans Arts Group is a non-profit, apolitical self-funded organization and hopes to continue to provide an artistic/historical view of a most trying time in Americas history, its participation in the Vietnam war.

627 SOUTH HAMLIN - PARK RIDGE, ILLINOIS 60068 - (312) 823-3325

HAMBURGER HILL

5/20/69

20 years ago

Hamburger Hill — 'Was it worth it?'

By Tom Tiede

WASHINGTON (NEA) — Art Wiknik remembers as if it were yesterday. And in the sense that these things rearrange the pages of a man's life, it was. In May of 1969, Wiknik was a 20-year-old U.S. Army sergeant in Vietnam. His infantry unit was ordered to take part in an ongoing battle in that nation's Ashau Valley.

The general operation was called Apache Snow. But the principal focus of attention has become known as the American assault on Hamburger Hill.

It was one of the most ferocious fights of the combat in Southeast Asia. The toll in terms of blood and spirit was so unnerving that it would become the last major U.S. battle of the war.

The American resolve in Indochina was already tenuous. After Hamburger Hill, it virtually collapsed. The assault was denounced on the floor of the U.S. Senate as "senseless and irresponsible" — the phrase was used as well in heated media commentaries — and it became a condemnatory symbol of the overall effort in Vietnam.

As it happened, that effort was closely tied to the Ashau Valley. The area, located to the south of the DMZ, was a geographic terminus of the North Vietnamese supply route (the fabled Ho Chi Minh Trail). As such, the communists used it as a staging area to launch many of their war maneuvers, including the demoralizing Tet Offensive of 1968.

American commanders thus came to believe Ashau was a chief obstacle to allied victory. And Operation Apache Snow was one of a number of attempts to sanitize the valley. It was launched on May 10, 1969, by 2,800 men from the 101st Airborne Division, the 9th Marine Regiment and one unit of the South Vietnamese army.

Sgt. Wiknik was with the 101st, the Screaming Eagles of World War II fame. He was a more or less willing draftee who had risen quickly through the enlisted ranks. He had arrived in Vietnam the month before. This was to be his first encounter with what he calls the "real war," the one with the shooting.

Wiknik's company was airlifted into the valley on May 18 and put down near Hamburger Hill, a 3,000-foot peak that sits a mile from the Laotian border. The Vietnamese call it Ap Bia mountain. The U.S. military maps listed it as Hill 937. The GIs invented the "hamburger" designation after the human meat-grinding took place.

The hill was defended by 900 North Vietnamese who were secured in tunnels and bunkers. Screaming Eagles

It was the last major U.S. battle of the Vietnam War.

from the 3rd Battalion of the 187th Infantry had tried to take the hill several times before Wiknik and his unit (Co. A, 2/506) arrived. The GIs had driven to the top on three occasions, only to be forced back. Wiknik remembers seeing many of them sitting about "dazed and in shock."

The sergeant's turn came on the morning of May 20. He says the 101st bombarded the peak with two hours of artillery. The reinforced infantry assault started at 10 a.m. — full in the open and with fixed bayonets. Wiknik says the mountaintop had been all but denuded by nine days of battling, there were few hiding places for the Americans, and the enemy began firing right away.

When the shooting got too close, Wiknik and a companion jumped into a bomb crater. As they wondered what to do next, the other man was hit in the leg. "The bullet went down through his drinking canteen," the sergeant says, "water splashed all over, and I thought, 'Jesus, right next to me! I better get out of here.'"

Wiknik crawled to the top of the crater. Then he was hit himself. "I felt something in the chest — like somebody had punched me. And I thought for a minute I was dead. But they only

hit my ammunition bandoleer. I had it strung around my neck, like Pancho Villa used to do, and the damn thing saved my life."

After that, Wiknik took off on a run up the hill. He says everyone yelled to keep down. But he'd had enough of the bomb crater. He found some debris that offered modest cover. He was far out in front of the rest of the assault on the north side of the mountain. He scrambled a bit and fired a bit, "just like they do it in the movies."

Wiknik reached the top in the afternoon. He says that when he looked back for the rest of his unit, it wasn't there: "I was alone. I guess the North Vietnamese had gone — and the rest of the guys hadn't made it up yet. It was eerie. All I could see were burned logs, shell holes — and the rotting bodies of the dead."

The other Americans arrived shortly. Even though some nearby skirmishing would continue, the battle for Hamburger Hill was essentially over. The evidence is that during the 11 assaults on the isolated mountain, at least 600 North Vietnamese were killed; the U.S. casualties were said to be about 50 dead and 270 wounded.

Art Wiknik left the following day for another trouble spot in the Ashau Valley. That was after he noticed that someone had printed a sign on a piece of cardboard from a C-ration box and nailed it to a well-blasted tree stump on the summit. The sign read: "Hamburger Hill. Was it worth it?"

Wiknik lives today in Higganum, Conn. He is married, has three children and works at Pratt & Whitney. He says he does not regret his involvement in the Vietnam War. But, 20 years later, he can not forget that sign on Hamburger Hill. "No," he concludes, "it was not worth it at all."

© 1989 NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE ASSN



TOM
TIEDE



101st, 82nd Troopers Kill 233

September 1968

CAMP EAGLE (USA)—Paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade recently killed 103 enemy and captured 23 suspects, while paratroopers of the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, under operational control of the 101st, killed 130 more in two weeks of heavy fighting.

The enemy kills credited to the 82nd's 1st Battalion, 508th Airborne Infantry raised the 15-week toll of Operation Nevada Eagle to 1,658 enemy killed in northern I Corps near Hue.

Engaging an enemy platoon occupying fortified positions 19 miles south of Hue, 82nd paratroopers pinned them down with small arms fire, then fixed their bayonets and assaulted the NVA bunker complex.

The enemy platoon broke contact and fled, leaving 14 bodies behind.

The troopers also detained one suspect, who later led the troopers to a cache which included 107 rounds of 82mm mortars and 1,200 NVA uniforms.

During their second day in the same area, the 82nd troopers engaged another enemy platoon entrenched in bunkers. They assaulted and drove the enemy from their positions. A sweep of the area yielded 12 enemy bodies and 13 individual and crew-served weapons.

Other units from the 1st Battalion, 508th Airborne Infantry killed four NVA soldiers and found a large weapons cache containing 178 individual and crew-served weapons, a radio, two heavy machine guns, 10 122mm rockets and miscellaneous small arms and mortar ammunition.

On the third day of the reconnaissance-in-force mission, the 82nd paratroopers engaged an estimated reinforced enemy company, 16 miles south of Hue. Tactical air strikes and friendly artillery fire were called in on the enemy positions.

VC Interested In 101st News

PHUOC VINH (USA) — The 101st Airborne Division's "Screaming Eagle" newspaper was discovered to have extended beyond its normal circulation near here recently.

Paratroopers from Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 506th Infantry were searching a hastily abandoned Viet Cong bunker complex when they came upon a dug-in structure resembling a day room. On one of the tables were several copies of the airborne division's newspaper.

"I'm not sure our paper is exactly on the Viet Cong's approved reading list," said Private First Class James G. O'Carroll, Jr. The lead story told how paratroopers had successfully engaged a larger NVA force only two miles away.



Colonel Joseph Conmy as he appeared in Vietnam as Commanding Officer of the 3rd BDE, 101st Airborne Division 1968-69.

