A photograph of a dense tropical jungle. The scene is filled with various types of trees and plants, including large, dark tree trunks and vibrant green foliage. In the lower center, a soldier wearing a helmet and a dark uniform is seen from behind, looking into the thick brush. The lighting is somewhat dim, creating a sense of being deep within the forest. The overall color palette is dominated by greens and browns.

Rendezvous With Destiny

101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)



Throughout the past summer and fall months we Screaming Eagles have fought all over Northern Military Region 1. These campaigns brought a new degree of stability to the area so that the national elections were conducted in relative peace and almost completely unopposed by NVA or VC activities.

Together with our ARVN allies we pinched a vital nerve of the NVA during Lam Son 719 by driving him deep into Laos and severing his major supply lines. During Lam Son 720, we dominated the A Shau Valley. Here we gutted enemy caches and base camps which destroyed his forward positions in Thua Thien Province. Then during Lam Son 810, we supported the 1st ARVN Division as they thrust into enemy complexes in Western Quang Tri Province.

Now as we head into the monsoon season, we find that the 1st ARVN Division has taken over much of our old area of operation in preparation for our eventual withdrawal from Vietnam. Fire Bases Bastogne, Rifle, and Tomahawk are occupied by Vietnamese with Rakkasan soon to follow. Famous places such as Veghel, Rendezvous, Airborne, and Eagles Nest have passed into the ARVN area of operations. Our major role in the months ahead will be to support the great 1st ARVN Division as they assume the dominant military role in Thua Thien Province.

The words and photographs here are dedicated to the inspiring young troopers of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) who, for 29 years, have sacrificed their comforts and lives so that our Nation and our allies may remain free. In the true tradition of Screaming Eagles, we have been challenged by, we have met, and we have been successful in our Rendezvous With Destiny.

Thomas M. Tarpley
Thomas M. Tarpley
Major General, USA
Commanding

Summer Fall 1971

Rendezvous With Destiny

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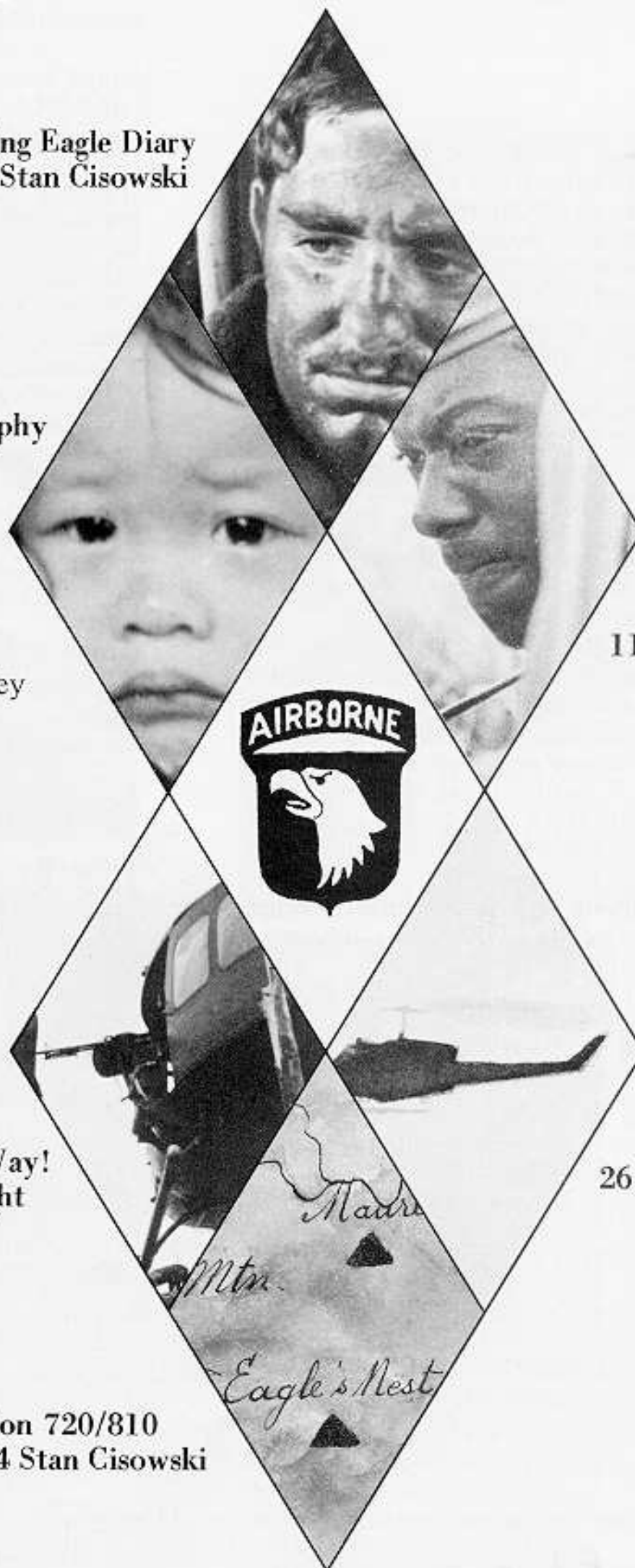
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Screaming Eagle Vietnam Diary

by Spec. 4 Stan Cisowski



April 1 -- Troopers of Co. B, 3rd Bn., 506th Inf., arrived just in time to save the life of a local village chief about to be executed by an NVA terrorist band near FB Tomahawk. The enemy fled from their jungle enclave when Screaming Eagles approached, leaving their prisoner bound and gagged, but still alive.

April 2 -- "Geronimos" of Co. D, 1st Bn., 501st Inf., discovered a cave 20 miles west of Quang Tri containing 30 60mm mortar rounds, 20 B-40 rockets, 20 rucksacks, and more than 100 protective masks.

April 5 -- "Currahees" of Co. B, 2nd Bn., 506th Inf., reacted to a probe of their NDP by an unknown sized enemy force near FB Vandergrift by killing five NVA soldiers and capturing three AK-47 s.

April 9 -- The CP of the 3rd Brigade moved back to Camp Evans today from Camp Carroll with the conclusion of Operation Lam Son 719.

April 14 -- The 2nd Bn., 320th Arty., along with elements of the 1st Bn., 327th Inf., combat assaulted onto FB Fury in order to conduct an artillery raid on the A Shau Valley. During their brief stay on the hilltop firebase, the 105mm battery delivered continuous fire on enemy positions and supply routes, resulting in the destruction of one enemy truck and numerous bunkers, fighting and antiaircraft positions. Today's raid marked the opening of Operation Lam Son 720.

April 15 -- The Screaming Eagle Replacement Training School (SERTS) graduated its 1,000th class after more than five years of operation in RVN.

April 17 -- The Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm was received by Major General Thomas M. Tarpley on behalf of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) at a victory celebration in Hue marking the successful conclusion of operation Lam Son 719.

April 18 -- Medics from the 1st Bn., 502nd Inf., saved the lives of three Vietnamese civilians while on a MEDCAP mission near Hue. Two of the victims were involved in a motorcycle accident, and the third was injured by a VC mine minutes before the MEDCAP team arrived. The "First Strike" medics administered emergency first aid treatment and called in a "dustoff" to transport the wounded Vietnamese to the 85th Evacuation Hospital in Phu Bai.

April 22 -- "Above the Rest" infantrymen from the 1st Bn., 327th Inf., staged a successful pre-dawn ambush along a trail in the A Shau Valley, killing five NVA soldiers and capturing a mortar tube, small arms ammunition, explosives, grenades and individual weapons.

May 1 -- Colonel Edmond P. Abood became Division Support Command commander of the 101st.

May 7 -- Colonel George C. Viney became the Chief of Staff for the 101st.



May 15 -- Co.'s C & D, 2nd Bn., 506th Inf., discover a regiment sized NVA basecamp six miles south of FB Ripcord. The basecamp included 30 huts, 65 bunkers with overhead cover and several caves. Altogether 9 mortar rounds, 26 B-40 rockets, 70 lbs. of explosives, 3 automatic weapons, and 5,000 small arms rounds were found within the complex. The huts and bunkers were destroyed by explosives before the "Currahee" troopers withdrew.

May 17 -- The 3rd Bn., 506th Inf., stood down today after three and one half years of proud service in Vietnam. The "Currahee" battalion participated in 16 major combat operations during their South East Asian stay, including last year's dramatic thrust into Cambodia which resulted in the destruction of NVA sanctuaries and staging areas.

May 18 -- A "Pink Team" from C Trp., 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav., observed 25 NVA soldiers south of FB Rifle. Despite intense ground fire the helicopter team engaged the enemy force and killed seven.

May 21 -- Chaplain (CPT) Jimmy Young and SFC R.C. Henry, 326th Engineer Bn., led the defense of FB Rifle against a midnight mortar and sapper attack. The two hour battle ended with eight NVA killed and only one American fatality. Infantrymen from Co. C, 1st Bn., 501st Inf., joined in repulsing the surprise enemy assault.

Earlier today, Co. D, 1st Bn., 506th Inf., discovered 18 NVA built huts, including two mess halls and a medical dispensary, in the triple canopy jungle near FB Ripcord. Also found in the area were 50 105mm artillery rounds, 3 B-40 rockets, and other miscellaneous equipment.

May 22 -- Thirteen Screaming Eagles received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry at an awards ceremony at Dong Ha for their personal heroics during Operation Lam Son 719.

May 29 -- A "Pink Team" from A Trp., 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav., destroyed numerous bunkers, fighting positions, a 12.7mm machinegun, and accounted for 15 enemy KIA's near the Laotian border in western Quang Tri Province.

Later today, Air Force jets were called in to the same area and killed 15 more enemy, destroyed 18 additional bunkers, and knocked out another crew served weapon.

May 30 -- A "Pink Team" from A Trp., 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav., killed nine more enemy near the scene of yesterday's encounter.

June 1 -- "Drive On" troops of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 501st Inf., discovered eight newly constructed enemy bunkers near FB Tomahawk containing over 100 lbs. of rice and 14 60mm mortar rounds.

June 3 -- A & B Co's, 1st Bn., 506th Inf., discovered 48 enemy bunkers near FB Gladiator containing 14 cases of 12.7mm ball ammunition and 6 mortar rounds.

June 4 -- Cobras from C Btry., 4th Bn., 77th Arty. (ARA), in support of elements from the 1st ARVN Division, engaged an enemy force resulting in nine KIA's just east of the A Shau Valley.





June 5 -- "Death on Call" Cobras from B Btry., 4th Bn., 77th Arty. (ARA), in one of the largest battlefield actions in recent months, killed 60 NVA soldiers and destroyed one mortar position, resulting in six secondary explosions, 20 miles west of Quang Tri.

June 6 -- Twelve NVA were killed and seven bunkers destroyed when Cobras from B Battery, 4/77th, were called in to support the 4th Bn., 2nd Rgt. (ARVN), which was in contact with an enemy force of unknown size near the A Shau Valley.

June 7 -- In the fourth consecutive day of heavy action for the ARA, B & C Btry. s, 4/77th, engaged three NVA companies near the Rockpile area, resulting in 23 KIA s.

June 8 -- A recon element from the 2nd Bn., 502nd Inf., discovered 60 enemy bunkers with overhead cover and 40 fighting positions northwest of FB Birmingham.

June 11 -- "First Strike" troopers from Co. C, 1st Bn., 502nd Inf., while on a routine patrol in the jungles near FB Veghel, discovered two large enemy huts with adjoining underground bunkers containing 20 B-40 rockets and one 60mm mortar aiming sight. Nearby the infantrymen found six freshly dug enemy graves.

June 18 -- After receiving enemy small arms fire early this morning while deployed in the NDP near FB Barbara, the 2nd Brigade's Aero-Rifle platoon called for ARA for support to suppress the enemy. A first light search of the surrounding area revealed three bunkers destroyed by ARA and two observation platforms holding 16 B-40 rockets, 16 mortar rounds, and 1 AK-47, abandoned. A more extensive search later in the day revealed a hut and adjoining bunker guarded by six boobytraps. The BBT s were discovered and dismantled without injury.



June 18 -- Colonel Richard J. Tallman became commander of the 3rd Brigade of the 101st.

June 21 -- Lieutenant Colonel William E. Crouch, Jr. became 101st Aviation Group commander for the 101st.

June 26 -- Brigadier General James F. Hamlet was assigned to the 101st today as Assistant Division Commander (Support).

Also today, Co. C, 1st Bn., 506th Inf., caught an enemy with his pants down when they spotted an NVA trooper bathing in stream while two comrades provided security. The three enemy fled when Screaming Eagles opened fire, leaving behind three rucksacks and a complete NVA uniform.

June 27 -- Thirty Vietnamese orphans from Hue visited Camp Eagle to attend a morning chapel service followed by an outdoor picnic sponsored by the 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav.

June 30 -- Brigadier General John G. Hill became Assistant Division Commander (Operations), of the 101st.

