



STRIKE

Vietnam War Weekly History



February 24th – March 02nd, 2019

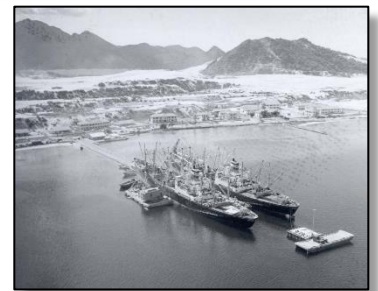
Issue: 142

Brief History of the 501st, 502nd and 2nd Brigade (101st ABN DIV)

The 502nd, or "five-oh-deuce", was activated July 1, 1941 at Fort Benning, Georgia as the 502nd parachute infantry battalion, as an experimental unit formed to test the doctrine and tactics of parachute assaults. The 502nd entered combat in World War II on June 6, 1944, by jumping into NORMANDY, with allied forces landing on D-Day and the Battle of NORMANDY. Between 1945 and 1964. A major reorganization took place on 3 February 1964, when the 2nd Brigade of the 101st Airborne was activated at Fort Campbell, replacing the 1st Airborne Battle Group, 501st Infantry Regiment. The reorganization from the battle groups to brigades and battalions placed two battalions of the 502nd in different brigades of the 101st.



The 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry was in the 1st Brigade with 1-327th and 2-327th Infantry. Which deployed to Vietnam and arrived at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam on 29 July 1965, they were commanded by the most notable commander LTC Hank "The Gunfighter" Emerson.



The new 2nd Brigade's original organic battalions were the 1st and 2d Battalions, 501st Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry. December 1967 the 501st, 502nd and 2nd Brigade deployed by C-141 aircraft and arrived at BIEN HOA Airbase on 13 December 1967. Over the next five years, Soldiers of the "Ready to Go" Brigade participated in twelve campaigns, compiling of a distinguished combat record as well as an enviable reputation for success in the rehabilitation of a war-torn nation. The Brigade redeployed to Fort Campbell in April 1972.



During this week, in the span of 8 years since the 501st Infantry Regiment, 502nd Infantry Regiment and 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division deployed in support of the Vietnam War the following are from After Action Reports, Staff Duty Logs, and Personal Accounts. (* All items have been reproduced from the Unclassified / Declassified Holdings of the National Archives.)