The 101st Airborne Division, was the only division that was ever airlifted into combat. On December 12, 1967, from Fort Campbell, Ky., C-141 cargo jets carried over 10,000 combat and support troops and 5,118 tons of equipment during OPERATION EAGLE THRUST as it was called.

BIEN HOA

The next day on December 13, 1967, on the Bien Hoa, airstrip in Vietnam, 10,000 miles away Major General O. M. Barsanti, reported to Gen William C. Westmoreland, commander of American troops in Vietnam, with these famous words: "Sir the 101st Airborne Division, reports for combat, Airborne Sir."

CURRAHEES

Currahees of the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, found out in October 1969, that the Viet Cong loved Spam.

When the Currahees captured one Viet Cong near a tunnel complex eight miles south of the DMZ, included in their arsenal they also found 405 cans of good old Spam.



(compliments of Paul Greaux)

HEROES

THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

(Reprinted with permission of Gallery Magazine)

THE BIG LIES

BY MAJ. RICHARD A GREEN (RET.)

Here's Vietnam from another viewpoint. The one that is seldom heard, rarely publicized, and not as sensational as the big lies that are told and retold. True veterans will instantly recognize the big lies. The movie *Platoon* was full of them. For the sake of those veterans who remember Vietnam for what it really was, here is a quick recap of the bigger of those lies.

- *"Fragging" of American officers and NCOs:* I have never met anyone who actually saw this happen. I am sure it happened somewhere, sometime, since the Army did "acquire" a few psychopaths from the civilian world.

- *All the drug addicts that were created in Vietnam:* Drugs were being used widely by most of the younger generation all over the United States, and they continued to use drugs when they got to Nam.

- *The unfair ratio of minority groups to whites in Vietnam:* The fact is that

the larger percentage of non-white soldiers were assigned to rear-echelon support outfits. However, I can say without fear of contradiction that those blacks who were assigned to combat duties were fantastic soldiers and I knew quite a few of them.

- *And the biggest of the big lies, about all those under 18 who were in combat in Vietnam:* I never met any soldier in Vietnam who was under 18, and I am pretty sure that few of you can remember ever meeting one either.

The American fighting man in Vietnam was one of the best equipped, best trained, best informed, and most capable of all the soldiers in all the wars that the United States ever fought. While there, they were the most dedicated and deadly efficient fighting men of any in our history. That they came back to the States and "denied" their true feelings about Vietnam is understandable, due to the pressures brought

to bear by employers, families, and society in general. Of course, bad-mouthing the war also helped you get laid. I have met several veterans over the years who admit that their biggest "shame" over Vietnam is that they never have felt free to stand up and say, "I am proud of my contributions in Vietnam!"

Well, now is the time to do it! I am proud of my contributions in Vietnam! I did what I was trained to do and I did it to the best of my ability. I fought beside some of the bravest, baddest soldiers that the world has ever known. As a helicopter pilot, I flew them into the hottest LZs one can imagine and brought them out after they had kicked ass. I know that they were ready to go in and get Charlie, and I know they were bursting with pride when they came out victorious. And they always came out victorious. When they were in combat and needed supplies, my platoon, the Black Widows out of Phu Bai, readily

flew ash and trash for them. When they were wounded, we got them out and to the medical facilities in time to save their lives. When I was shot down in the Ashau Valley, they came to my rescue. The combat soldiers in Vietnam, the grunts, did a fantastic job over there and they knew it! It is time they let others know that, despite the big lies, the combat troops did not lose the war in Vietnam—and neither did the brass. The politicians gave victory to the North Vietnamese and the protesters here in the United States aided our enemy and shamed us before our allies. The only shame we should feel is that our people betrayed us.

But let's get down to some specifics about a specific and very real unit that served admirably in Vietnam, from the platoon leaders all the way to the lowest-ranking door gunner. I was assigned to Charlie Company, 101st Aviation Battalion/Group, 101st Airborne Division, formerly of Phu Bai and Camp Eagle. As soon as I met the guys in the unit, I knew there was something very special about them. Crow, Moak, Bartels, Bartels, Cunningham, Nero, De-Franco, May, Cormack, Carmack, and many others. The unit was made up entirely of heroes waiting for the chance to prove how good they really were. And prove it they did, on an almost-daily basis. How can one evaluate the value of the gunners who stood there in the open door of the helicopter, providing covering fire when the fighting was hot and heavy and the people on the ground needed us to go into a hot LZ? Also immeasurable is the intestinal fortitude of the pilots who laid it on the line every day they went out, never knowing when a simple resupply mission would turn into a life-and-death situation.

The Black Widows flew not only in support of the combat mission of the 101st Airborne Division, but were often called upon to fly in support of the 5th Special Forces out of Quang Tri, the 3rd Marines at Dong Ha, and the 2nd ARVN Regiment of the I Corps area. Like the 101st Airborne, these units were out to kick Charlie's butt whenever he could be found, and they found him often. To call one of these units better than the others would be a difficult endeavor, because all were gung-ho, totally professional, and highly efficient organizations with one goal in

common: victory. Let no one ever bad-mouth the South Vietnamese soldier in our presence, because the Black Widows flew in combat with them and we know they were gutsy fighting men who stood their ground and ran Charlie's butt into the ground. The 2nd ARVN regiment included a helicopter company called the "King Bees," whose unorthodox approach to flying in combat could fill a book, often doing the impossible with helicopters that most Americans would have preferred not to be flying.

"Hamburger Hill" was nothing like the movie. Those of us who were there know it. Damn the writer who gave the movie the scene in which an American door gunner opened fire on American troops. Those kinds of lies have given all veterans a black eye for too long.

States who were sucking up to special interest groups for whatever reasons.

But the Black Widows, like all units in Vietnam, continued to do their best under these circumstances. Perhaps former members of the "A" team who were pulled out of a position west of the Ashau Valley while under withering NVA fire and taken to firebase Currahee will read this and remember. Others, like the four-man crew that we pulled out of the Ashau after its helicopter was shot down amid a mass of hard-core NVA troops, will remember the brush with death and the elation of getting the hell out of there. I hope there are civilians still alive in Vietnam or, even better, living in some other country where they are safe, who will remember when the train they were on was blown off the track

Every time American military forces were made to give territory back to the VC, more American lives were put in jeopardy. This was due not to the actions of American brass; the generals in Vietnam were brilliant strategists under orders from the civilian leaders back in the States who were sucking up to special-interest groups for whatever reasons.

The taking of Hamburger Hill was an act of military genius—until some politician, who is known for having problems with cars and bodies of water, raised so much hell that the 101st was forced to pull out and give the stronghold back to the North Vietnamese Army. The Ashau Valley in mid-1969 was secured, Charlie couldn't get a bag of rice through there and soldiers could and did go out and sunbathe during the little bit of time off. Again, U.S. Forces were made to pull back and let Charlie take over. Every time American military forces were made to give territory back to the VC, more American lives were put in jeopardy. This was due not to the actions of American brass; the generals in Vietnam were brilliant strategists under orders from the civilian leaders back in the

by NVA, and the Black Widows came in under heavy fire and pulled out load after load of them, flying them back to safety and medical assistance. I could go on about the Black Widows and the actions in which they were involved, but the limit here is 2,000 words and it would take 10,000 times more words than that to tell it all.

To all veterans of Vietnam, I would like to send this message: I'm proud that I was there! I am proud to have served with you, whether it was daily or by association. We did our part, we won the battles, and we can be proud of our accomplishments in that war. We did our share; it was our civilian leaders and the protesters who lost the war. When all is said and done, we can always hold our heads high and say, "Hell, yes, I was there!"