July 5 -- Command Sergeant Major Francis Ruddy took over today as Division Command Sergeant Major at a ceremony at Camp Eagle. Also today COL Larry A. Caid took command of Division Artillery.

July 6 -- Screaming Eagles got a preview of the upcoming monsoon season as Typhoon Harriet struck Eagle Country with winds of 60 m.p.h. and rainfall totalling 12.75 inches. Storm damage was widespread but generally minor due to extensive storm preparations.

July 10 -- Colonel Thomas A. Ware, Jr. assumed command of the 2nd Brigade of the 101st.

July 19 -- Cobra gunships from A & C Trps., 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav., tallied 35 enemy KIA s and one .30 cal machinegun destroyed in scattered action along the western edge of northern Military Region 1.

July 24 -- 2/17th Cobras killed 10 enemy and destroyed one .30 cal machine gun near Khe Sanh, and an "Air Cav" Aero-rifle platoon, after insertion into the area, captured another machinegun and killed one more enemy soldier.

July 28 -- Aerial reconnaissance by B Btry., 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav., revealed 11 enemy bodies and 2 crew served weapons destroyed.

July 28 -- Colonel Robert Arter became commander of the 1st Brigade of the 101st.

August 3 -- "Rakkasans" from the 3rd Bn., 187th Inf., left Military Region 1 for the first time in almost three years to patrol the rugged mountains around Cam Ranh Bay.

August 7 -- Co. s A & D of the 1st Bn., 327th Inf., discovered nine bunkers with 35 82mm mortar rounds in the triple canopy jungle near FB Maureen.

August 8 -- A Vietnamese civilian led an EOD team from Camp Evans to an enemy cache he had accidentally discovered containing 145 fragmentation grenades, 2 mortar rounds, and 2 artillery rounds.

August 11 -- "No Slack" troopers from Co. s A & C, 2nd Bn., 327th Inf., found 3 huts, 17 bunkers and 24 fighting positions 10 miles southwest of Hue, all showing recent enemy use, and miscellaneous equipment including one 122mm rocket.

August 14 -- Miss America and six other beauties from the annual Atlantic City pageant visited Camp Eagle today to present a musical variety show to 6,500 wildly appreciative troops. Later the six beauty queens toured FB Bastogne and the 85th Evacuation Hospital in Phu Bai.

In battlefield action today, a "Pink Team" from C Trp., 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav., killed 12 enemy and destroyed 2 12.7mm machineguns on the southern end

of the A Shau Valley.

August 16 -- The 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) celebrated its 29th Anniversary today with a legacy of heroic battlefield action at places like Normandy, Bastogne, Berchtesgaden, Qui Nhon, An Khe, Dak To, Vinh Loc, Dong Ap Bia, Street Without Joy, the A Shau Valley, and Khe Sanh.

August 19 -- A Vietnamese woodcutter led troops from Co. D, 1st Bn., 327th Inf., to seven NVA built bunkers containing 227 82mm mortar rounds and 10 75mm recoilless rifle rounds.

August 25 -- A "Pink Team" from A Trp., 2nd Sqdn. 17th Cav., killed 12 NVA soldiers in support of troops from the 1st Infantry Division (ARVN) operating in the northwest corner of Quang Tri Province.

August 26 -- The ARA from B Btry., 4th Bn., 77th Arty., killed 14 NVA and destroyed one mortar position when they were called by elements of the 1st Infantry Division (ARVN) to flush out an entrenched enemy force 10 miles south of the DMZ.

August 27 -- An NVA small arms ammunition factory was discovered by troopers from Co. C, 2nd Bn., 506th Inf., as they prepared to cut an LZ near FB Rakkasan. Along with the powder, slugs, and shell casings that served as the raw materials for the factory, the "Currahees" also found 7 rifles, 10 mortar rounds, 11 B-40 rockets, 30 fragmentation grenades, and 3 anti-personnel mines at the site.

August 31 -- Operation Lam Son 720 ends with over 700 enemy KIA s credited to American forces and 75 crew served weapons destroyed or captured.

September 1 -- Helicopters from the 101st airlift thousands of ARVN troops into western Quang Tri Province to begin Operation Lam Son 810.

September 6 -- An A Trp. "Pink Team" from the 2nd Sqdn., 17th Cav., totaled 13 enemy KIA s in four separate engagements in northwestern Quang Tri Province.

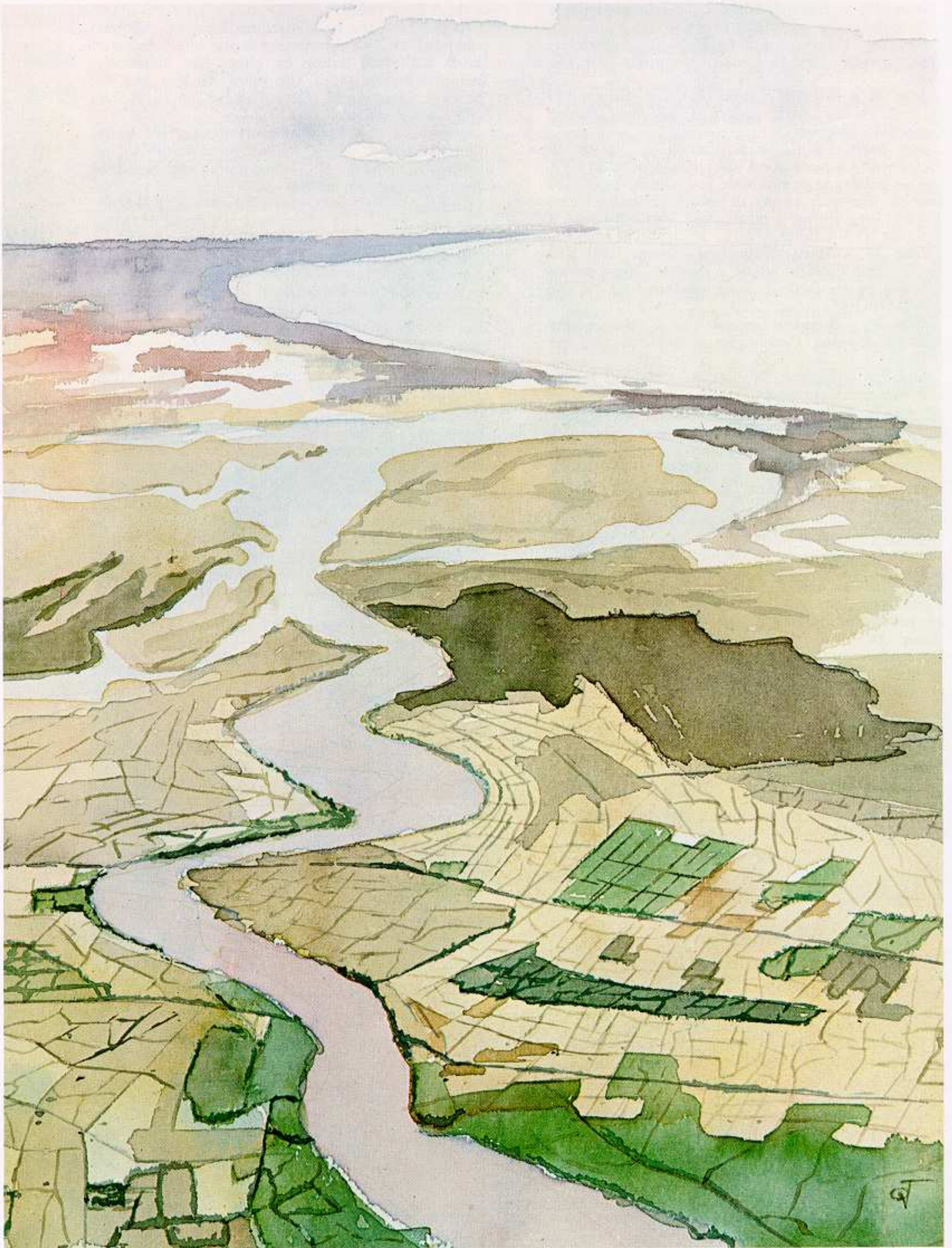
September 12 -- The sighting of an NVA artillery position near Khe Sanh by a 2/17th Cav LOH resulted in 39 NVA killed, and 4 122mm artillery pieces, 4 transport trucks, 10,000 gallons of fuel, and tons of ammunition and supplies destroyed. After the initial sighting, a B-52 air strike was called in on the position and later an element of the 1st Infantry Division (ARVN) Hac Bao combat assaulted into the area as a part of Operation Lam Son 810.

September 18 -- Operation Lam Son 810 ends with 172 enemy killed and more than a half-million rounds of ammunition captured or destroyed.



ROCKOFF





VAN TILBORG

the lowlands

by Capt. Dan Murphy

A SANDY, SIX-MILE-WIDE FRINGE OF LAND DRAPES THE DENSE, IMPOSING ANNAMITE MOUNTAINS AS THEY DESCEND TO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA.



Least suited to agricultural development of South Vietnam's four major regions, the lowlands are home to virtually all residents of the country's two northernmost provinces, Quang Tri and Thua Thien. Farmers, fishermen and woodcutters of the area, as well as residents of the two principle cities, Quang Tri and Hue, have for years been lashed by fierce weather and plagued by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong terrorists. But they struggle to keep a grasp on the land and maintain their established independent way of life.

Following the 1968 Lunar New Year celebration in the lowlands, when allied forces including the 1st Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam and the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) were called upon to break the North Vietnamese Tet offensive, a three and one half year period of peacefulness has prevailed. NVA and VC units were exposed and driven into the mountains miles from the majority of the populace. Screaming Eagles and the 1st Inf. Div. then formed a shield around the lowlands, allowing unmolested economic and cultural change and stability to take root.

There is a sharp contrast between Thua Thien Province immediately following Tet 1968 and the same region today. With 150,000 refugees scattered to

resettlement camps and supported by the government, 16,000 family dwellings damaged or destroyed and more than \$3 million in property damages wrought during 26 days of pitched battle, the area was a shambles. Yet, three and one half years later, completely unhampered local and national elections have been held, progressive land reform measures and economic development programs have been enacted and the military security of northern Military Region 1 has become stronger than at any time in the past two decades.

The 101st and 1st Inf. Div. began combined military operations on a large scale immediately following Tet 1968, forging a powerful allied regular army force which tracked and defeated the enemy. In a series of aggressive operations both combat divisions proved far superior to Communist opposition and drove deep into enemy territory.

As the boundaries of liberated countryside expanded, security within the rear areas of lowland districts and villages was taken over by paramilitary and reserve military forces. Military planners began training and modernization which rapidly established Regional, Popular and Peoples Self Defense Forces units of MR1 as among the finest in the country.

Through an aggressive recruiting campaign and

The Lowlands

training cycle, home guard units rapidly began filling their ranks. Officers of the 101st led combined combat patrols with battalions, companies and platoons of Regional and Popular Forces. As their capabilities increased, they were woven into a security net which, during the summer of 1971, reduced enemy agitation and attack in the lowlands to the lowest level in many years. As training, equipment and morale improved, Popular Forces evolved as the greatest threat to Viet Cong agents operating in populated areas, surpassing ARVN and U.S. military units.

Currently in northern MR1 there are over 40 Regional Forces companies and over 200 Popular Forces platoons operating. This bastion of defense has caused much of the feeling of confidence among the people which has spurred economic progress in the region. Under the wrap of security people returned to villages, farmers to the field and fishermen to the sea. And, with stability, came the first results of a vigorous government effort to aid and develop the lowlands.

On March 26, 1970, the president of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), Nguyen Van Thieu, signed into existence the Land-to-the-Tiller law. This legislation was the culmination of seventeen years of attempts at land reform-- eliminating absentee ownership of South Vietnam's fertile ricelands and guaranteeing ownership of the land to families who farmed it. The law promised sweeping change for thousands of peasants who often paid up to 70 per cent of their rice crop each year to owners living hundreds of miles distant, keeping the tillers in constant poverty.

During the first year of enactment of the law, the Government of Vietnam (GVN) granted 210,000 hectares of land, free of charge, to more than 160,000 families throughout the Republic. Although the program faced many obstacles in Thua Thien Province the response was tremendous. The lowlands region is not rich in rice production and much of the tillable land was owned not by absentee owners but by villages--communal land given them by emperors a century ago. Nevertheless, more than 25,000 applications for land ownership were filed in little more than a year and one half, and, as legal complications of redistributing Village Communal Land were ironed out, progress began.

The key measure of the Land to the Tiller law is a printed title which is issued to farmers who can identify land holdings and show intent to continue farming the

land. The title establishes legal ownership of the land and represents justice for thousands of families who previously were mere serfs, chained to the land and bonded to a system of neverending poverty. Land redistribution in the coastal provinces shattered Viet Cong land reform propaganda which was a camouflaged attempt to control and glut major portions of the annual rice harvest for the enemy war effort.

Village land registrars, trained by the GVN government to enact the Land to the Tiller law, use aerial photographs to identify farm plots and assist farmers in filling out necessary application forms to obtain ownership. In the northern provinces, land is limited to one hectare (10,000 square meters) per family.