- 24 February 1966 **Operation HARRISON:** At 0730H, B/2-502 IN again made a thorough search and sweep of villages near NA NGU (1) and PHY LAC vicinity CA271321 and CQ280320 respectively with negative enemy contact. At 1300H, B/2-502 IN engaged 1 VC vicinity CQ288318; results: 1 VC KIA (BC), 1 weapon and one box of 30 caliber ammunition captured. At 1715H, B/2-502 IN was extracted by helicopter from LZ RED vicinity CQ282322 back to Battalion base vicinity CQ206426. B/2-502 IN closed Battalion base effective 251815H February 1966. (HQ, 2-502 IN; After Action Report, Operations HARRISON; 1 April 1966)
- 24 February 1967 **Operation FARRAGUT:** In response to a request for assistance from LAM DONG Province, the 2-502 IN BN and C/2-230 ARTY conducted airmobile assaults from SONG MAO to selected LZ's west of DI LINH and began search and destroy operations to locate and destroy an estimate VC battalion which had ambushed local ARVN forces. (HQ, 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV; After Action Report, Operation FARRAGUT)
- 24 February 1968 1-502 IN BN search and destroy operations continued with security of QL #1. Scattered light contact made with 1 WIA by BBT.
- 24 February 1969 **Operation SHERMAN PEAK/Operation NEVADA EAGLE:** A/1-502 IN continued to provide security at FSB T-BONE. B/1-502 IN conducted RIF operations to OMAHA and set out ambushes. D/1-502 IN sent out patrols and ambushes also. C/1-502 IN and Recon platoon remained at LZ SALLY.
- 24 February 1970 D/1-502 IN taught PF forces today on a variety of subjects including First Aid, Hasty ambushes, NDP sites and M79 grenade launcher. B/1-502 IN (-) moving east received S/A fire and one man was wounded in both legs below the knee. He was evacuated to the rear in the vicinity of 795985. Enemy casualties were unknown. C/1-502 IN, 3rd platoon spotted 1 NVA/VC carrying something. The man fled, and a search of the area produced nothing.
- 24 - 28 February 1971 **Operation Jefferson Glen:** A/2-502 IN combat assaulted into the new Area of Operations. As B/2-502 IN was preparing to combat assault, the Battalion Commander was notified to cancel the existing operation and prepare to move to QUANG TRI Province to come under the operational control of the 3BDE. The mission was to support LAM SON 719. A/2-502 IN was brought back to FSB BIRMINGHAM and with much haste; preparations were made to move north. Coordination at all levels had to be affected and preparations immediately made to move the battalion north. With thorough planning and massive effort, all obstacles were overcome, and on the morning of the 25th, STRIKE Force, relocated to CP at MAI LOC and moved and moved the companies into the AO ten miles to the southwest of QUANG TRI.
- At MAI LOC the remaining days of February were spent "digging in" and fortifying the compounds. Troops shelters were built, mess buildings and latrines were erected, and a command post for the bunker line was established. A comprehensive logistic system was set up using three widely separated resupply points. Thus, continuous comfort service support was provided for all field elements throughout the vast area of operations.
- February 28th, ended Operation JEFFERSON GLEN for the STRIKE Force troopers as the last week of February ushered in Operation LAM SON 719.
- 24 - 25 February 1971 1-501 IN BN was air lifted to DONG HA Combat Base and received a warning order to move on 25 February to A-1, B-1, and A-2. The move was completed, and operations were resumed in that area. During the reporting period a light mortar platoon was organized in B/1-501 IN and C/1-501 IN. These elements consisted of one 81mm mortar tube and fifteen to twenty men. The platoon remained in the companies' area of operation and conducted daily patrols. Its purpose was to provide the Company Commander with fire support under his direct control.
- 24 February 1971 1-501 IN BN has assumed command of A-2. B/1-501 IN found a booby trap vicinity YD281758, B/1-501 IN vicinity YD281785 site six enemy and engaged them with mortar fire. Results negative.
- 25 February 1967 **Operation FARRAGUT:** Elements of 2-502 IN BN contacted 4 VC resulting in 3 VC KIA (BC), 1 VOC and 3 individual weapons captured. Acting on intelligence received from the captured VC, one company conducted an airmobile assault to LZ's SW of DI LINH to block enemy routes of withdrawal. The company contacted an estimated 2 company force just prior to dark resulting in 1 US KIA, 8 US WIA, 9 VC KIA (BC) and 5 individual weapons captured. The enemy broke contact at dark and TAC air and artillery were utilized throughout the night in an effort to block the enemy routes of egress. (HQ, 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV; After Action Report, Operation FARRAGUT)
- 25 February 1968 1-502 IN BN provided security of QL #1 and bridge (460400) in preparation for 26 February operations.
- 25 February 1968 **Operation TACOMA/HOUSTON:** At 0840H, B/2-502 IN vicinity AT912944 found 5 claymore type mines all destroyed in place. (HQ, 2-502 IN BN; Operation Tacoma-Houston After Action Report; 20 March 1968)



25 February 1969 **Operation SHERMAN PEAK/Operation NEVADA EAGLE:** C/1-502 IN and B/1-502 IN were OPCON to 1-501 IN BN. Recon platoon moved from LZ SALLY to OMAHA and conducted a RIF operation with 1 platoon of PF. A/1-502 IN remained at FSB T-BONE, D/1-502 IN conducted a RIF.

25 February 1969 C/2-502 IN and D/2-502 IN combat assaulted into LZ RED. In four contacts, 3-187 IN BN killed two enemy and captured two weapons southwest of FSB BRICK. The 2BDE initiated a combined cordon southeast of LZ SANDY, with elements of 1-501 IN BN, 1-502 IN BN, C/2-34 Armor, ARVN troops, RFs, PFs and National Police. Elsewhere, B/2-501 IN engaged three NVA, killing one and capturing two AK-47s, one carbine, a 60mm mortar tube and 10 mortar rounds. (Rendezvous with Destiny (Volume 2, Number 1); Spring 1968-69)

25 February 1970 1-502 IN, Recon spotted silhouette of 1 suspected NVA/VC. They employed artillery and are sweeping the area with negative results. B/1-502 IN, 3rd platoon engaged 3 NVA/VC and wounded one at 808988. They also captured 1 rucksack containing 50lbs of rice, 1 each binoculars and spices.