"Heroes: The Vietnam Experience" is a monthly series written by Vietnam veterans about their experiences during, or as a result of, their service in the Vietnam War. Submissions must be approximately 2,000 words in length, typed and double-spaced, nonfiction, and include a photocopy of the author's DD-214. Submissions will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. The author of each published submission shall be paid \$500. Submissions should be sent to: Heroes Editor, Gallery Magazine, 401 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016-8802.

The Screaming Eagle



Vol. III, No. 5

101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)

Feb. 16, 1970

Two Live Cheaper

Joint Forces Conduct Missions From Rifle

By Spec. 4 Elliott Cooper

FSB RIFLE - Strike Force troopers of the 2nd Bn. (Ambl.) 502nd Inf. have found that two can live cheaper than one at their home here - at least in terms of military operations.

Vietnamese soldiers of the 1st ARVN Div's 4th Bn., 54th Regt. are presently occupying and operating out of this fire base

located 12 miles south of Hue with the Screaming Eagles in a combined effort to increase operations in the immediate area and provide extra security to the rear.

This arrangement was conceived during an earlier joint U.S. - Vietnamese operation involving the 2nd Bn., 502.

When the Strike Force soldiers were deployed under the Screaming Eagles' 2nd Brigade, it was decided that Fire Base Rifle should not be abandoned since bunker complexes, exit trails and other signs of Viet Cong or NVA activity had been spotted in the area.

So the 4th Bn., 54th Regiment was called on to fill in while the O-Deuce was working under the Second Brigade. The ARVN's were also in a position to continue normal operations during the Screaming Eagles' one-week absence.

When the time came for the Strike Force troopers to return, however, they joined forces with the South Vietnamese, rather than take their place.

"The reason behind our combining forces," explained Lt. Col. Roy J. Young, Strike Force commander, "was primarily because the area around Rifle has been the scene of many small yet highly successful

operations ever since the O-Deuce moved here back in October."

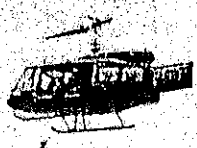
The Strike Force commander then added that by combining forces, the two battalions "more completely cover the area of operations. We now have six rifle companies instead of the usual three."

Responsibility for securing the firebase has remained with the ARVN's, but they have been augmented by some Strike Force troopers.

The command post groups of both units have been occupying the same tactical operations center, working together "to effect the necessary cooperation and coordination intrinsic to this operation," continued Col. Young.

"The cooperation between forces on the firebase itself has been excellent," added Maj. Floyd Walters, battalion operations officer, who explained that the biggest problem seems to be the language barrier.

"Working jointly has provided us with a much better understanding of ARVN tactics and techniques, as well as giving the Americans a much greater appreciation for the ARVN's intense efforts to carry the war to the enemy," he concluded.



ON THE EDGE - Currahees from the 1st Bn. (Ambl.), 506th Inf. learn over the skirts of a training helicopter as they learn the latest techniques in rappelling during a week of battalion refresher training at Camp Evans. (U.S. Army photo by Spec. 4 Howard Shner)

Sixty Classes Improve Bn.'s Airmobile Skills

CAMP EVANS - The 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 506th Inf. which has become a jack-of-all military skills, returned to its base camp here recently to brush up on combat skills.

The training schedule, composed of over 60 classes and 80 classroom hours, covered an eight day period which reflected the diverse skills required of 101st infantrymen.

The sessions, which stressed improvement of the infantry's airmobile capability, were basically a refresher for the battalion. Most of the instruction was given by members of the battalion's own infantry companies.

This training is especially good for the new people," said Sgt. Arthur Wiknik, Higgenum, 1st Co., an assistant instructor at the rifle range. "It

enables them to profit from the personal experience of men who are veterans here.

Sgt. Maj. James Williamson, of Chicago, commented, "The reaction of the men has been good. They realize that there are no second chances in the field.

In special session on airmobile operations, the Currahees practiced loading and unloading on landing zones during combat assaults, use of a personnel ladder dropped from a CH-47 Chinook, and rappelling from Huey-model helicopters.

The block of airmobile instruction also included training in the use of aerial rocket artillery. After a display of the firepower and accuracy of Cobra gunships, one of the heavily-armed choppers made a dry run at full speed over a ground position.

Echoing the interest of the soldiers in airmobile techniques, Lt. Col. Howard Crowell, Alexandria, Va., battalion commander, concluded, "The speed of the aircraft and the adaptability of the men to varied terrain is the essence of airmobile infantry operations."

General Wright Gives Oath For 101st Eagle Re-enlistment

CAMP EAGLE - The 101st soldier from the 101st to reenlist during the month of January was given the oath of enlistment recently by Maj. Gen. John M. Wright Jr., Division Commanding General.

Spec. 4 Robert G. Roller was promoted to his present rank and given the oath of enlistment at the Commanding General's evening briefing. Roller reenlisted for three years, selecting the career field of data processing. He is now enroute to his home in Ponca City, Okla. where he will spend his 30-day reenlistment leave. Upon his return to Vietnam, he will be assigned to the 1st Admin. Co. at Phu Bai and he will work in the data processing section.

During January, the 101st reenlisted 125 first term RA or AUS personnel. This is the highest number of reenlistments the Division has obtained in any one month since its arrival in Vietnam. The key to the increased number of

reenlistments was the emphasis placed on in-Division reenlistment options. Only four of the 125 men who reenlisted during January reenlisted for reassignment to units outside the Division.

Screaming Eagle troopers can reenlist for a large number of jobs inside the Division for on-the-job training. Any man who has completed 3 months of active duty can reenlist in the Division for doorgunner, data processing, clerical operations, motor maintenance, heavy equipment operation, finance, special services, food service, entertainment, Eagle Beach, postal operations, transportation, law enforcement and many others.

Many of these jobs involve training which offers career development and civilian employment opportunities. Men interested in the career field, on the other hand, who has completed their service should contact their unit career counselor.



101ST IN 101ST - Maj. Gen. John M. Wright Jr. gives the enlistment oath to Spec. 4 Robert G. Roller. Roller was the 101st first term RA-AUS soldier to re-enlist in the division this year. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jack Kauga)

Drugs Hit Everyone; Not Only The User

At one time or another, nearly everyone serving in Vietnam has the opportunity to use drugs. It may seem that the decision to use them is a simple one. After all it is a strictly personal decision, is it not?
Is it possible that a person high on marijuana or on a "trip" may be dangerous to those around him?

MARIJUANA

Marijuana is the most commonly used drug in Vietnam.

Little is known of marijuana's long-term effects. But what of the short-term effects?

It has the effect of disorienting the user from his surroundings. This produces a false sense of well-being and the user becomes incapable of thoroughly performing his duties.

In a combat zone, where one man may be called upon to save the life of a friend at any given time, it is of the utmost importance that every individual be in full command of his faculties at all times. A man under the influence of marijuana is dangerous to both himself and others.

LSD

Lysergic acid diethylamide, or LSD, is a strong hallucinogen and has been found to be very hazardous to the well-being of the user. As is the case with marijuana, LSD does not create a physical dependence, but a psychological need is often created.

LSD has a variety of effects. A "good trip" may

completely free the user from the bonds of reality and create a feeling of complete well-being. A "bad trip" may enslave the user in the midst of wild hallucinations, cause bizarre behavior, panic or any number of frightening consequences.