Once a claim has been certified and approved by a village or hamlet council, it is forwarded to the federal government ministry in Saigon, where the information is fed into a computer. A printed copy of the title is mailed to the farmer. Under the provisions of the 1970 law, no property taxes are paid by the farmer during his initial year of ownership.

Previous estate holders, including villages controlling Village Communal Land, are reimbursed at the rate of two and one half times the average annual rice yield. They are paid 20 per cent of the total value in cash and receive 80 per cent in the form of 10 per cent government bonds. Former landowners who farm their own land may, under the law retain up to 15 hectares.

An infusion of money earmarked for credit and economic development into the provinces by the GVN has also stimulated the rate of growth in the lowlands. The Agricultural Development Bank, ADB established in all 44 provinces of the Republic of Vietnam in 1967, has become a primary source of farm credit. Providing loans to individual farmers or groups of farmers the ADB has lowered the criterion of private banks--often accepting a man's good reputation as collateral for a loan--and established reasonable rates of interest, encouraging farm modernization and expansion.

Village credit committees control the ADB credit programs. Selected villagers compose the committees and screen applications for private loans of up to 50,000 piasters and are responsible for collecting them. The credit committees are organized and trained by the ADB.

In addition to supervising small agricultural loans, the committees also administer another GVN

program--Village Self Development (VSD). Begun in 1969, the VSD program reached fruition in northern MR1 during 1971, providing money to encourage the launching of income - producing projects within communities.

Villages in Thua Thien and Quang Tri provinces were initially granted a minimum of 400,000 piasters by the GVN, larger villages receiving proportionately more. Each village council administers the funds and is empowered to vote all of the funds to be used for public projects, such as school construction, or to put aside up to 50 per cent of the monies for income-producing projects, such as loans to groups of farmers to purchase machinery. VSD funds which are loaned to private interests by the village are administered by the Village Credit Committees, and, when used for agricultural development, may be matched by equivalent loans from the ADB.

VSD funds and money from the ADB provided a greater stimulus for economic development. The availability of money to villages for public works, and to the private sector for economic growth, has allowed government planners to begin to think in terms of long range planning for future development of the region.

Complementing the self determination of the citizens of Thua Thien Province during the past months were the efforts of soldiers in every battalion of the 101st Airborne Division (Ambl.) Coordinating with GVN officials at province, district and local levels, Screaming Eagle units provided materials and technical advice, as well as manpower, to accomplish the most urgently needed building projects and solve abnormally complex civic problems.

Working throughout all 11 districts, Screaming Eagle troopers accomplished more than 20 major projects, varying in scope from construction of the Bach Thach Pier in Phu Loc District by soldiers of the 326th Engineer Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry which required massive amounts of materials, supervisory time and labor; to the provision of wooden desks for schools. As 1971 closed, the list of community projects dwindled. Villagers turned to the 101st primarily for adequate building materials and technical advice to complete programs they had initiated. A sign of the close working relationship between hamlet and village officials, district and province advisors and the 101st more than 90 per cent of the assistance projects scheduled were completed on or ahead of schedule

during the past year.

In addition, Vietnamese-U.S. cooperation was strengthened through the unselfish acts of humanitarianism which have become characteristic of the American fighting man. Screaming Eagles supported more than ten orphanages throughout northern MR1 and medical personnel conducted dozens of MEDCAP (Medical Civic Action Program) missions, bringing a healing hand to remote hamlets. Commanders of the 101st produced what one senior U.S. military advisor in the region called "The closest and best rapport with Vietnamese officials and citizens of any military region in South Vietnam.

Clearly, all signs point to the vigorous renewal of life as usual in the coastal lowlands since peace has been restored.

Vietnamese public health officials recently waged a five-pronged attack against disease and illness in the countryside to; establish model Sanitary Hamlets, improve the water purification methods, control flies and mosquitoes and bring medical aid to the villages through the equivalent of the MEDCAP.

Since June, 1970, the movement of refugees through the region has remained static. Only about 30,000 of the initial 150,000 refugees generated by the Tet offensive of 1968 remain away from their original homelands, many staying in the new environments from personal preference.

Eighty eight per cent of school age children in Thua Thien Province attend school, 194,000 students crowding 415 elementary schools and more than 32,000 students attending high school.

More than 82 per cent of all eligible voters participated in the fall 1971 national and local elections. In Thua Thien Province 416 hamlets and 85 villages boast elected officials.

The city of Hue, once renowned as a tourist attraction, has begun to rebuild its famous monuments from the Imperial age of Vietnam with the aid of a 10-million piaster grant from the GVN.

The coastal lowlands region produced the first overage of rice in five years, despite three typhoons and unseasonal heavy rains.

As the impenetrable ring of security provided by the 101st Airborne Division (Ambl) and the 1st Infantry Division and RF/PF Forces expands, the coastal lowlands continued to regain their long deprived greatness.





MURPHY



MURPHY



MURPHY

The Lowlands



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ROCKOFF

Humping It!

by Spec. 4 James Christy

**A COMBAT ASSAULT, 15,000 METER TREK
THROUGH THE BUSH IN SEARCH OF THE ENEMY**

With a chatter chatter concussion of rotor blades twelve UH-1 Huey helicopters flew in line to a freshly cut landing zone where they deposited the perennial mainstay of combat operations--the infantryman--on a combat assault.

Spread below the helicopter-borne troops was the green carpet of Vietnam; emerald rice paddies of the

lowlands, shallow scrub of the piedmont and, where the earth rose and the soil grew rich, the shag of mountain rain forests.

Flanking the Hueys or diving close to the canopy were snout nosed AH-1 Cobra gunships moving through the air like small shiny fish ready to suppress the enemy with rockets and mini-guns.

Humping It

As the metal birds approached the insertion area and circled low over the tree tops the appearance of the jungle changed. Hills that from a thousand feet looked rolling and carpeted grew suddenly deep and tangled. Climbing the rugged hills were trees a hundred feet high—massive trunks topped by twisting limbs and close-growing leaves.

The first helicopter descended into a broad crevice between steep hills and touched down upon a grassy landing zone (LZ). In a storm of blowing dirt and leaves the first troops jumped to the ground and moved to the edges of the LZ to provide security. As one “slick” lifted, another approached and door gunners trained weapons on the jungle, gripping M-60 machineguns.

After the last bird deposited its team, the platoons

separated and moved into the forest, each following a different route in a southerly direction and the infantryman once again was alone in the bush.

The company commander and his command post (CP) squad worked with 2nd Platoon. By radio he kept contact with other platoons and monitored their actions.

With machetes the 2nd Platoon point element chopped a trail uphill. After advancing several hundred meters they rotated the job with the other squad.

“Take Five,” someone ahead whispered and five fingers were extended in a signal passed down the line. The men sat against their rucksacks. Some reached for canteens and others lit cigarettes. The CO and his radio telephone operator (RTO) passed instructions to 1st Platoon.

“I like to keep a good 1,000 meters between each of my platoons,” said the company commander. “When they patrol to their flanks I don’t want them bumping into each other.

“Each platoon searched a section three grid coordinates wide. The broad buffer zone is a safety precaution allowing for error in direction,” he explained.

As the men started climbing again dark clouds grew overhead. Soon a tropical shower penetrated the canopy, soaking the men’s clothing and equipment and turning the beaten trail into mud.

When they reached the hilltop the rain stopped but dusk had arrived and the men began clearing a perimeter and building overhead cover. Hammocks were hung between trees and ponchos were stretched above as protection from rain.

Small stoves were made by punching V-shaped holes with can openers into empty C-ration cans. A pale blue “heat tab” was dropped in, ignited, and a can of beans and franks or boned turkey balanced on top until the juices bubbled around the rim.

Each man carried a food supply for three days and no more than five quarts of water. Frequent resupply and jungle streams eliminated the need to pack in heavy amounts of food and water.

“Humping’ never becomes easier,” said a communications chief, “but you can learn to tolerate it. A lot of ‘grunts’ seem to fight exhaustion and still drive on—which baffles a lot of us who aren’t 11-Bravo.”

Two men not infantry trained but who followed the Company during the mission were the forward artillery



observer and his RTO. Several hours after most of the platoon had fallen asleep or taken guard watch, the two artillerymen prepared to call in defensive target artillery strikes on the surrounding hills.

"First we ask for WP (white phosphorous) air bursts to mark the general target area. Then we walk the 155mm rounds in, listening for blasts and adding or dropping 50 to 200 meters until they come close," said the FO.

"By bringing the rounds close we discourage any enemy in the area from approaching our position."

Rain fell again as the two men directed artillery into the jungle. The carefully plotted rounds cracked louder or fainter as the men adjusted their targets.

At midmorning the next day a reconnaissance patrol, nicknamed X-ray, began slicing a path down the hillside. The CO and his RTO stayed at the night defensive perimeter and followed the progress of the element by radio.

"After we've been inserted into an area it takes about 36 hours to get oriented before we usually find anything," he said.

"We searched this area several months ago," he said indicating a spot on a folded map in his lap. "We know the locations of several old enemy bunkers. Our mission is to determine if they have been used recently or if any new infiltration routes have been opened.

"We may find nothing new but that will still be an important discovery," he added.

The rest of the platoon heated coffee or cocoa and spread damp poncho liners and towels in the morning sun to dry.

When the X-ray reached the bottom of the hill the others rucked up to follow. One man would help another to his feet and they would stand slightly stooped under the weight of the rucks. Towels draped around the neck were pulled through the canvas shoulder straps to cushion the load and ease the strain on the shoulders. One man cradled an M-60 machinegun in his arms and others carried gun ammunition in metal boxes strapped to their rucks. The grenadier held an "over and under" M-202 a combination M-16 rifle and M-79 grenade launcher and wore a canvas vest filled with gold tipped high explosive grenade rounds. The rest grasped M-16s, the black stocks and handguards scratched and pitted with use. Across their chests were



ROCKOFF

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Humping cloth bandoleers of 20 round magazines. Each man had
It been issued one banana clip which he kept locked and loaded in his weapon.

After a night of rain the trail was slippery and as they descended the men grabbed vines and tree trunks to keep their footing.

The sky was clear and the sun bright but the leafy cover kept the forest floor cool and damp. Small brown leeches crawled like inch worms over dead leaves and up trooper's boots and trouser legs. Large animals were seldom seen but monkeys and birds chorused in the sunny upper branches.

On a recent mission a large gibbon came down from a tree to inspect a mechanical ambush set up near the perimeter. When he pulled the trip wire the claymore mine detonated, wounding him. When the men came to investigate, the enraged monkey leaped at them, was shot by one of the troops and fell into an enemy weapons cache concealed by bamboo branches. The cache contained mortar rounds and other munitions. "He was definitely an NVA monkey," quipped one of the men.

Continuing through the forest the Company maintained a steady but unhurried pace, stopping often to rest their legs and catch their breath. By dusk they had reached a new NDP.

They quickly built shelters and encircled the perimeter with claymore mines.

One month before, another ambush led to the detainment of an NVA soldier. First platoon had placed



ROCKOFF





ROCKOFF

a mine on a trail 75 meters from the NDP. As the men returned to the NDP the mine exploded. Artillery was fired into the area and 2nd squad searched. By the detonated mine they found a dead enemy soldier and a blood trail. After reconning for 200 meters the infantrymen found a pair of trousers laying on a large boulder. To discourage an ambush the men fired into the bush, but high enough that a single wounded man would not be harmed. After several bursts a Vietnamese voice cried, "Chieu Hoi" (open arms).

"When he saw us he threw back his arms and lay flat on the ground to show us he didn't have a weapon," said one trooper.

The prisoner's wounds were dressed and he was

flown by medical evacuation helicopter to 85th Evacuation Hospital for treatment and interrogation.

Having secured the NDP the men ate supper. A platoon sergeant and platoon leader mixed Vietnamese noodles with C-ration pork slices and beefsteak. Then nuoc mam, a fermented fish sauce, and other spices were added.

"I've been in Vietnam over five years," said the top, known as Sergeant V to his men, "and I've really come to appreciate Vietnamese food. One of our Vietnamese scouts keeps me supplied with all the ingredients."

"You can't help but like it," said the lieutenant, softening the noodles in boiling water. "He'll have us all eating Vietnamese food soon. It's a good way to modify the old C-'rats'."

One man whose supper was delayed was the medic, nicknamed "Doc" by the men. He straddled a log applying bandages to open sores on a soldier's foot. His aid bag beside him nearly overflowed with bandages, bottles, tubes of ointment and pill capsules.

"Infection is hard to prevent in the bush," the medic said, peeling off a strip of tape. "Even the smallest scratches must be kept clean or they fester and sometimes develop into cellulitis—an inflammation of the cells.

"Boils are another big problem," he added. "They'll pop up almost anywhere."



Humping It

Next morning the platoon started the difficult descent of a waterfall, the shortest route to the main "blue" in the valley. The men slipped often on wet, moss covered rocks or stepped in pools of water.