25 February 1971 1-501 IN BN "Geronimo" troopers moved to A-1, B-1 and A-2, where search and attack operations were conducted until 04 March 1971. The battalion then participated in Operation LAM SON 719.

25 February 1971 Screaming Eagles from 2-502 IN BN and 1-501 IN BN moved north to take over AO's previously the responsibility of ARVN units to enable the RVNAF to bolster their forces in LAOS. (Rendezvous with Destiny (Volume 3, Number 4); Winter-Spring 1971)

26 February 1968 1-502 IN BN cleared and secured assigned section of QL #1 and conducted combat assaults with 3 companies. During the period, light combat was experienced and A/1-502 IN NDP was probed by sappers. Results: 7 NVA KIA (BC) and 2 WIA, 2 KIA.

26 February 1968 **Operation TACOMA/HOUSTON:** At 1205H, C/2-502 IN detonated a trip wired grenade at coordinate AT904953 with a result of 3 US WHA. At 1630H, Recon elements vicinity AT929904 found one fresh grave, exhumed results 1 VC KIA. (HQ, 2-502 IN BN; Operation Tacoma-Houston After Action Report; 20 March 1968)

26 February 1969 **Operation SHERMAN PEAK/Operation NEVADA EAGLE:** B/1-502 IN captured two tons of paddy rice in the combined cordon near LZ SANDY. A combined cordon was established along the west bank of the SONG BO south of the AN LO Bridge by 3BDE and ARVN elements.

26 February 1969 **Operation SHERMAN PEAK/ Operation NEVADA EAGLE:** Alpha Company and Delta Company of the Rakkasans, in three contacts, killed three VC and captured one crew served and one individual weapon. B/1-502 IN captured two tons of paddy rice in the combined cordon near LZ SANDY. A combined cordon was established along the west bank of the SONG BO south of the AN LO Bridge by 3BDE and ARVN elements. (Rendezvous with Destiny (Volume 2, Number 1); Spring 1968-69)

26 February 1970 B/1-502 IN, 3rd platoon, 1st squad found a campsite occupied by 2-3 enemy. It is estimated to be 24-48 hours old.

26 February – April 1971 **Operation LAM SON 719:** During the next six weeks, the STRIKE Force Battalion conducted operations against enemy forces in QUANG TRI Province. On 26 February 1971, the STRIKE Force Battalion combat assaulted into AO Green, located east of the city of QUANG TRI. Initially, the Battalion conducted reconnaissance in force (RIF) operations over the entire area of operations. These RIF operations were used to provide an assessment of the area and gain intelligence. There is no doubt that the combined operations of the 2-502 IN BN and RF/PF forces of QUANG TRI Province, coupled with aggressive artillery fire planning, pushed the enemy south across the QUANG TRI River.

While B/2-502 IN and C/2-502 IN were conducting aggressive reconnaissance in the jungle canopy, the Reconnaissance Platoon located elements of an NVA Rocket Artillery Battalion in the QUANG TRI Rocket Belt. B/2-502 IN was immediately lifted into the Rocket Belt and established Ruby II as an outpost while C/2-502 IN worked along the QUANG TRI River in small reconnaissance boats. Additional intelligence indicated a need for additional forces. Therefore, the STRIKE Force was deployed into the Rocket Belt. "As a result of the Rocket Belt operations, no major enemy attack ever developed against QUANG TRI City, during Operations LAM SON 719" (Quote: MG Tarpley, CG, 101st Abn Div, 13 April 1971.)

In the meantime, the Artillery "Tiger Plan" caused a member of the local sapper force company to CHIEU HOI. Information from the CHIEU HOI revealed that the Headquarters of an enemy sapper unit was located between the QUANG TRI River and the DA KRONG River. Their mission was to provide intelligence on U.S./ARVN units that could be utilized by their special combat elements. The battalion jumped on this lead and got an extension of the already large AO and kicked off Operation Bald Eagle. (The STRIKE Force Battalion's AO now covered 605 square miles.)