Would you depend on a man under the influence of LSD or trust him with your life?

AMPHETAMINES AND BARBITURATES

Amphetamines and barbiturates are those drugs used as stimulants and sedatives. They have proven to be medically useful in the treatment of many ailments, but their indiscriminate use can lead to nothing but trouble for the user.

THE DECISION

Although the particular effects of different drugs vary, some can detach the user from what is going on around him. Some drugs have proven to be habit-forming and physically dangerous. All drugs are likely to alter your relationship with those around you.

The fact must be faced that no man has the right to endanger others. When you are incapable of safely firing a weapon, sensibly driving a vehicle or staying alert on guard, you are putting others in real danger.

The use of drugs is your decision; it is your own business what risks you want to take with your health. But your business ends when the welfare of others comes into the question.



Redeployment Drops Don't Go With Plans

A lack of understanding on the part of many soldiers in Vietnam as well as their friends and relatives in the United States regarding the current Army policy governing troop redeployment from Vietnam has been the cause of much disappointment for both the fighting man in the Republic and his relatives in the U.S.

Personnel are redeployed from the Republic in keeping with the authorized troop ceiling; when the authorized ceiling is lowered, a troop redeployment begins. Reduction in personnel is managed primarily on a unit basis, essentially dealing with authorized strengths. Certain units are selected to be eliminated from the force structure and are then inactivated or redeployed.

However, the members of a unit selected for redeployment are not necessarily returned to the United States. The basic policy of a twelve month tour for individuals continues to apply. The redeployment or inactivation of a unit is not meant to change the 12 month tour policy. Even while units are being redeployed, there remains substantial need for replacements within units remaining in the Republic; those who have substantial parts of their tour remaining at the time their unit is redeployed will be transferred to other units in Vietnam.

Current Army policy is that personnel assigned to those units named as part of the phase III redeployment will be retained in Vietnam until their normal DEROS.

Many soldiers also have the mistaken notion that troop redeployment will necessitate "drops" for those who are approaching their DEROS even though they may not be in a redeploying unit. It is unlikely that this will be the case in the future. A good piece of advice for the soldier eyeing a possible cut in his tour is to not make any firm plans and to avoid getting his hopes up for nothing.

Chief Of Chaplains Visits Div.

PSB BASTOGNE - The name "Bastogne" has special meaning for Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Francis L. Sampson, Chief of Chaplains, United States Army, a recent visitor to this fire support base located 15 miles southwest of Huc. In December, 1944, Chaplain Sampson was serving with the 501st Parachute Inf. Regt. at the Belgian town of Bastogne.

During the siege of Bastogne, he was captured by the German Army and imprisoned. He was not freed until April, 1945. While a prisoner in the German POW camp near the Baltic, he asked and was allowed to remain with the enlisted prisoners.

Chaplain Sampson visited Fire Support Base Bastogne on Jan. 21 as part of his annual visit to Vietnam. This was his fourth visit to RVN. The purpose of the trip was to visit with chaplains, commanders and soldiers about the religious ministry provided by United States Army Chaplains in Vietnam.

During his lengthy military career, the Chief of Chaplains has made three combat jumps.

Chaplain Sampson has served as an instructor at the United States Army Chaplain School. He has also served as Division Chaplain of the 101st.

Cols Bradley, Siegrist Exchange Commands

CAMP EVANS - In Change of Command ceremonies here recently, Maj. Gen. John M. Wright Jr. received the colors of the 3rd Brigade from Col. Robert H. Siegrist and presented them to Col. William J. Bradley.

Col. Bradley came to Vietnam in June 1969. He has served as commander of the Division Support Command.

From 1947 to 1951, he attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. He was graduated a Bachelor of Military Science and commissioned a 2nd lieutenant.

Col. Bradley has previously served in Korea, Great Britain, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam and various stateside assignments. While in Korea, he earned the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device.

Col. Siegrist, who has taken the post vacated by Col. Bradley, has commanded the 3rd Brigade since June 1969. During that time the brigade cleared North Vietnamese units from the A Shau Valley. Under the colonel's command, armor was employed for the first time in the A Shau. During October and November, the brigade provided cover for the redeploying 3rd Marine Division.



The Screaming Eagle is an authorized Army newspaper published by the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), RVN, for military personnel. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Reproduction of all material other than copyrighted items is authorized. Address all communications to Editor, Screaming Eagle, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), APO San Francisco 96343. Printed in Tokyo, Japan by Pacific Star and Stripes.

Circulation 15,000

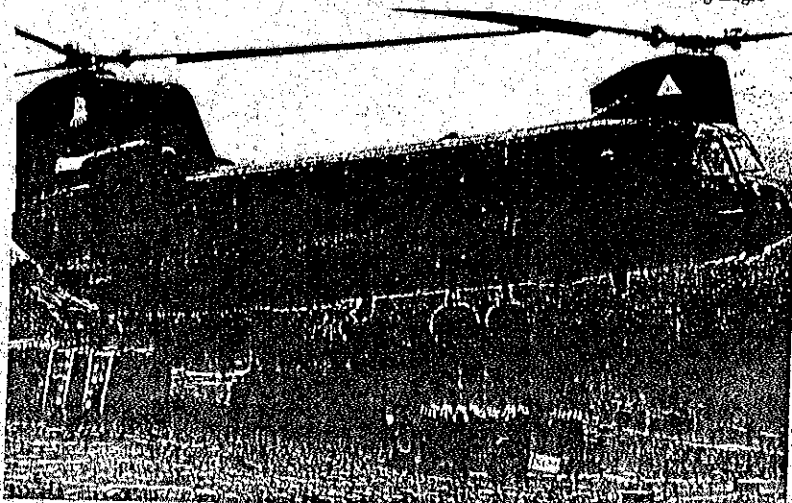
Commanding General Maj. Gen. John M. Wright Jr.
Information Officer Maj. Richard L. Bryan
Command Information Officer Capt. Allen J. Dines
Editor Spec. 4 Tom Atwell
Editorial Assistant Spec. 4 David Rose

Unit Correspondents

- | | |
|---|---|
| Spec. 1 T. Andrzejewski 1/506 | Sgt. Gordon Roberts 1/506 |
| Spec. 1 John Greenfield 1/187 | Spec. 4 Terry Brown 2/506 |
| Spec. 4 John Peters 1/187 | Sgt. Canute Delmasse 2/506 |
| Spec. 4 Gordon Burton 1/187 | Spec. 3 Dan Wade 2/11 |
| Spec. 4 Mike Morgan 1/501 | Spec. 4 Russ Brown 2/177 |
| Spec. 4 John Siew 2/202 | Spec. 5 Robert Trice 2/118 |
| Spec. 4 Garth Larsen 2/202 | 1st Lt. Sgt. Bernard Gordon 1/187 |
| Spec. 4 Elliott Cooper 2/202 | Spec. 4 Aaron Sanders 1/187 |
| Sgt. Tim Coder 1/506 | Spec. 4 Larry Lindberg 154 Avn |



TAKING IT FROM HERE - Lt. Don Heil (far right) of Mt. Carmel, Pa., lends a hand to men of his unit, 1st Plat, A Co., 326 Engr. Bn., in building a bridge ramp. The ramp is part of the platoon's Phu Thu road project, a civic action program to open new roadways for the Vietnamese people. (U.S. Army photo)



GETTING OFF HERE - The last of the ammunition for Bravo Btry., 2nd Bn. (Amb.) 11th Arty. drops from the CH-47 Chinook delivering munitions to the unit during an artillery raid at Fire Support Base Blaze. (U.S. Army photo by Spec.5 Dan Weber)

ARVN-US Units Join In Operation

By Spec.4 Jack Cooney

CAMP SALLY - A joint U.S. and ARVN operation lasting six days has swept 120 square kilometers in an area west of Hue in attempt to interdict enemy forces possibly massing for an offensive. The operation tagged "Stud" included a task force of six infantry battalions, one cavalry troop and the equivalent of two artillery battalions.