Near the bottom they found a large jungle pool under an overhang of rock. Banana trees with leaves the length of canoes towered above and shut out the light. Here they stopped for lunch.

As the men ate, the CO was alerted over the "horn" of a sudden change in mission. The present mission had

Most of the route to FB Bastogne, roughly 12,000 meters away, had to be hacked away by machete.

The CP coordinated with 1st and 3rd platoons, checking positions and routes so the entire company would arrive at the firebase at the same time.

Climbing uphill, the men came to a vertical cliff of soft clay. The lead element dug footholds in the earth and struggled to the top. One man remained at the edge to help the others, taking weapons handed up and directing the placement of feet.

CHRISTY



been canceled and the men were to return by foot to Firebase Bastogne within 36 hours. The CO and platoon leader studied the map to find the best route.

At the main stream the men filled empty canteens and then waded downstream in waist deep water for a hundred meters.

Emphatic, excited voices were heard over the radio. A reconnaissance team from Company E had engaged a platoon of enemy troops nearby and were calling for air support.

Within minutes two sections of Cobra gunships were on station. At the sound of rotor blades the men looked up to see a Cobra and a light observation helicopter pass overhead.

Soon the troops began a strenuous climb uphill. Once above the valley they planned to follow a ridgeline, avoiding hills or ravines that would slow their progress.



By the time the sun dropped behind the ragged hills the platoon had traveled several "klicks" (kilometers) and located a new NDP. Cicadas in the trees had started a loud chorus, halting for a brief interval and starting again as the sky grew darker.

A nightly ritual, the men rubbed "bug juice" on arms, necks, and ears to repel mosquitoes.

"This hump can't be rougher than Hill five-four-two," said one man tying the shoelace ends of his poncho around a tree. "That was straight up."

"Yeah, we marched 10,000 meters on that mission. This can't be much worse," said another troop.

"Just a little longer," added another.

Before sunrise the men rucked up for another day of humping. Their destination, visible through the trees, was a far ridgeline and Hill 542, the highest point above FB Bastogne.



ROCKOFF

ROCKOFF



ROCKOFF

Humping It

By noon the platoon had moved 2,000 meters and crested Hill 542. The CO called for a "kick-off" resupply. Each man would receive another C-ration meal and two quarts of water.

A man chopped away several bushes to further clear the LZ and when the resupply bird appeared, a speck in the distance, a cannister of smoke was popped to signal the pilots. Then the helicopter landed, dropped off the supplies and picked up two men for R and R.

Several thousand meters still separated them from the road leading to the firebase and to reach the valley they had to descend another waterfall.

Soon after leaving the LZ the troops came to a nearly vertical drop covered with deadfall, loose rocks and snaring vines. One at a time the men crept down the sheer slope, sliding on their buttocks or stomachs and clutching grass and vines to stop a fall. Some lodged their weapons in a crevice below and lowered themselves down to retrieve them. One man slipped on loose soil and slid with a log several feet.

This has got to be the shortest way to the bottom," said one man. His bedroll had slipped free from his

rucksack and he lay against the mud and leaves strapping it back to the frame.

"It would be the quickest way if you fell," said a troop inching down from above.

The slope joined a dry waterfall which dropped a thousand feet to the base of the mountain. The troops stepped carefully down the large boulders, gathering at a point halfway to rest their legs.

Few words were exchanged. Most men passed their rest breaks in silence, lying against their rucks, removing their steel pots or wiping their faces with towels. Grim determination marked some faces while others betrayed patient submission to fatigue and the hard miles ahead.

One man massaged his right thigh with both hands.

"I pulled a muscle climbing down those rocks," he said. "My legs are so tired I can't trust them."

"You'll walk the pain out," said the man next to him. "We don't have much farther to go."

There were five more miles but the men kept the distance whittled down and remote in their minds. Reaching the firebase became the clear and attainable goal.

At the bottom the waterfall became a shallow creek.



ROCKOFF

Montagnard woodcutters had worn a wide footpath that followed the creek into the valley. It was late afternoon and the platoon moved quickly down the path, planning to reach the main road by nightfall.

The path became a jeep trail and then joined Route 547, the road to FB Bastogne. On the road the troops walked several meters apart, two columns abreast.

They reached the road footsore and fatigued and formed an NDP on a grassy knoll above the road. In the dark they set out claymores and dug in their rucks for C-rations. Since they were in the open, strict noise and light discipline was kept.

The night sky was clear and a warm breeze blew over the valley. Fireflies blinked on and off. A series of parachute flares dropped slowly behind a distant ridgeline, illuminating the valley with a soft light.

The FO and his RTO directed artillery into the mountain they had left. Following a muffled report from FB Kim Quy a flash of white appeared on Hill 542, then a sharp concussion seconds later.

The last hump of the mission would be made the next morning. After several days of C-rations and warm water the troops looked forward to breakfast at the firebase.

"There is a limit on bacon," said one platoon leader, "but the mess sergeant has guaranteed all the eggs you can eat."

At five o'clock the next morning the men were wakened. Leg muscles ached but the men assembled their gear quickly.

Before sunrise the platoon had marched the first of three klicks to Bastogne.

In a bend in the road they came upon eight men and a young girl in a woodcutter's truck. The platoon sergeant, who spoke Vietnamese, questioned the people and asked for identification. They claimed to have run out of gasoline the night before. One squad stayed with the truck until a Vietnamese interpreter could come from the firebase and further investigate the story.

The others continued marching, not stopping to rest and reaching the firebase in time for breakfast. And there were eggs for everyone.

In four days the infantrymen had traveled by foot 15,000 meters, most of the way through heavy jungle. They had heavy beards, rips in their fatigues and their boots were still wet.

"Would you believe we just humped 15 klicks," said

one man in the breakfast line. He received an incredulous stare from one clean shaven troop and a chuckle of sympathy from another.

Before noon 1st and 3rd Platoons had arrived at the firebase, late for breakfast but in time for clean fatigues and cold beer and soda from the rear.

"The airmobile concept has modified the traditional role of the infantryman but often when the need arises the men are required to perform as true foot soldiers and hump long distances," said the company commander.

For the Screaming Eagle infantryman the combat role has lessened with Vietnamization of the war, but troopers are always ready to meet the soldiering challenge.

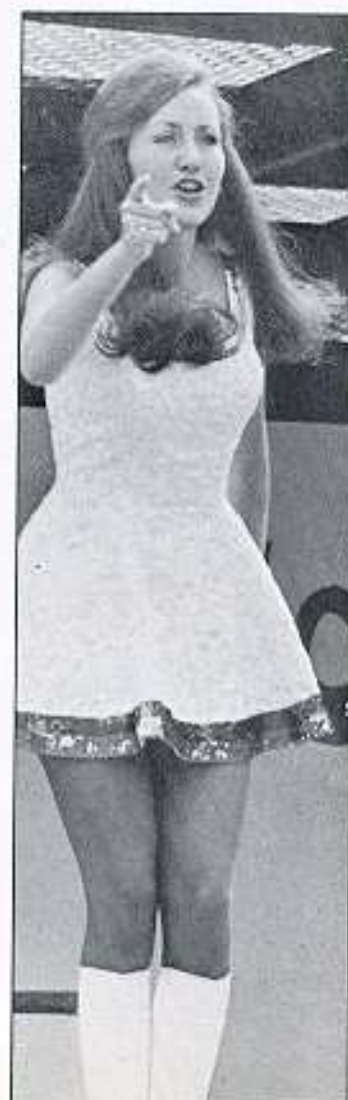




BURNS



BURNS





BURNS



MCCANNON

BURNS

Miss America

They came -- beautiful, smiling, seven.
 Sincere, sweet and "Taking Care of Business"...
 reaching out hands of a grateful nation and
 the wholesome beauty of America, they brought
 the "World" to Screaming Eagles for a few hours.
 Gone at sunset, the scent of perfume, the
 autographed photos and memories lingered.
 They came.

1971

MCCANNON



Airmobile — All the way!

By Spec. 5. Gregory Wright

THE 101st WROTE THE BOOK ON AIRMOBILE OPERATIONS DURING LAM SON 719 AND THIS YEAR TURNED THE PAGE, MAKING HELICOPTER WARFARE A STATE OF MIND

“During World War II we used to walk 20 miles to fight. We had to walk everywhere to meet the enemy,” said a tough looking sergeant at Firebase Bastogne. “We did that kind of thing every day. That’s just the way the infantry worked then.”

Although walking was the primary means of transportation in those days, things have changed quite a bit since. Nowadays Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) are combat assaulted into battle aboard helicopters. Just as the 101st was a pioneer of the airborne concept during the second world war it has proven a new concept on the battlefields of Vietnam....airmobility.

The first men of the 101st parachuted into combat. After the initial jump they marched to the enemy, a method which consumed precious time and often exposed them to hostile fire along the way. Use of helicopters for movement into battle now saves both time and lives. With speed unheard of in previous wars, battle-ready troops and supplies can be moved over miles of rough terrain, inserted in a given location, and, if necessary, extracted to fight in a new location within a matter of minutes. Speed, exact coordination, precise timing, and massive firepower are characteristic of the airmobile unit, and have enabled the 101st to meet and defeat the enemy in Military Region 1 time and again.

THE AIRMOBILE CONCEPT

Airmobility means more than just the movement of troops into combat, however. Aviation support to the 101st is a massive task consisting of the airlift of thousands of personnel, and hundreds of thousands of tons of vital supplies yearly. The 101st Aviation Group

(Airmobile) is responsible for this support, and must coordinate all the various types of missions. When missions are requested by the division operations center they must be carefully analyzed and all requirements considered. Once this careful planning is completed missions are assigned to subordinate units by an air movement coordination element.

INSTANT REACTION

Whether the mission is resupply, redeployment of artillery pieces, or transportation of general staff or dignitaries it receives the same painstaking attention.

Airmobility also means the ability to take the muscle of artillery aloft and deliver it with pinpoint accuracy on the enemy. Sleek AH-1G Cobras of the 4th Battalion (Airmobile), 77th Aerial Rocket Artillery (ARA) can be in the air within two minutes of receiving a call for artillery support. While speeding toward the target area pilots receive the exact location and details of the mission, and upon arrival are prepared to hurtle downward with blazing mini-guns and devastating rocket fire.

In the mountainous terrain of northern Military Region 1 these ships are able to provide close artillery support in situations conventional guns would be unable to reach. They have come up against everything from enemy bunkers and gun emplacements to NVA armor, proving the value of the fighting helicopter.

Obviously the helicopter makes the airmobility concept practical. It provides the speed, carries the firepower, and makes the timing and coordination possible. Without proper maintenance, though, these craft would soon be grounded. For a UH-1 Huey, the ship used primarily for troop transportation, about 14

hours of total maintenance time are required for every hour of flight. The larger, more complex Chinooks and Skycranes need even more attention to remain flight worthy.

The first line of maintenance on any aircraft is the responsibility of the ship's crew chief. It is not unusual for these men to put in a 20-hour work day caring for their birds. They must carefully examine their craft before and after each flight, making certain that the myriad of bolts and hydraulic hoses are unworn and tightened to exacting tolerances. They are responsible for promptly reporting any problems which are beyond their capabilities to repair.

When major repairs are needed the bird is turned over to full time maintenance personnel who are an integral part of the airmobile division. Working long, hard days these men keep the sophisticated aircraft flying. They are highly trained for their demanding jobs and are well aware of the fact that the lives of crewmen depend on their work. With expert maintenance the helicopters of the 101st are kept ready to fly against the enemy.

The advanced technology which produced and maintains the helicopters of today has made possible certain tactics which are typical of the airmobility concept. One example is the "pink team" which the 101st has used with great success against enemy forces in Vietnam. This is a combination of the OH-6 light observation helicopter and AH-1G Cobras.

When working with such a team the LOH goes "down on the deck", flying at treetop level or lower, searching for signs of the enemy. Fully exposed to enemy fire, these scouts can recon a larger area in one day than men on the ground could cover in an entire week. When the enemy is sighted the LOH moves out of the area and the Cobras streak down to blast the target with their rockets and mini-guns. This type of operation makes life a little easier for troops on the ground, especially when enemy ambushes are detected and destroyed from the air.

A STATE OF MIND

The concept of airmobility in this way transcends all levels of command in the 101st. Everyone from general to private is affected by it, for in reality airmobility is a state of mind as well as physical happening.

An observer for the Australian Army, Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Argent, recently visited the 101st and was greatly impressed by this high level of spirit and

proficiency within the division.

"My main objective has been to gain ideas and experience while studying the airmobile tactics employed by the 101st," he explained when his visit with the Screaming Eagles had ended. "Observing these aircraft and crewmen, I believe this division to be the best equipped and most highly trained fighting division in the world. The pilots and personnel I've seen are top-notch and would be outstanding in any army."

A TYPICAL OPERATION

A typical airmobile operation, such as the ones Lt. Col. Argent observed, might begin when LOH scouts discover the enemy. They flash a message to the operations center to start the crushing wheels rolling. An Air Force forward air controller is first called in to mark the target area. Immediately fighters roll in to pound the target with their deadly ordnance.