The infantry battalions engaged in "Stud" included the 2nd Bn. (Amb.), 301st Inf. 2nd Bn. (Amb.), 502nd Inf. 1st Bn. (Amb.), 327th Inf. 1st Bn. (Amb.), 502nd Inf. 1st Bn. (Amb.), 501st Inf. and the 2nd Bn. 3rd Regt. of the ARVN 1st Div.

Condor Troop, 2nd Sqdn. (Amb.), 17th Cav. screened the southwest border during operations for the task force.

Soldiers from the airborne battalions were deployed into the area of operation within hours of the mission order. Tactical control was given to the Screaming Eagles' 2nd Brigade commander, Col. Raymond L. Kampe. This was the first major operation for the Ocean City, N. J. resident since assuming command of the brigade last November.

The smoothness of the operation was attributed to clear weather and the airborne concept for the tactical operation. The infantrymen were able to carry a lighter load, because resupply helicopters had little difficulty getting into the AO during the operation.

Light Observation Helicopters flew the company commanders on visual reconnaissance of their area while battalion commanders maintained actual control in their command and control ships. Huey, UH-1H "Slicks" moved the infantry units around several times in the area of operation. Most of the time, however, was spent moving through the mountainous triple canopy jungles in patrol style.

Although the operation resulted in only seven NVA killed during the action, it provided commanders with a first hand look at the area, which could prove a decided advantage in future operations. The task force also captured 11 AK-47 rifles, two machine guns and one 9mm pistol.

3/506 Recon Team Beats Odds

By Sgt. Cantilo Delmansse

LZ NORTH ENGLISH - In the tangled brush on a mountain top not far from here an NVA company recently ran into a recon team from the 3rd Bn. (Amb.), 506th Inf.

The NVA must have decided that with ten to one odds they could not lose. The Screaming Eagles proved them wrong. An official tally indicated that the NVA lost two killed in action and eight wounded.

The action began shortly after nightfall when NVA soldiers spotted the 101st troopers as they were calling in mortar fire on an enemy sampan.

The enemy began to hurl hand grenades and employ small arms and automatic weapons fire against the team, which was already in a night defensive position.

The team leader, Sgt. David J. Lindsay, of Washington W. Va., called in gunships on the advancing enemy and, with the aid of his assistant team leader, Spec.4 Thomas E. Creemeens, of Joliet, Ill., directed the gunship fire on the NVA positions.

"It was the next morning that we really started to make heavy contact," Spec.4 Tommy O. Barker, of Covina, Calif., recalled. "We started to move down the mountain when they fired at us with AK-47's and a light machine gun. We returned fire and headed back to some rocks."

Once his team had returned to cover, Sgt. Lindsay called in the gunships. In the time that it took the "guns" to arrive, the NVA had surrounded the small element using machine gun and

rifle fire and B-40 rockets to pin them down.

"I was sure happy to see those guns fly in," said Spec.4 Lindsay B. Ford, of Lamont, Calif. "They got the NVA off our backs in a hurry."

Tip From Villagers Saves Railroad From VC Charge

FIRE SUPPORT BASE ROY - An attempt to destroy a section of track along the Hué-Da Nang railroad, southwest of Phu Bai, failed recently after two Viet Cong who planted the explosive charge were reported to soldiers of the 101st.

Children from a local village spotted the pair of enemy soldiers planting a charge in the railway bed. They immediately reported the incident to their village chief, who organized a squad of People's Self Defense Force villagers to pursue the enemy.

At that moment, a jeep carrying the commanding officer, first sergeant and forward observer of Co. D, 2nd Bn. (Amb.), 327th Inf. approached the village. It's passengers noticed the Vietnamese racing down the track. "We pulled over and jumped out to investigate," related Capt.

...the VC had planted the explosive charge in the railway bed. They immediately reported the incident to their village chief, who organized a squad of People's Self Defense Force villagers to pursue the enemy. At that moment, a jeep carrying the commanding officer, first sergeant and forward observer of Co. D, 2nd Bn. (Amb.), 327th Inf. approached the village. It's passengers noticed the Vietnamese racing down the track. "We pulled over and jumped out to investigate," related Capt.

Division Conquers Rain With Chutes

CAMP EAGLE - A new solution to one of the most bothersome tactical problems in Vietnam, bad weather, is being developed in a joint effort by the 101st and the Air Force's 834th Air Div.

During the monsoon rains, when bad weather restricts the use of helicopters for resupply, ground troops are forced to carry greater quantities of food and ammunition, as insurance against cancelled resupply by air drop.

Soon, the Division Support Command and the 834th began developing a three-phase program to make all-weather supply drops a reality.

Under the plan, rotary wing aircraft, provided by the 101st, and fixed-wing Hercules C-130's, supplied by the Air Force, will be used to make the parachute drops.

In the first phase of preparation, now under way, practice runs are being made over flat, open terrain to improve accuracy. Special parachutes are being employed to help sharpen accuracy of the drops. The chutes are designed to free fall for 30 seconds before

opening, thus cutting down the effect of wind on the drop.

In the second stage of training, the drops will be made over mountainous terrain. The final phase will include targets in triple-canopy jungle, where marking the load, once it has landed, will be one of the critical considerations.

Frequent Contact Nets 9 KIA, 40 Bunkers

FIRE BASE ROY - Two weeks of frequent contact with Viet Cong troops southwest of this fire base recently netted Charlie Company, 1st Bn. (Amb.), 327th Inf. with nine VC KIA, fifteen captured AD-47 rifles, and eight SKS rifles.

Forty bunkers and fighting positions were also destroyed as three platoons of the company, commanded by Capt. Gary Goehde of Racine, Wis., were deployed to interdict enemy supply routes carved into the thick jungle terrain of the area. Enemy located on a mountain

nearby Charlie Company's first landing zone soon felt the pinch of hunger when their supply routes were cut off. They began sending daylight probes into the company's area, trying to determine if the company would depart the area with some not-too-gentle persuasion. Numerous U.S. contacts in the two weeks soon changed the enemy's mind.

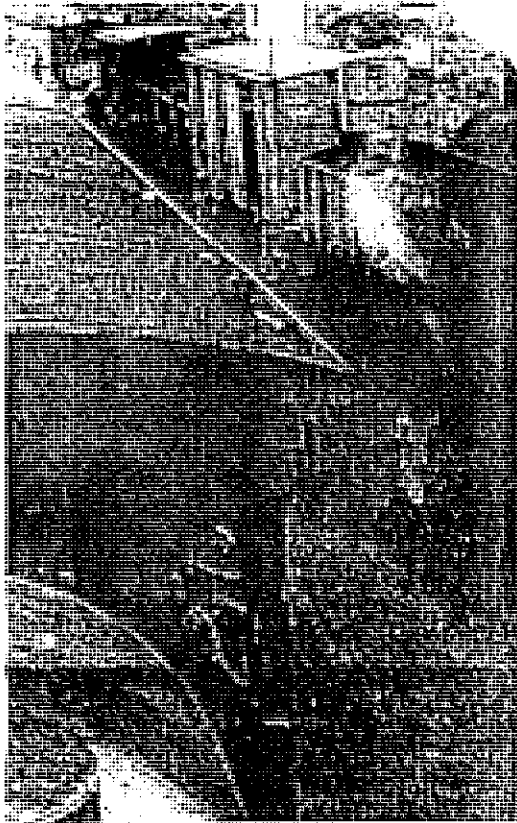
Driving rain and thick fog hampered the company for six straight days during the operation.