A scout helicopter reconns the area to assess damage done by the Air Force. The LOH withdraws and seconds later artillery begins to rain a deadly fire. When the barrage lifts the scout again reconns the area and moves out quickly to let the Cobras have their chance at the enemy.

While the enemy is taking this pounding a suitable landing zone (LZ) is being selected for the insertion of troops. When an LZ is found near the point of the initial sighting, pathfinder teams are dropped in to guide the troop ships.



Airmobile All The Way

Immediately upon landing and securing the area, the Screaming Eagles sweep through the area of sighting, searching for any enemy troops who may have survived. If the enemy has been lucky enough to escape it is likely that he will again be spotted by scout ships. In this case the entire process starts again, and the troops inserted initially can be extracted and re-inserted within a matter of minutes.

With the U.S. forces in Vietnam turning more and more to a supporting role, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) is taking over much of the ground action. This could be plainly seen during February and March of 1971 in operation Lam Son 719. During this period the 101st expanded its efforts to support the equivalent of two U.S. divisions and two and one half ARVN divisions. This operation clearly demonstrated the flexibility of the airmobile division and proved conclusively that the concept of airmobility is a sound one.

More than 1400 ARVN troops were lifted into Laos during the initial assault on the first day of the operation. Chinooks and Skycranes air transported ARVN artillery, vehicles, ammunition, and other supplies. Some 200 sorties were flown on this day by Screaming Eagle pilots, setting the pace for the following two months. In addition to providing a majority of the helicopters used during Lam Son 719 the 101st also provided indirect fire support and deployed ground troops in a supporting role.

THE AIR CAVALRY

Lieutenant Colonel Archie A. Rider, commanding officer of the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, had these comments on his unit's participation in this operation.

"During Lam Son 719 the Cav's job was primarily one of reconnaissance during the early phases of the operation, and later one of security. Put simply, we had to find and fight NVA forces which might have opposed



the ARVN during their offensive.

“At this time we were operating in a very sophisticated anti-aircraft environment, up against an enemy who, rather than running, was seeking to initiate contact just as we were. After some adjustments we were able to effectively carry out our missions in spite of the stiff resistance.

“This ability to quickly adjust to any situation is typical of the airmobility concept. Whatever the environment, the job of finding and fighting the enemy remains basically the same. To do this job, adaptability and the delivery of massive firepower in a short period of time are of vital importance.”

These same characteristics were seen again during the Lam Son 720 operation, and again airmobility paid off in full. The enemy was forced to push many of his men into the areas around Lao Bao and Khe Sanh, leaving his supply caches in the A Shau Valley virtually unguarded. Helicopters of the 101st immediately airlifted ARVN forces into the A Shau. There they swept through the valley capturing or destroying the supplies so laboriously transported and stockpiled by the enemy. Any of the former occupants of the A Shau Valley returned to find the ARVN gone and the former sanctuary barren.

On these and many other smaller operations, with either Vietnamese, U.S. troops or both taking part, the concept of airmobility has been proven again and again. The fine meshing of highly trained men and sophisticated machinery has produced a combat division unequalled by any in the world, flexible enough to support any number of troops to accomplish any given mission.



A Vietnam Legacy

by 1Lt. William Warner

A MEMORABLE HELICOPTER RIDE TRACES THE INDELIBLE PATH OF HISTORY CUT BY SCREAMING EAGLES IN NORTHERN MR1

“Clear?”

“Clear and untied, sir.”

A switch is flipped and a shrill whistle is heard. Rotor blades of the UH-1 helicopter begin to slap at the air. In a few minutes the “Huey” lifts off from Camp Eagle and heads southeast.

To the east is the South China Sea. To the north, south and west is the triple canopy jungle of northern Military Region 1--Screaming Eagle territory. From the demilitarized zone to the Hai Van Pass; from Vinh Loc Island to the Laotian border the 101st has fought with distinction since 1968.

The helicopter begins to gain altitude. Ahead lie some cloud covered mountains. As the pilot dodges clouds at 4,000 feet the first objective is visible.

BACH MA

High above the lush coastal lowlands of Phu Loc District, about 32 miles southeast of Hue, rises a 4,500 foot peak called Bach Ma, or “White Horse”, for the white clouds which constantly surround it.

Years ago it had been the site of palatial villas and French resorts. Until July 1969 its ruins had belonged to the Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces operating in Nam Hoa and Phu Loc, districts plentiful in the much sought after staple of Vietnam -- rice. In the Bach Ma area, where the mountains are close to the coastline, it was easy for the enemy to move stealthily into low-lying villages to confiscate rice and other foods, as long as he controlled the countryside below.

But in July, the 101st assaulted onto Bach Ma and established Firebase Sledge. It was a job specially tailored for airmobility. Old French roads were in a state

of ruin. Hueys brought the infantry. Chinooks and Skyranes brought the engineer equipment and Cobras and infantrymen combed the area for the enemy. Screaming Eagles didn't stay long, but their mission had been accomplished. The savage beauty of Bach Ma no longer belonged to the enemy.

The last time the 101st returned to FB Sledge was in early July 1971. No one is there now. The enemy dares not use it, but it is open to Screaming Eagles whenever they choose.

The pitch of the rotor blade changes as the helicopter peels off and heads towards the South China Sea. In the distance, northeast of Bach Ma is objective two.



VINH LOC

Fifteen miles east of Hue, Vinh Loc Island stands lazily along the southern coast of Thua Thien Province on the South China Sea. Before the enemy Tet offensive of 1968 more than 50,000 predominately Roman Catholic Vietnamese lived on this relatively rich district fishing and farming. They were happy, contented people who supported their government and felt secure under the protection of local regional and popular forces units.

But the Tet offensive resulted in the use of all available friendly forces, including those of Vinh Loc, to drive the enemy from Hue. This quick, massive redeployment left a power vacuum on the island.

Local Viet Cong forces acted quickly to fill the vacuum. Determined to dominate the island and use it as an R&R site and resupply point, they prepared defensive positions and established caches and safe areas.

The VC were brutal and aggressive in fulfilling their mission. They terrorized villagers to farm for them, feed them and perform other servile duties.

The influx of enemy forces from around Hue greatly increased VC strength on the island, but the South Vietnamese government managed to retain control of the eastern tip of the island. As the VC began to apply more pressure villagers began to flee to the government

sector of the island. Twenty nine thousand natives were eventually joined by 12,500 refugees, leaving approximately 8,500 unaccounted for or under VC control.

This set the scene for one of the most successful cordon operations in Vietnam military history. It was a surprise cordon of the district, to catch the enemy off guard. The 1st Battalion (Airmobile), 501st Infantry, teamed up with the U.S. Navy Hue River Security Force; the 12th and 13th RVN Navy Coastal Groups; 1st Battalion, 54th Regiment, Army of the Republic of Vietnam and members of the National Police Field Forces to make the move on the unsuspecting Viet Cong September 11, 1968.

At the end of the 10 day operation, 154 enemy had been killed, 370 had been captured, 56 had rallied to the South Vietnamese government and 176 individual and three crew-served weapons had been captured.

However, the citizens paid a high price for the battle victory and the right to return to their land. Most of the villages on the island were completely destroyed during fighting. The 101st's civil affairs section, G-5, was given the awesome responsibility of making Vinh Loc Island capable of sustaining the 40,000 refugees who returned to the island.

In the months that followed the 101st units supplied materials and manpower to help reconstruction; civil affairs teams helped the local government reestablish a police force, postal system and information service; MEDCAP (Medical Civil Assistance Program) teams trained Regional Forces, Popular Forces and local dispensary personnel in first aid and sanitation procedures.

By fall, 1969, one year after the battle, Vinh Loc was considered one of the most pacified areas in Vietnam. After two years the progress has not stopped. Vinh Loc continues to grow and prosper.

On Vinh Loc Island the war has been won.

At the northern tip of Vinh Loc Island the Huey turns to the southwest and objective three is already in view.

HUE CITY

Hue City, the ancient Imperial Capital of Vietnam, lies about 50 miles south of the DMZ. With a population of nearly 200,000 it is the third largest city in the Republic of Vietnam, behind Saigon and DaNang.

The Citadel of Imperial City, on the north bank of the Perfume River, is blocked off from the outside by two



VAN TILBORG

Vietnam Legacy

A walls 75 yards apart and averaging one foot thick and 15 feet high. Within the Citadel is the palace area where the ancient emperors of Vietnam lived, ruled, and in which some are buried.

Hue was generally regarded as the most beautiful city in South Vietnam and as such was one of the more popular tourist sites. During the last week of January 1968 thousands of visitors began arriving in Hue to celebrate Vietnamese Lunar New Year.

A ceasefire truce between North and South Vietnamese forces went into effect 6 p.m. January 29. That very night the enemy struck many areas of South Vietnam with their largest offensive of the war, but not Hue. The next morning the Tet truce in South Vietnam was officially terminated because of the numerous NVA and VC violations. Hue and the surrounding districts sounded full alert.

Allied military forces in the area were at full alert also. The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), 3rd Marine Division and 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division with the 1st Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam were operating in northern Military Region I at the time. The only Screaming Eagles were those of the 2nd Brigade at LZ Sally, north of Hue.

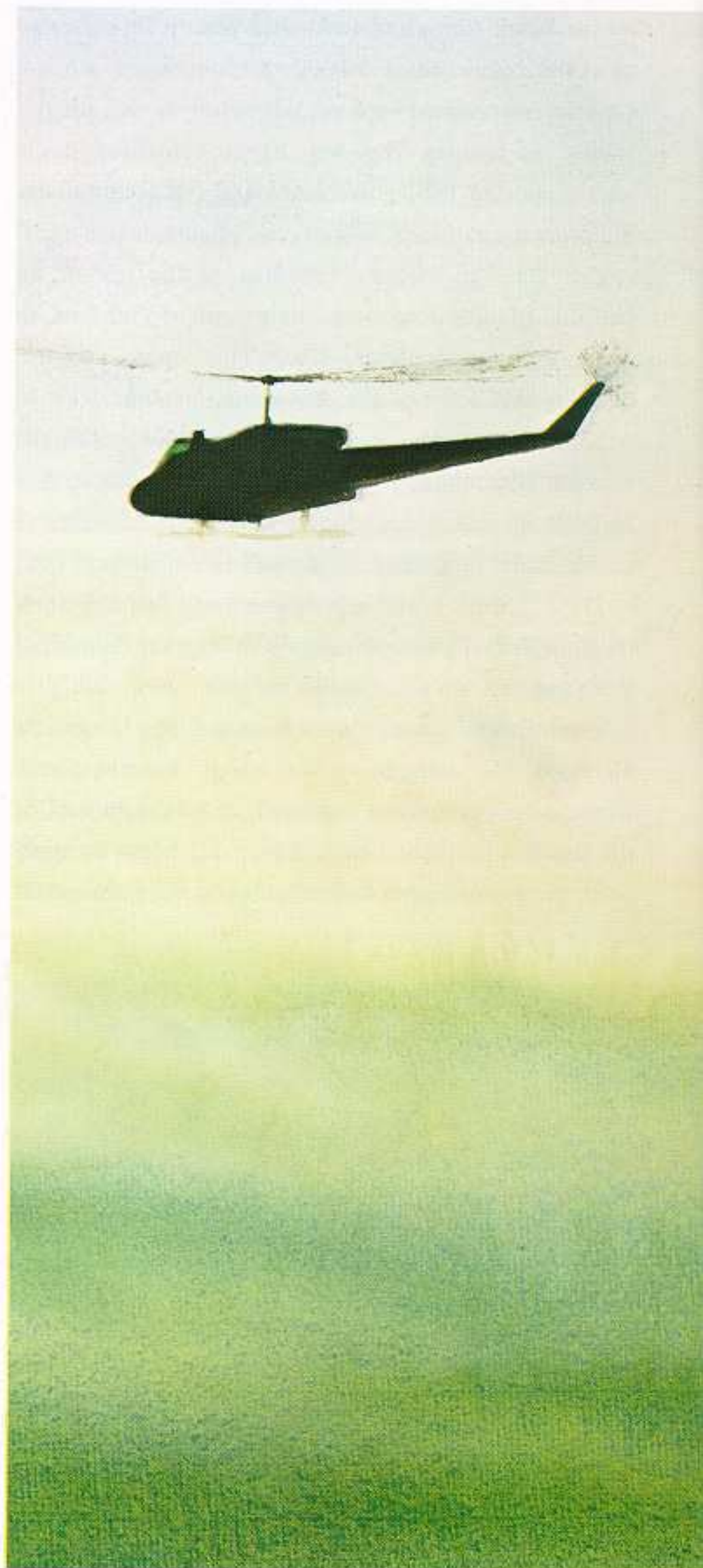
The enemy attacked Hue during the night of January 30 and by morning the red and blue communist flag was flying from the Citadel. The only area of the Citadel not under enemy control was 1st Inf. Div. headquarters. During Operation Jeb Stuart the Screaming Eagles of the 2nd Bde. fought with the 1st Cav and ARVN in the quest to recapture Hue and force the enemy to relinquish control of Quang Tri Province.