KEEPING WOODS - Sgt. Jerry Woodard of Brown, Miss., a member of the reconnaissance platoon, 1st Bn. Charlie, 327th Inf. looks a stranger from the 2nd ARVN Regt. during an operation at Fire Support Base Roy.

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

The Hue-Da Nang Railroad Winds Its Way On 7 Hour Trip



The passenger train waits by the smaller steam-engineered station train at the whistle stop in Cau Hai.

HUE - From Hue to Da Nang by railroad; it's a trip you'll never forget. The train isn't exactly the Santa Fe express; it takes nearly seven hours to cover the 70 mile stretch between the two cities and to say the ride is rickety is being polite. But it's a great way to see the people, hamlets, and scenery of southern I Corps.

It seems as though you stop at every hamlet between the two cities and at every stop new people board; some heading for markets in Da Nang with their pigs, chickens, rice, or sugar cane; some visiting relatives; some just going along for the ride.

At Lang Co, a fishing village about half way between Hue and Da Nang, the most beautiful part of the trip begins. Here the rails follow the panoramic coastline of the South China Sea and the passengers enjoy a breathtaking view of the waves pounding in upon the beach rocks hundreds of feet below them. About five miles south of Lang Co, the train goes around the Hai Van Pass, a deep cleavage cut between two mountain peaks, usually camouflaged by low slung wisps of clouds. Da Nang is still miles away, but it is visible from an old French fortress on one of the peaks.

Somewhere along the way, depending on how hungry the conductor is, the train will rumble to a halt and you know it's time for lunch, usually a meal of fresh shrimp and rice.

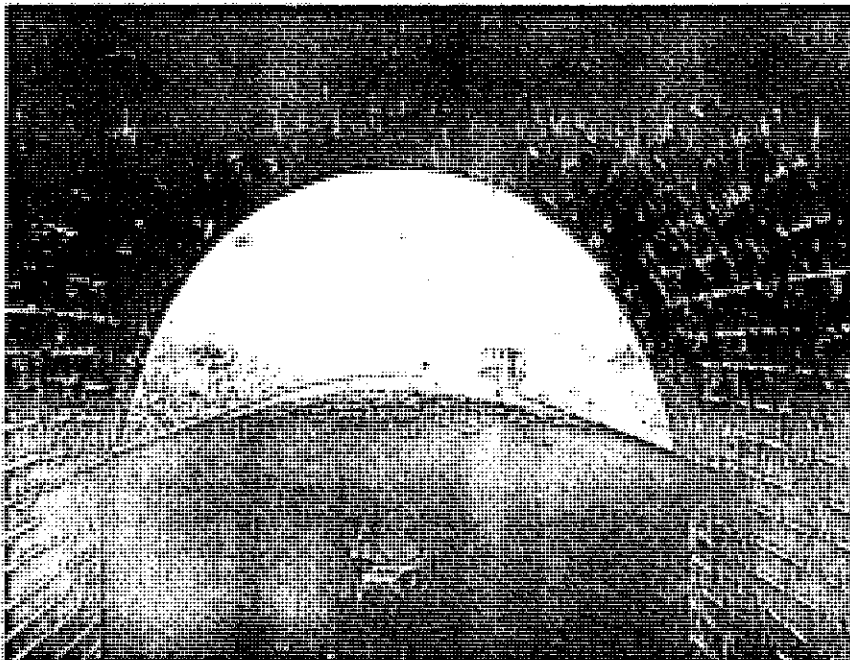
About six hours into the trip you approach Da Nang Bay. Visible across the bay is Monkey Mountain, so named by the Marines securing it.

The train chugs on and on through the outskirts of Da Nang then finally into the city itself.

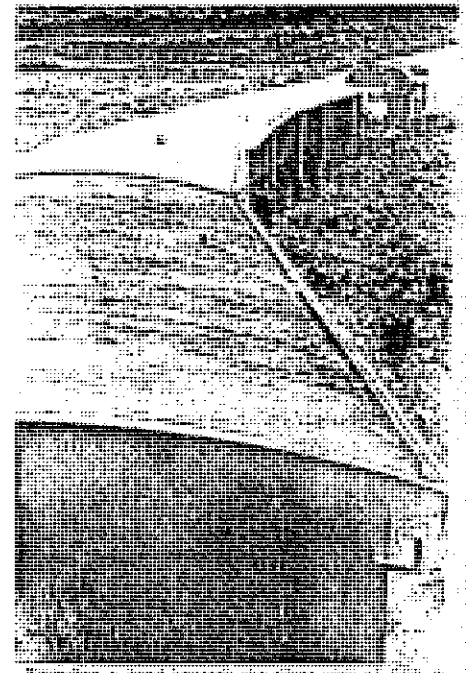
Two summers ago this trip wasn't possible. Train service between Hue and Da Nang was interrupted by the Tet Offensive of 1968. Continually threatened by VC terrorist incidents, rail traffic stopped completely until ARVN, Marine, and 101st units joined forces last summer to insure safe passage between the two cities.

ARVN and Marine outposts are now dotted long the 70 miles of tracks. A special security train was initiated. Manned by 1st ARVN Division troops, the train provides a constant deterrent against enemy attack. 101st dog teams now check the tracks for mines, and 101st light observation helicopters provide air security. ARVN soldiers also ride along on the passenger train for extra protection.

In South Vietnam, the railroad is not an anachronism; to the people from Hue to Da Nang, the railroad is a regular mode of travel, just like the sampan, the footpaths, and more recently, the motor bikes. Thanks to ARVN and US forces, the train will stick pretty close to its timetable.



Passing into sunlight after passing through one of Hue's mountain tunnels.



Humming in Hue's beautiful old station yard at Hue in I Corps.