The relentless shelling of Hue coupled with the stiff thrusts of the 1st Inf. Div. (ARVN) forced the enemy to flee. The "Ready To Go" troopers were poised in the path of retreat and killed 830 during the first 15 days of operations.

The remainder of the 101st soon joined the 2nd Bde. to establish a basecamp near Hue. They teamed up with 3rd Bde, 82nd Abn. for Operation Carentan I to clear the area near Camp Eagle, 6 miles southeast of Hue. When the operation ended at the end of March, the enemy had lost 861 additional soldiers and 186 weapons.

Now, three and one half years later, the enemy has dared not to attack Hue. It once again prospers as the population center and seat of government.

A pull on the cyclic stick and the "slick" lifts up again



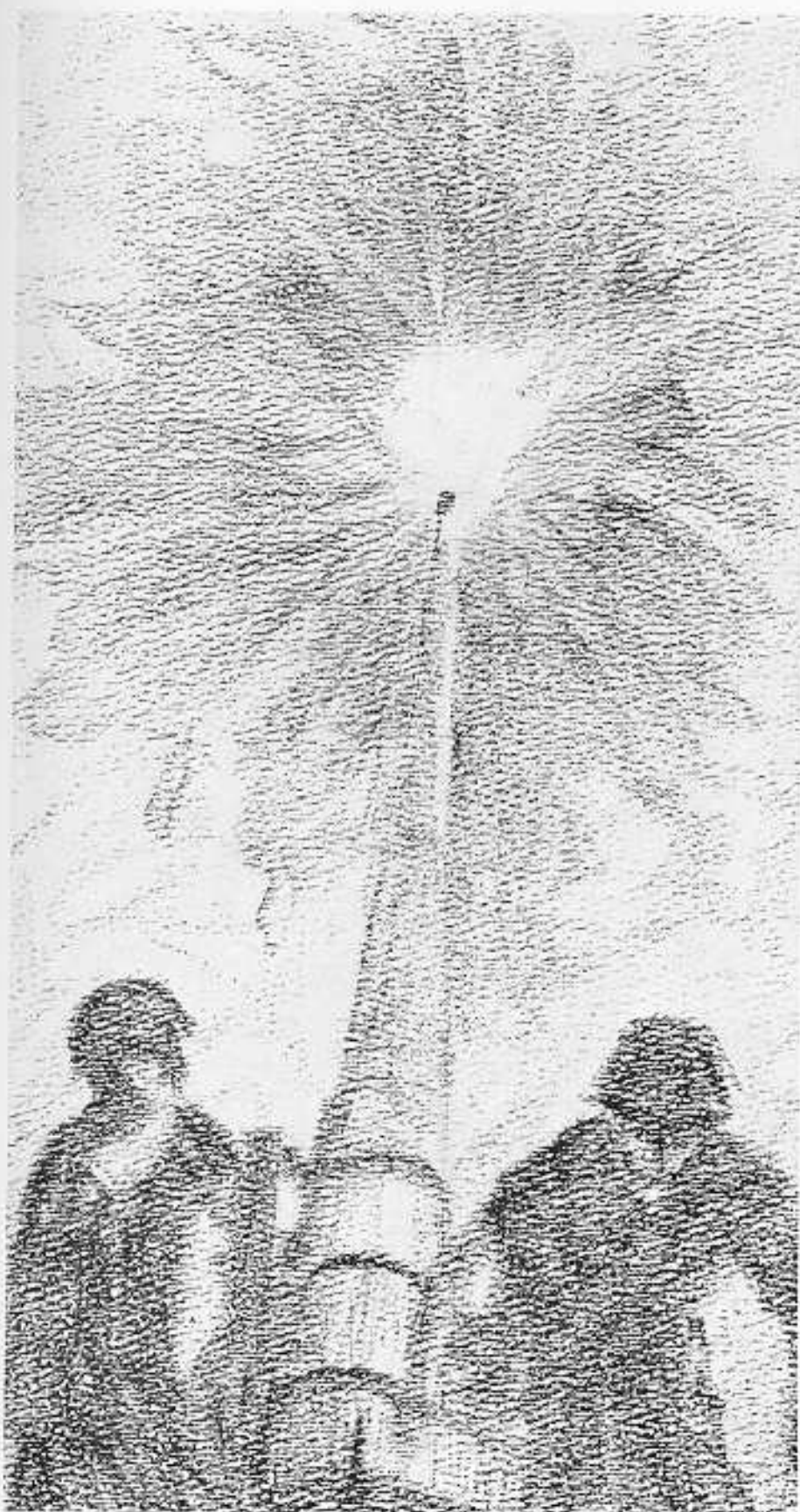
VAN TILBORG

and heads to the north along Highway One and the fourth objective.

STREET WITHOUT JOY

Bernard Fall brought the area to the attention of the world. The French had occupied the area. So had the Viet Minh, the Viet Cong, the NVA, U.S. forces and, occasionally the rightful owners of the land. For almost 20 years a 20-mile stretch of land along Highway One between Hue and Quang Tri had felt the ravages of war.

The old people of the area remember how they were forced to give food and money to the Viet Minh during the French Indo-Chinese War. They also remember the failure of massive French operations which led to a speedup in the withdrawal of French troops. The French first called it "Street Without Joy."



VAN TILBORG

For the people of the area there was no reason for joy or laughter. Their homes and crops had been destroyed as the French and Viet Minh struggled for dominance in the area.

The region prospered briefly until the mid-1960s when the Viet Cong made their presence felt. During Tet 1968 the area again became a scene of devastation and hardship at the hands of the VC and NVA. The people once again were forced to flee their homes and leave possessions behind to be destroyed by the Communists.

Now, nearly four years later, combined U.S. and South Vietnamese operations have pacified the area. They drove the enemy from the area following Tet. They brought security to the area and, with security, came resettlement. Civil affairs projects of the 101st aided displaced residents in rebuilding homes and getting crops started again. "Street Without Joy" is again echoing with the sounds of children's laughter. A look down from the helicopter indicates the "Street" has come to an end. Ahead lies Quang Tri City and further north, the DMZ. But a turn west at Quang Tri and it is on to objective five.

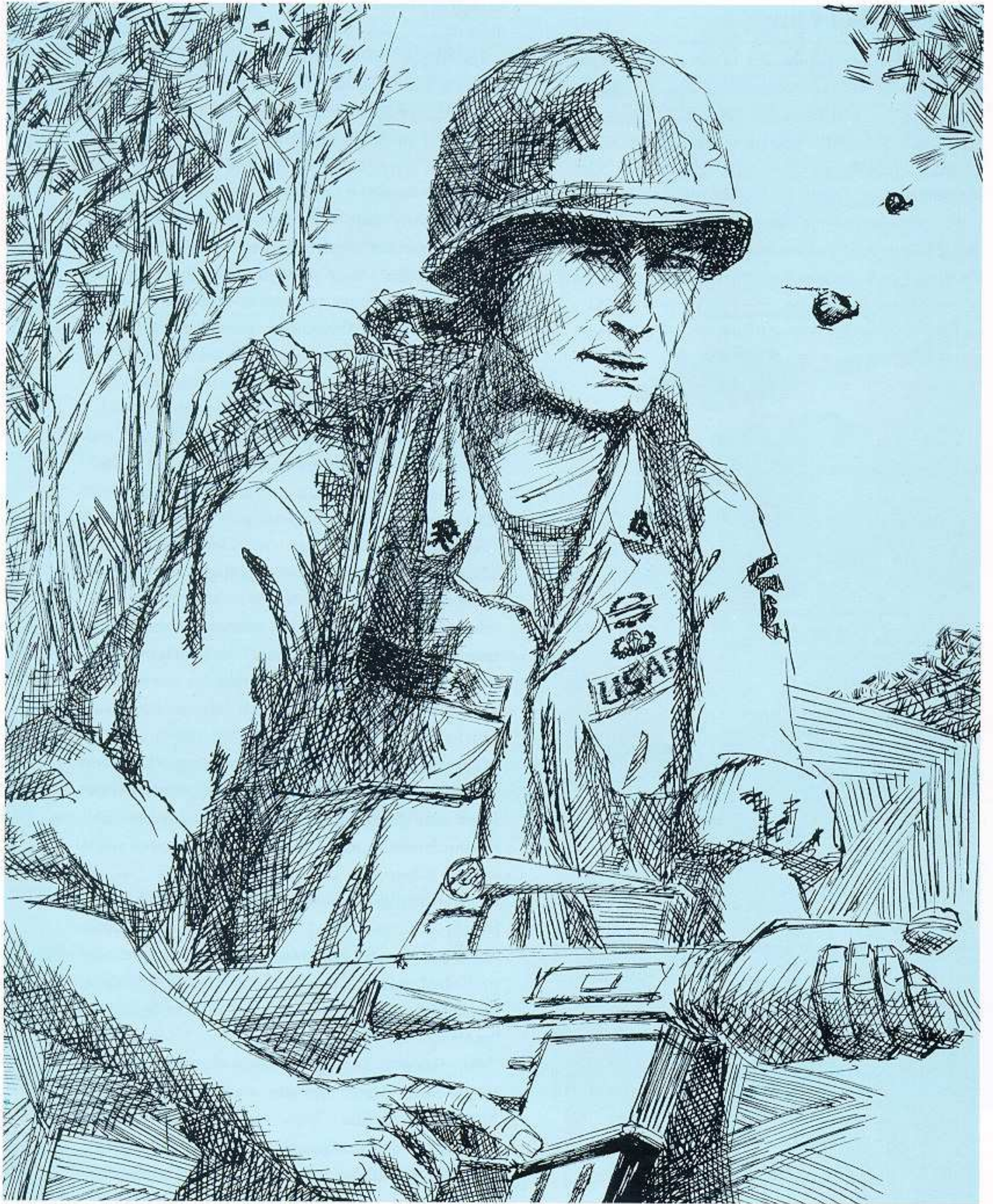
Ten miles west of Quang Tri is the lonely Montagnard village of Mai Loc. Few Screaming Eagles had heard of Mai Loc in 1969. Yet when U.S. Marines began to redeploy during fall, 1969, "Currahees" from the 1st and 2nd Battalions (Airmobile), 506th Infantry, were called upon to provide screening missions and Mai Loc became a base of operations 101st troopers would not soon forget.

The plan was to insert "Currahees" along a line from the DMZ to Khe Sanh in the southern portion of the province to thwart enemy movements from Laos and North Vietnam that would interfere with the redeployment.

Screaming Eagles established two forward firebases to provide artillery support to the infantry's screening operations. The 3rd Brigade forward command post was established at Mai Loc. Alpha Troop, 2nd Squadron (Airmobile), 17th Cavalry then moved in to support as the Marines moved out.

By October 31, the "Currahees", their mission accomplished, turned the area over the 1st Inf. Div., ARVN. But for the "Triple Threat" troopers of the "O-Sixth" it had been a highly successful 38-day operation. The Marine units had redeployed safely while the enemy once again felt the power of airmobility, suffering 59 killed and numerous caches destroyed.

A
Vietnam
Legacy



VAN TILBORG



ROCKOFF

This was not to be the last time 101st troopers would see Mai Loc. In the early months of 1971 Operations Dewey Canyon II/Lam Son 719 were launched. As the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) thrust in Laos, Screaming Eagles along with elements of the Americal Division and 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), moved north to support the operation. The Montagnard villagers once again had visitors. Although Khe Sanh was the main base of operations, Mai Loc served as a principle refueling and rearming point and furnished artillery support as well. A neverending stream of trucks, helicopters and people flowed in and out of Mai Loc for two months.

The RVNAF operation ended in early April and Screaming Eagles again departed--mission accomplished.

A turn to the south and a pair of Cobra gunships join the Huey. Objective six is not yet totally pacified.

A SHAU

There is little recorded history of the A Shau Valley--35 miles of rich, tropical frontier along the extreme western portion of Thua Thien Province. As early as 1962 the Vietnamese and Americans had begun to establish bases and small airfields in the valley. The only other people who dared to enter the area were some 30,000 Montagnard tribesmen.

But by March, 1966, the bases had been abandoned. Pressure from the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, coupled with the problems of resupply and weather had discontinued operations.

The valley belonged to the enemy-- for a time at least.

It was not until 1968 that American and allied forces reentered the A Shau, by then an enemy haven. Running the length of the valley was the enemy-built Route 548, which carried tons of enemy supplies to staging areas supporting operations against DaNang and Hue.

In May, 1968, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), with support from the 101st's 1st Brigade became the first to risk entering the valley again. But the 1st Cav.

Div. was ordered to another area of operations further south. Screaming Eagles returned to the A Shau.

By August 1968 the 101st Airborne had a new name and a new concept of operation which they were quite willing to demonstrate to the enemy: airmobility.

During Operation Somerset Plain, Screaming Eagles raided deep into the valley for 17 days, in an effort to cut enemy supply routes from the west. Destroyed base camps and captured caches only served notice to the North Vietnamese Army as to what to expect after the approaching monsoon season.

During the rainy season the Eagles prepared for Operation Kentucky Jumper and its three sub-operations into the A Shau during spring, 1969.

For two months of Operation Massachusetts Striker, Screaming Eagles clawed at the southern portion of the valley, putting a large dent in the enemy's resources. Inclement weather forced 101st commanders to return from Firebase Whip as their forward base of operations. When the 1st Battalion (Airmobile) 502nd Infantry, was inserted onto the newly selected base of FB Veghel, "First Strike" troopers found themselves in the middle of a company of the 9th North Vietnamese Army Regiment. The enemy, hopelessly outnumbered, began to flee to the west. For 33 days the "O'Deuce" pursued until the enemy made its stand at Dong A Tay, the battle of "Bloody Ridge." Ninety NVA soldiers lost their lives at the hands of the 101st. When the "First Strikers" were later inserted on Firebase Lash, near the "Yellow Brick Road" south of the valley, they uncovered one of the largest caches ever found in Military Region I, capturing over 100 tons of equipment including 14 trucks and over 600 new SKS rifles.

The 30 day XXIV Corps operation Apache Snow was planned to catch the enemy deep in his own territory. Led by 3rd Brigade infantry battalions the enemy was found, pursued and defeated. The highlight battle of the operation started two days after Apache Snow began and raged for 10 days. The Battle for Dong Ap Bia -

another story in itself.

The final thrust into the A Shau was on June 8 and launched Operation Montgomery Rendezvous. Screaming Eagles began by striking out at the central portion of the valley, with the 326th Engineer Battalion (Airmobile) accomplishing the awesome task of building an airstrip at Ta Bat in just 54 hours. Later, the operation marked the first time that armor had ever been in the valley. By the time Montgomery Rendezvous ended on August 14 over 320 Communists had met death and nearly 200 weapons had been captured.

Although this was the last official operation devoted to routing the enemy from the valley, Screaming Eagles continued to roam the A Shau until October 1. In their wake troopers of the 101st left a decimated enemy, with severed supply lines and shattered communications. Enemy attempts to disrupt the life of South Vietnamese in the lowlands were thwarted permanently in the A Shau.

Almost at journey's end the "slick" turns back to take a closer look at the "other story".

DONG AP BIA

Hill 937 is now probably one of the most well known hills in Vietnam. To be sure, it is certainly not the highest, and its location west of the A Shau Valley offers no particular military advantage to armies which hold it. To the men of the 3rd Battalion (Airmobile), 187th Infantry who swept toward Dong Ap Bia (Hill 937) from the west, it was just another hill. To the North Vietnamese Army it was the base camp for the 29th Regiment.

The "Rakkasans" combat assaulted to an area west of the valley along the Laotian border and swept east in search of the enemy. Nothing was known of the enemy on the hill; the enemy knew little of the approaching Screaming Eagles -- an attack from the west was the last thing the NVA planners expected. But on May 10, two days, after the beginning of Operation Apache Snow,

there was an encounter and for 10 days Dong Ap Bia was the scene of one of the most bitterly contested battles of the war.

For eight days "Rakkasans" assaulted, then withdrew from the hill under heavy enemy fire. For eight days air strikes and artillery continually pounded the enemy on the hill. For eight days the 1st Battalion (Airmobile), 506th Infantry tried to fight its way to Dong Ap Bia to support the 3/187th.

On May 20 a total of four allied battalions were in the area and a coordinated assault on Hill 937 was planned. Amid the thunder of supporting fire the "Rakkasans" and Company A, 2/506th assaulted from the north and west; 1/506th attacked from the south and southwest; 2nd Bn, 3rd Regt., ARVN came from the southeast and "Drive On" troopers from 2nd Battalion (Airmobile), 501st Infantry applied pressure from the northeast.

Under the pressure of five infantry battalions and the 1,000 tons of bombs and 16,000 rounds of artillery that had been dropped on them, the enemy wilted.

Americans had paid a steep price for victory -- 62 dead, 420 wounded. But if victory's price was steep the enemy's price of defeat was devastating. The majority of 675 NVA dead during Operation Apache Snow were suffered at Dong Ap Bia. Hundreds of bunkers and caches were destroyed and huge caches of ammunition and weapons captured. The 29th Regiment was decimated.

It has been nearly four years since the 101st first began operations in northern Military Region 1. They have fought from the DMZ to the Ruong Ruong Valley; from the South China Sea to the Laotian border. They have met the enemy and defeated him. Now with the offensive fighting being accomplished by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, American soldiers seldom return to the scenes of previous conquests. But the enemy rarely returns. Northern Military Region 1 will go down in history as another Screaming Eagle "rendezvous with destiny."



Eagle Eyes



MURPHY

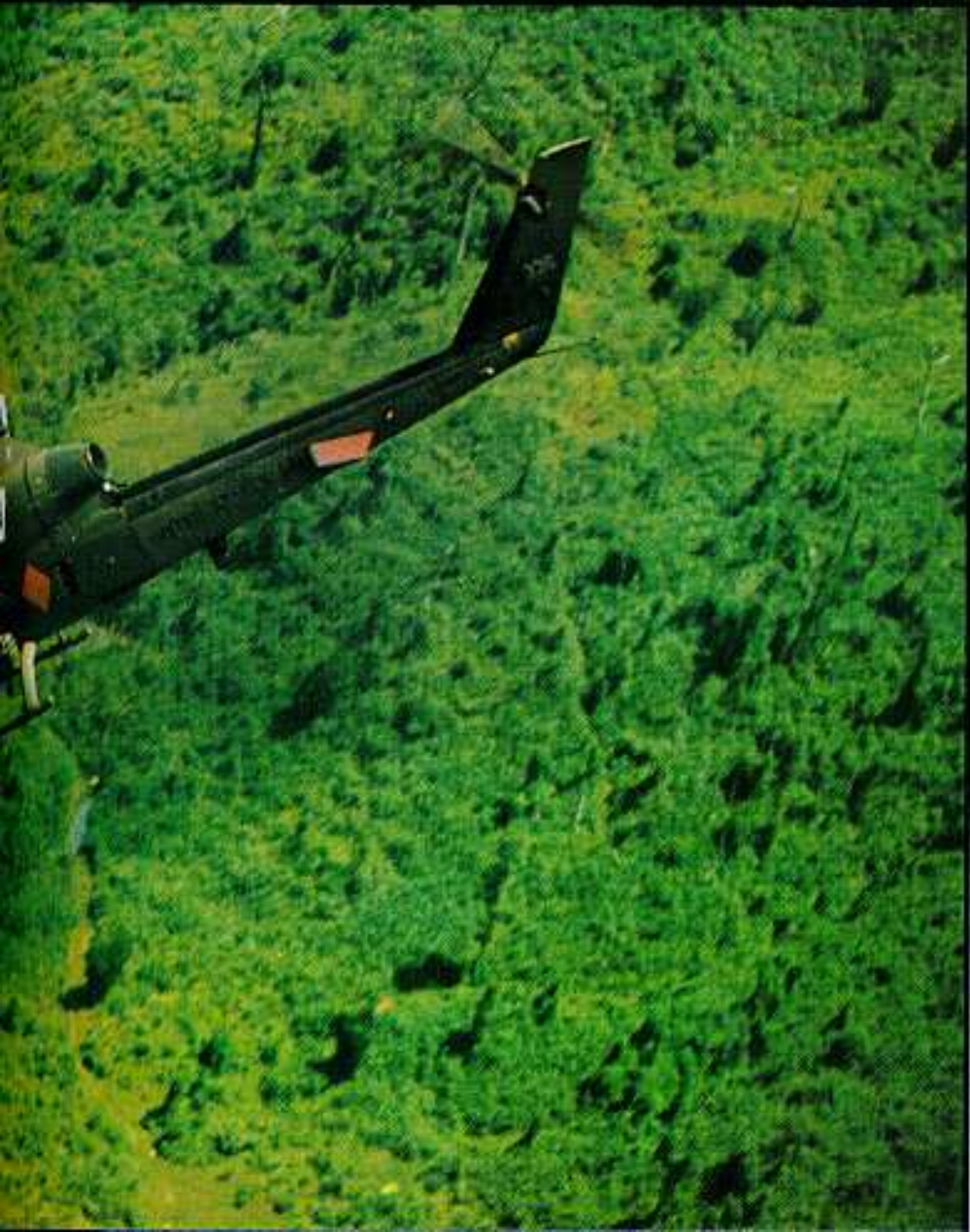




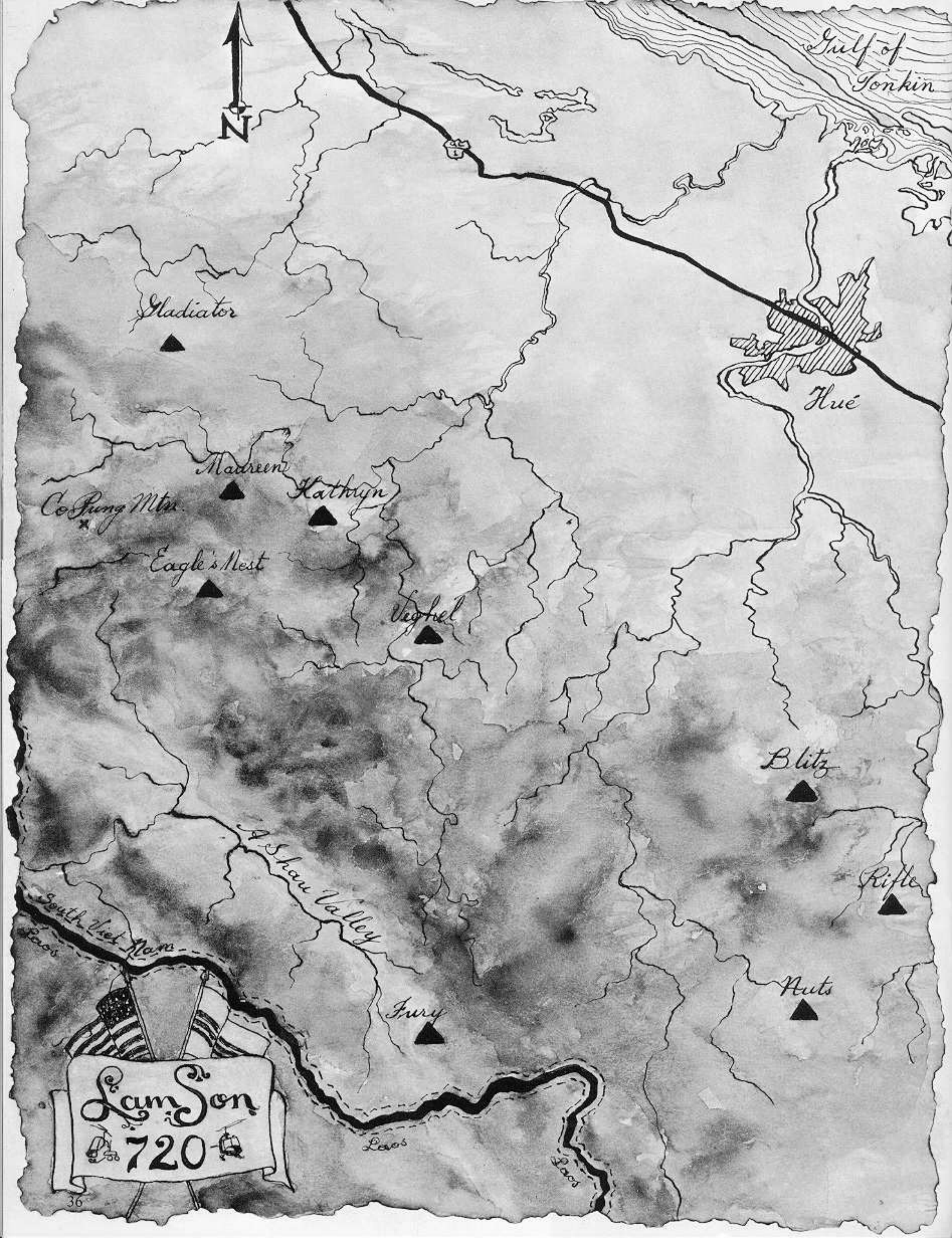
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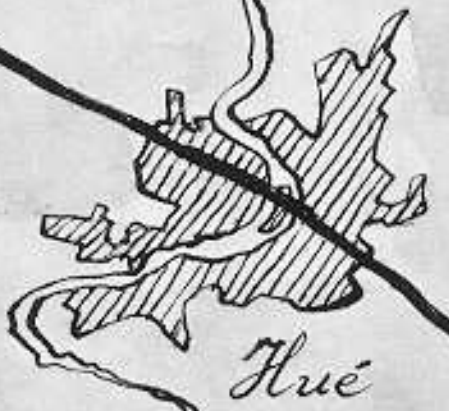
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Gulf of Tonkin



Gladiator



Hue

Madreen

Kathryn

Co Pung Mtn.