Photos



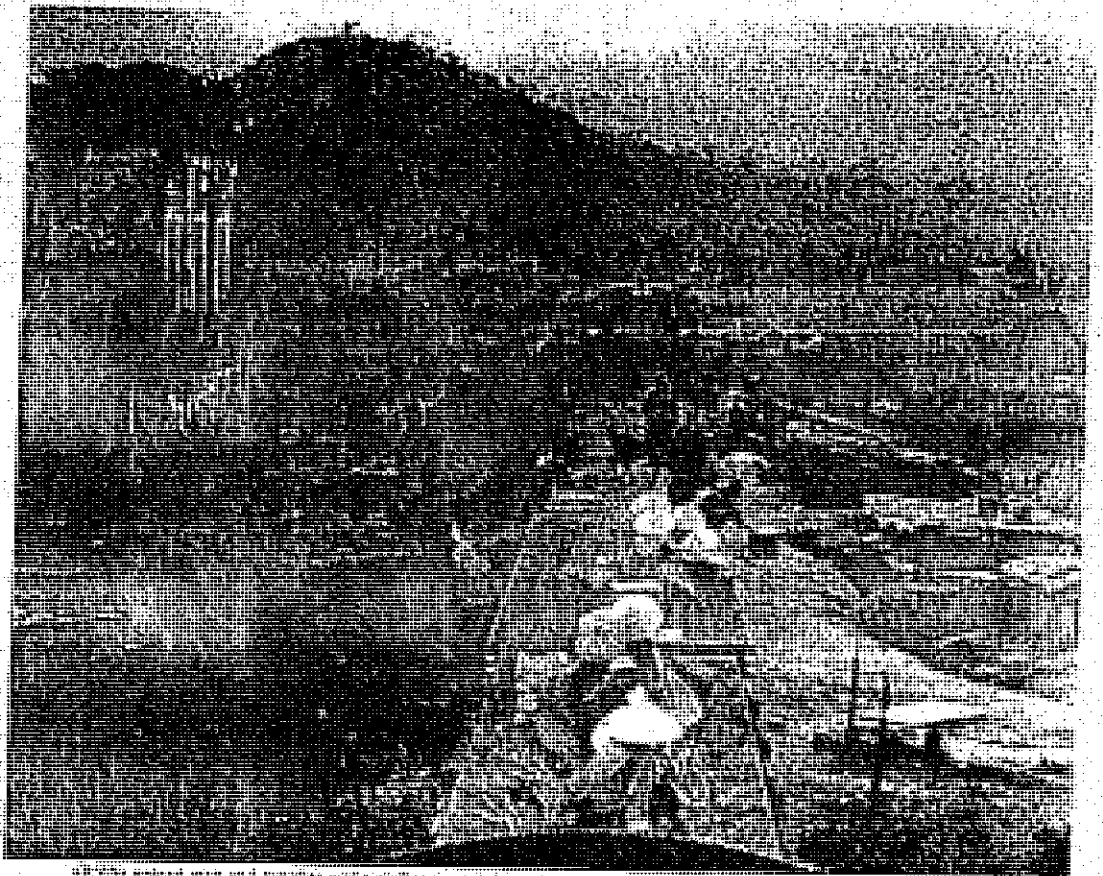
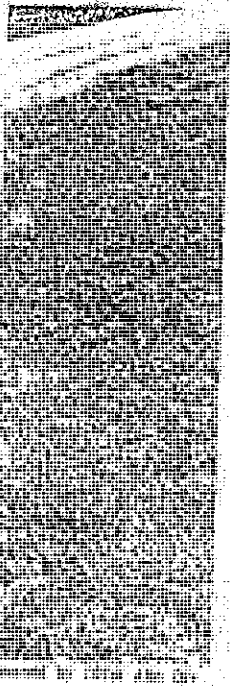
Children gathered around the "Red Iron" around a base camp.



Lines of many journeys mark the face of this elderly Vietnamese lady.

by Spec. 5 E.P. Baker

Story by Lt. Robert Gorman



U.S. troops moved more and supplies better organized from their bases to the front of operations.

Interpreter Has Come Long Way With Div.

By Sgt. Gordon Roberts

CAMP EVANS - In a country where there is so much talk about being "short", Dinh Van Phong, a battalion interpreter, finds himself "long". He has served with the division's 1st Bn. (Ambl.), 506th Inf. since its arrival in Vietnam in 1967.

Phong fled south with his family from North Vietnam at the age of six.

"Because we were Catholics," he explains, "it was impossible for us to live freely there." When Phong and his family arrived in the south with other refugees, his father was given a small piece of land near Bien Hoa.

After graduating from high school in 1967, Phong joined the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. While in the ARVN, he studied English in the Armed Forces Language School.

"When I completed language school, I had my choice of any American unit. I wanted to serve with," he recalls. "The 101st was operating near

my home at the time, so I chose them."

But soon, the division migrated north, and Phong went with it.

After 18 months on line in battles at Phouc Vinh, Cu Chi and Dak To, Phong was made his battalion's "handy man." In addition to his own duties as an interpreter, he is now in charge of all other interpreters in the battalion, and all its Kit Carson Scouts.

Although he spoke very little English when he first joined the "Currahee" battalion, Phong now writes letters to American friends who have returned home. He also types much of his work and enjoys reading the Stars and Stripes.

"After the war is over, I'd like to take a trip to the United States to see all the things there I've heard so much about," he says.

In reply to the many 101st soldiers who have invited him to visit their homes, he repeats, "I'll have to stay here until our job is done, but maybe someday I'll be able to come to America."

MARS Antenna Sitting High After Tricky Job With Huey

CAMP EVANS - How does one place a 385-pound radio antenna on top of a 60-foot pole? This problem recently fell on the shoulders of Maj. John Truffa of Miami, Fla. officer in

charge of the 3rd Brigade Military Affiliate Radio Station.

After several ideas were considered it was decided to use a UH-1 Huey helicopter to lift the antenna to the top of the

pole. Co. A, 158th Asst. Hel. Bn. (Ambl.) was called on to perform the task.

On the first attempt the antenna was slightly damaged by high winds, but a few days later, after Spec. 4 Henry Baum, Scott Amana, Iowa, repaired the antenna which he had built, another try was made.

With WO Amadio Florenti of Shoreham, N.Y. at the chopper's controls, the antenna was lowered to wremen Pfc.s Rosario DeFazio, Brooklyn, N.Y. and Joseph Glockner, New Orleans, La.

With the new antenna in operation, the number of calls put through and the quality of the communication to the United States have been greatly increased," stated Lt. David Martin, assistant officer in charge of the MARS station.

Brigade Clerks Pull Security At Firebase

CAMP EAGLE - "What'dya mean I'm going to the fire base?" was the most common reaction when members of Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 502nd Inf. were told they were going to Fire Support Base Rifle as a security force for a day and a night.

It all began when elements of artillery and infantry from the 101st staged an artillery raid into the southern tip of the A Shau Valley.

"Rather than bring another company in to secure the fire base for such a short time, it was decided to utilize the Headquarters Company personnel," explained Lt. Col. Roy J. Young, Battalion commander.

Three platoons were formed, including as many people with infantry experience as possible.

While at Rifle, the men assumed the normal duties of fire base residents. They worked on improving the defenses and conducted short-range

reconnaissance patrols around the base.

Most of the men agreed, later, that the lay had passed quickly. The night, however, seemed to creep slowly by. As Spec. 4 Howard Mudd, of Longview, Tex., so aptly put it, "Every log or tree moved at least once that night."



LEFT OUT? - Veronica Carlson looks as though she might have been left out in the cold, though we couldn't imagine who would do such a thing. At any rate, don't allow yourself to get left out especially when it comes to Veterans Administration benefits. Contact your local VA representative when you return to the states. (Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.)

No Meat For This Medic

CAMP EAGLE - Would you turn down a thick, juicy steak after 30 days in the field? Would anyone?

Believe it or not, there is a 101st soldier who has never tasted a steak and has no desire to ever do so. He is Spec. 4 Michael Harsany, Mount Vernon, Ohio, a medic with the 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 502nd Inf.

Harsany is one of a rare breed of gourmet vegetarians. He has never tasted spaghetti and meatballs, beans and wieners or beef and potatoes. As he puts it, "I don't eat meats, so that doesn't leave much for me in most situations."

But, Harsany has his own solution. When it is show time, and everyone in his unit is opening up "Cs", he pulls out his Teflon saucepan and a large plastic bag filled with assorted packets of

macaroni, spaghetti, biscuit mix, soy bean wieners, and other assorted "hoodies."