Eagle's Nest

Veghel

Blitz

Rifle

A Shau Valley

South Viet Nam

Fury

Huts

Laos

Laos



Lam Son 720/810

by Spec. 4 Stan Cisowski

BEATING THE NVA BACK TO THE A SHAU VALLEY ESCARPMENT FOLLOWING LAM SON 719, THE 101ST AND 1ST INFANTRY DIV. (ARVN) PLUGGED ROUTES OF INFILTRATION AND FOUND RICH ENEMY SUPPLY AND WEAPONS CACHES

BEGINNINGS:

At dawn of April 14, 1971, an armada of 33 Huey troop transport helicopters and Cobra gunships from the 101st and 158th Assault Helicopter battalions, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), assembled within the stolid walls of the Citadel in Hue. On command, several hundred Hac Bao "Black Panther" Rangers, South Vietnam's most elite fighting force, hurriedly scrambled toward the waiting aircraft. Long shadows of early morning still stretched across the ancient courtyard as the first helicopter lifted off and headed west. Their destination was a suspected enemy logistics concentration in the A Shau Valley, a fabled enemy stronghold only 25 miles from South Vietnam's third largest city.

At the same time, 35 miles southwest of Hue, seven UH-1 Hueys and two Cobras, carrying an advance element of the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, raced toward abandoned Firebase Fury on the southern end of the notorious valley. The infantrymen's mission was to clear the hilltop of boobytraps and secure the firebase as quickly as possible.

Following the combat assault of the Hac Bao into the A Shau, the helicopter fleet headed south to airlift the remainder of the 1/327th to FB Fury. Simultaneously, eight CH-47 Chinooks from the 159th Aviation Battalion lifted three 105mm Howitzers with ammunition to the mountaintop base. Less than one

hour after it had begun, the massive airmobile deployment was complete. Operation Lam Son 720, a combined U.S. and Republic of Vietnam (RVN) endeavor to continue the momentum and cooperative spirit of Lam Son 719, was underway.

STRATEGIES :

With their vital supply lines through southern Laos threatened by the South Vietnamese drive toward Tchepone, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had, in the first few months of 1971, moved the bulk of their forces northward from the A Shau to defend the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex. After the conclusion of Lam Son 719, the pedestrian NVA troops again began filtering south. South Vietnamese and American commanders realized that with the Allies' superior mobility, they could easily beat their enemy back to his normal operating area near the A Shau and seize the high ground to control his major infiltration routes.

To strengthen Vietnamization, the 1st Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), elected to operate within the A Shau and Da Krong Valleys, while American forces, consisting primarily of troops from the 101st Abn. Div. (Ambl), would secure the eastern flank, providing a protective shield against enemy infiltration into the populated lowlands. In addition the 101st would help supply air support to the South Vietnamese operations throughout northern

THE OPERATION:

On April 14, Phase 1 of Lam Son 720 began with the insertion of the Hac Bao company into the A Shau and a one day artillery raid from Firebase Fury. The Screaming Eagle 1st Brigade started in the early part of the campaign, as the 1/327th secured the FB Fury area in the southern A Shau while the 2/502nd combat assaulted onto Co Pung mountain to the north, allowing Company A, 326th Engineers, to reconstruct the abandoned firebase at the summit. Co Pung would remain a key position through the summer months because, as the highest peak in the area, it served as an important ARVN artillery and forward command post.

Meanwhile the 101st's 3rd Brigade went into action by occupying the ridge lines directly to the east of the A Shau and, with the equipment and knowhow of Company B, 326th Engineers, reopened Firebases Kathryn, Maureen, Gladiator and later, Eagle's Nest. FBs Kathryn and Maureen, located only a few miles from the A Shau, served as excellent artillery platforms as the big 155mm Howitzers from the 2nd Battalion, 11th Artillery, provided fire support for ARVN forces operating on the floor of the A Shau. FB Eagle's Nest, located on the very edge of the A Shau, served as an important observation post, allowing forward observers to monitor enemy activity on the valley floor below.

During this and the succeeding phases of Lam Son 720, the Screaming Eagle 2nd Brigade had the important mission of patrolling the ridge lines and manning firebases that lay just to the west of Camp Eagle and Phu Bai Combat Base. Known as the "Rocket Belt", this area had often been used as a launching pad for enemy rocket and mortar attacks on the 101st's rear areas. But during the next few months, Camp Eagle and Phu Bai would remain virtually immune from enemy harassment.

On May 1st, Phase 2 of Lam Son 720 began when increased enemy activity in the FB Veghel area, 16 miles southwest of Hue, forced the RVN Marines to pull out

of the Da Krong Valley in order to counter the enemy threat to the south. The 1st Brigade of the 101st was replaced by the 54th ARVN Regiment and redeployed to its normal area of operations to counter an enemy buildup there. The 3rd Brigade continued to conduct search and clear operations in the mountainous jungles east of the valley, blocking enemy infiltration into the lowlands and discovering a number of cache sites including an abandoned regimental sized NVA basecamp that had been built in 1970.

The enemy buildup in the south culminated on the night of May 21st when an NVA mortar and sapper attack was launched on newly reopened FB Rifle, 18 miles southeast of Hue. Troops from the 2nd Brigade's Company C, 1st Bn., 501st Inf., and an element from the 326th Engineer Battalion manned the firebase's bunkers and repulsed the surprise attack after a two hour battle.

By the end of May, enemy pressure had shifted from western Thua Thien Province to northern Quang Tri Province as NVA gunners began shelling the line of firebases that guard the DMZ. In response to these attacks, ARVN commanders decided to move the bulk of their forces away from the A Shau to South Vietnam's northern border. While the 101st infantry battalions held their positions to maintain the protective shield guarding the lowlands, Screaming Eagle aviation units followed the ARVN forces north to provide aerial transport and logistical gunship support.

In mid-July, the 3rd Regiment (ARVN) began an intensive search and clear operation near FB Nuts, 20 miles south of Hue, in an effort to engage the 5th NVA Regiment thought to be operating in the area. Screaming Eagle Howitzers from the 2nd Battalion, 11th Artillery, and 2nd Battalion, 320th Artillery, operating from FBs Blitz and Normandy, provided extensive support of the ARVN sally, while the 101st Aviation Group and Cobra gunships from the 4th Battalion, 77th Artillery (ARA), and the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, continued providing air support. By August, the 5th NVA

Regiment had withdrawn south into Quang Nam Province from the FB Nuts area rather than face the combined Allied firepower deployed against them.

In late August, Lam Son 720 came to an end with ARVN forces returning to northern Quang Tri Province to reinforce the embattled firebases along the eastern half of the DMZ. Despite heavy enemy rocket and ground attacks centered around FB Fuller, South Vietnam's northern front held fast.

CONCURRENT OPERATIONS:

While ARVN infantrymen took over the initiative of ground combat in the mountainous triple canopy jungles of northern Military Region 1 during Lam Son 720, their fellow countrymen serving in the South Vietnamese Regional and Popular Forces began to assume a greater responsibility for the defense of the populated lowlands. To facilitate this transition, several infantry battalions from the 101st joined with RF and PF companies to patrol the piedmont area that borders the lowlands.

In one such instance, the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry, conducted combined operations for more than three months in the rolling hills surrounding Camp Evans with the Regional Forces from the Phong Dien District. One of their combined missions was to provide security for a road building team from Company B, 326th Engineers, whose efforts would allow South Vietnamese farmers to resettle on fertile farmland near the 3rd Brigade basecamp.

The 326th Engineer Battalion remained one of the 101st's most active units throughout the length of the Lam Son 720 campaign. The engineer battalion constructed several new firebases, including FB Binh Dinh, FB Kim Quy, and rebuilt and enlarged a score of firebases including FB Brick, FB Tennessee, FB Rendezvous and FB Rifle. "326th" road crews constructed or upgraded several all-weather routes, including Rt. 545 to FB Rifle, Rt. 547 to FB Birmingham and FB Bastogne and the Rakkasan Road to FB Rakkasan, allowing these important bases to remain

open throughout the upcoming monsoon season.

Of all the Screaming Eagle units, the 101st Aviation Group probably contributed most to supporting the ARVN efforts in Lam Son 720. More than 45,000 sorties flown in support of the South Vietnamese by the group carried 10,000 soldiers into combat and 22,000 tons of supplies and equipment to field positions and firebases. Pathfinders from the 101st Group were often the first men inserted into hostile enemy territory to direct more than 150 combat assaults made by the South Vietnamese. On several occasions the Pathfinders had to suppress enemy resistance at the scheduled landing zones single-handedly before troop carrying assault helicopters could be brought in safely.

The 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, played an important role throughout all four phases of Lam Son 720. Besides providing extensive aerial support with their Cobra gunships and LOH aircraft, the Cav's Aero-Rifle platoons conducted intelligence gathering reconnaissance patrols in places like the A Shau Valley and the Khe Sanh Plateau.

RESULTS:

On August 31, 1971, Operation Lam Son 720 officially came to an end. Not only was every enemy buildup throughout northern Military Region 1 blunted by the rapid airmobile deployment of Allied infantry, artillery and air power, but large-force NVA units were denied free access to their once secure strongholds in and around the A Shau Valley.

The numerical summary of battlefield activity during the four and one half month operation showed that South Vietnamese Marines, armored cavalry units and soldiers from the 1st ARVN Division had killed 3,104 enemy and captured 232 crew served weapons and 560 individual weapons. U.S. forces, including the infantry, artillery and aerial support units of the 101st, had tallied 710 enemy KIA's, 70 individual and 4 crew served weapons captured, 24 individual weapons and 71 crew served weapons destroyed.

Lam Son 810

By late August, numerous Allied intelligence reports indicated an NVA logistical buildup in western Quang Tri Province, including intensive enemy efforts to extend and upgrade the road network extending from the DMZ into the Republic of Vietnam's northernmost province. In order to thwart a possible enemy offensive aimed at disrupting the October presidential election, ARVN military commanders led by Major General Phan Van Phu, Commanding General of the 1st Infantry Division (ARVN), decided to launch a massive counter blow against the Communist buildup, using the assets and support capabilities of the 101st Abn. Div. (Amb).

Officially titled Operation Lam Son 810, the new campaign began on September 6, 1971, when 6,000 troops from the 1st Infantry Division (ARVN) and South Vietnamese Marines from the 258th and 147th Brigades combat assaulted into the NVA stronghold in western Quang Tri Province. Helicopters from the 101st Aviation Group, provided all air transport for the operation and during the next 12 days flew 11,094 sorties to carry 13,763 troops and deliver over 2,600 tons of supplies and equipment.

In one day alone, 101st Chinooks and Skyranes moved 24 artillery pieces onto firebases opened to support the drive. On another occasion, 60 UH-1 Hueys combat assaulted a complete ARVN battalion of 350 men to a forward field position. Riggers from the 426th Supply and Service Battalion assisted the Screaming Eagle helicopter crews throughout the operation in slinging heavy loads of equipment and supplies onto the choppers.

Pathfinders of the 101st Group worked directly with the South Vietnamese on their combat assaults, arriving first on the landing zones, guiding the troop-carrying aircraft to a safe touchdown, and returning to their home base only after the air move was completed.

Elements of the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, and D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry, flew numerous armed aerial reconnaissance missions in front of advancing ARVN and Marine units. Dozens of cache and enemy locations, including an NVA artillery position with tons of ammunition, were found in this manner, aiding the South Vietnamese ground elements to successfully accomplish their mission of crippling the enemy just prior to the onset of the monsoon season, making it very difficult for him to replace his lost supplies during the winter months.

The 4th Battalion, 77th Artillery (ARA), flew in general artillery support of the attacking forces during the operation, destroying numerous enemy positions including several artillery sites.

In order to free more ARVN troops to participate in the westward thrust, infantry units from the 2nd Brigade took over control of FB's Barbara and Anne. A 105mm battery from the 2nd Battalion, 320th Artillery, provided support for the 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry, who secured the lowlands around Quang Tri during the ARVN drive.

On September 18, with the onset of heavy monsoon rains, Operation Lam Son 810 ended. Enemy pressure on Quang Tri Province had been relieved, tons of supplies and ammunition had been captured, miles of roadway had been destroyed by airstrikes and the NVA strength around the Khe Sanh Plateau had dwindled from an estimated high of 10,000 before the operation to 6,000 men at its completion.

Enemy combat losses were put at 172 dead. Captured or destroyed enemy equipment, munitions and supplies included four 122mm artillery pieces with 2,000 artillery rounds, 300,000 AK-47 rounds, 100,000 rounds of 37mm antiaircraft ammunition, 430 B-40 rockets, 382 82mm mortar rounds, 400 recoilless rifle rounds, 40 antitank mines, 4 trucks, 1200 gallons of gasoline, 6 miles of telephone wire, 5 tons of rice and numerous small arms and automatic weapons.





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