Harsany says, "When someone gets a package from home, they usually give me most of the non-meat items. They help quite a bit when my supplies run low."

Resupply for the company comes about every four days. But for Harsany, supplies come about once a month in the form of a package from his family.

When he returns home, Harsany plans to study dentistry. He is also a car enthusiast. But, for now, Harsany is content serving his buddies in Co. C. Although he doesn't pack the quantity of rations that others do, he still carries one of the heaviest rucksacks in the company, thanks to all his medical supplies - plus a month's supply of vegetarian "taste teasers."



TAKING A BREAK - Spec. 4 Fred Cunningham Jr. of Orlando, Fla., a member of Co. A, 1st Bn. (Ambl.), 501st Inf., takes a well-deserved smoke break after his unit arrived at Fire Support Base Rifle recently after an operation in the field.

(U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jack Kanan)



JOINT EFFORT - Elements of the security platoon of the 2nd Brigade and 3rd Regt., 1st ARVN Div. participate in a joint sweep of an area 19 kilometers northwest of Hue. (U.S. Army photo by Spec. 4 Scott Evans)

Rakkassans Teaching Viets Necessary Medical Skills

By Spec. 4 James Greenfield

CAMP EVANS - While many American units are engaged in training Vietnamese fighting forces, Rakkassans are adding another vital, but often neglected facet to the program of Vietnamization.

The medical section of the 3rd Bn. (Ambl), 187th Inf. is setting up a pilot program for teaching Vietnamese basic medical skills.

During current pacification and training operations in the Phong Dien District, northwest of Hue, the Screaming Eagles have encountered an urgent need for more medically trained personnel throughout the district.

"Our battalion MBDCAPs can't possibly take care of all the medical needs in the district," says Staff Sgt. John Hunter, Atlanta, Ga. a battalion medic.

Therefore, the Rakkassans have concentrated their efforts on teaching local Vietnamese enough medical knowledge to assist in providing care to their own people. Although the

program is just beginning, the objectives are already formulated.

Through cooperation with Dai-Uy Phyl, the Phong Dien District chief, two people from each hamlet in the district have been chosen to take part in the six-week course.

"We'll try to get young high school or college Vietnamese for the program," said Capt. Keith Kulow, Hubbard, Ohio, battalion surgeon.

Kulow indicated that although educational background and knowledge of English were not specific criteria for the course, these would determine just how advanced the medical course will become.

"He hopes the course can cover everything from simple first-aid to pediatrics and he has prepared his class lectures and visual aids accordingly. Since it is a pilot program, Kulow hopes that the lessons learned can be used for future, more advanced courses.

The Phong Dien District has provided classroom space in Phong Dien and will take care of

transportation to and from classes. If everyone cannot meet at one central location, plans are being formulated for smaller "field classes" in different sections of the district.

The ultimate goal of the program, according to Kulow is to develop a skilled Vietnamese medical cadre who can carry on the teaching program independent of the Screaming Eagles.

Eagle Receives 'Freedom Award'

CAMP EAGLE - A 101st soldier has been named the top award winner of the annual Freedoms Foundation Letter Contest, sponsored by Freedoms Foundation, Valley Forge, Pa. His award will be the coveted "Defender of Freedom Award."

Spec. Four Peter Westover II, Relay, Md., will be presented with a \$1,000 U.S. Savings Bond and an engraved George Washington Medal as first prize winner in the national contest. Ceremonies will be held at Valley Forge in late February.

Westover is assigned to the 158th Avn. Bn., Co. A at Camp Evans where he works as an operations specialist.

During the autumn of 1969, Westover entered the contest at Fort Rucker, Ala. where he was assigned as an instructor in weather and communications procedures at the U.S. Army Aviation School.

"A notice concerning the contest was posted on the company bulletin board," he recalls. "The object was to write a letter of 500 words or less to the Foundation on the subject 'My Hopes for America's Future.' I entered because I had some things I wanted to say about how America can make better use of both her human and natural resources. Air and water pollution and the waste of land are things that bother me."

He continues, "I tried to emphasize how important it is to deal with these problems in terms of solutions. It seems like there is much too much criticism around the country and too little effort at solving problems that we all are aware of."

Westover says that he developed a better perspective on the promise of America while living overseas. He was born on Sept. 17, 1944 at Fort Lauderdale, Fla. while his father, a lieutenant in the Fleet Air Arm of the British Royal Navy, was stationed at Pensacola. Both Westover and his father hold dual citizenship, while his mother is a native born American citizen.

The specialist lived in England from 1944 to 1955, where he attended elementary school, and again in 1962 while visiting with his grandparents. He also lived in Canada from 1955 through 1959, where his father, now a draftsman for a steel fabrication company, was employed.

Tet Packs Spark Holiday

CAMP EVANS - Combined efforts by soldiers of the 101st and Phong Dien District officials have provided special Tet "food packages" for the families of 84 Vietnamese civilian soldiers.

"Because the People's Self Defense Forces of the Phong Dien District are increasing their defense activities during the Tet season," explained Lt. Robert R. Tait of Bonair, Va. "We realized many of the soldiers would not be able to spend Tet at their ancestral homes, so we arranged this program with the district chief to show appreciation for their efforts."

Under the training of the 3rd Bn. (Ambl), 187th Inf. the PSDFs have begun moving further into their district area and frequently stay

overnight on operations.

Lt. Col. Herbert Y. Schandler, battalion commander, and District Chief Dai-Uy (Captain) Phyl, jointly distributed the food supplies provided by the battalion's civil affairs section.

Each family received approximately ten pounds of food goods, to include dehydrated milk, cheese, candy and other staples.

Dai-Uy Phyl selected 84 families from the district to take part in the food distribution program and arranged for their transportation to Phong Dien, 30 miles northwest of Hue.

The families represented almost all of the hamlets and villages in the district, including several refugee camps near Phong Dien.

River Rats Guard Lengthy Stretch Of Song Bo

CAMP EVANS - They call them "River Rats" because of the job they perform.

These 101st troopers have been given the task of patrolling the Song Bo River for a 20-mile stretch approximately 20 miles north of Hue.

The River Rats are composed of engineers from Co. B, 326th Eng Bn. (Ambl), a Vietnamese Interpreter and "Rakkassans"

from Co. D, 3rd Bn. (Ambl), 187th Inf. Their job is to check river traffic along the Song Bo and intercept food or weapon supplies earmarked for enemy elements operating in the foothills of northern Thua Thien Province.

Although river patrols are quite common further south in Vietnam, the patrol along the Song Bo is one of the few in the

area that is so heavily patrolled. The river is a major supply route for the enemy and the 101st is determined to keep it open to their own forces.

The patrol is made up of a mix of American and Vietnamese soldiers. They are equipped with small boats and are able to move quickly up and down the river.

Lenten Services Set

The chaplains of the 101st have scheduled a series of special sacramental services to be held at Division Memorial Chapel at 6 p.m. every Wednesday during Lent. Each service will be conducted jointly by Catholic and Protestant chaplains from sponsoring units.

SERVICE DATE	SPONSOR
Feb. 18	Div. Acty
Feb. 25	326 Engr. and 2/17 Cav.
March 4	101 Avn. Grp.
March 11	1st Bde.
March 15	C/DISCOM
March 25	27 Engr. and NHC/10

Holy Week services will be announced at a later date.