A/2-502 IN and D/2-502 IN were inserted into AO Bald Eagle. A/2-502 IN first two aircraft into the LZ received fire but the fire was quickly suppressed by the escort gunships. On the third day of the operation, D/2-502 IN initiated contact with an NVA unit. A/2-502 IN was brought up to block the enemy's withdrawal and reinforce the action, while artillery, ARA, and flame were poured into the contact point. Again, the next day D/2-502 IN engaged the enemy in a bunker complex. After close in fighting with LAW's and hand grenades, one NVA Soldier surrendered. Meanwhile, A/2-502 IN discovered valuable documents in another area of the enemy base camp. The POW and captured documents provided extensive intelligence on the enemy unit, its AO, strength, weakness, and propaganda mission. (The NVA POW had been in South Vietnam on 17 days.) Based on the POW's information an extensive artillery fire plan was initiated against the confirmed targets. Following three days of artillery fire a combined US/ARVN reconnaissance intelligence raid was launched to wrap up the operation.



During the last week of March, the battalion learned through reliable intelligence sources, that an NVA unit was moving into CAM LO District. Again, STRIKE Force extended the AO and conducted another combined US/ARVN operation north and west of CAM LO. C/2-502 IN assaulted and swept east while two RF companies came under intense B-40 rocket and automatic small arms fire. As C/2-502 IN accelerated their movement to the contact point, artillery, ARA, and air strikes using napalm were directed on the enemy. C/2-502 IN got into the action and routed the enemy using small unit fire and maneuver. (One NVA was carrying a letter which was post marked in Vinh Linh, four days before the day he was killed. Vinh Linh is 35 miles, as a crow flies, across the DMZ in North Vietnam.) Information from a POW captured by C/2-502 IN caused the battalion to stay overnight in the area and pursue the operation further. The next day C/2-502 IN located the NVA Regiment's base of operations which included heavily fortified bunkers, watch towers, weapons, and ammunition and supply caches. This operation proved to be of immediate importance to the CAM LO District forces.

During early April, the 2-502 IN BN received indications of an enemy build up and extensive movement in the area north and east of FSB MARY ANN. In reaction to this; A/2-502 IN, three reconnaissance teams, and a sniper team were inserted into the area. The workings of these units provided much intelligence on the enemy movements in the area. After a reconnaissance team, had made contact and developed the situation it was learned that one of the enemy KIA was a company commander of an enemy operating in TRIEU PHONG District, QUANG TRI Province. Many documents were gathered and reported. Notification was made to the QUANG TRI Province Advisers and the results of this intelligence had far reached effects on the VC/NVA units in the area.



It must be recognized that the ARVN bore the heavy fighting across the border in LAOS. Certainly, the hard battles of the ARVN Rangers, the ARVN Airborne Division, and the 1st ARVN Division supported by air from the 101st ABN DIV, contributed in a major way to the success of LAM SON 719. LAM SON has added to their confidence and experience and materially aided Vietnamization.

Nevertheless, it was STRIKE Force Soldiers who accomplished the 2-502 IN BN mission. Valuable intelligence could not have been gathered without the detailed, patient and careful scouring of the jungle by the Infantrymen of the 2-502 IN BN.

LAM SON 719 rapidly drew to an end in early April as MAI LOC was used as a redeployment point. Thousands of pieces of equipment and men were moved into the area as operations in the west were closed out. The BN CO became the Regional Commander and had the awesome task of tactically situating and protecting all these men and material. The airstrip at MAI LOC obtained the appearance of a major supply depot, for at times there were a hundred of more aircraft of all types in the area.

However, to insure noteworthy completion of our part of LAM SON 719, RCN Team 2 detonated two claymore mines when they detected movement outside their perimeter. This command detonated ambush netted 3 NVA KIA, 1 AK-47, 1-9mm parabellum pistol, numerous documents, and a couple of days at Eagle Beach for Team 2. A Company not to be outclassed, discovered a cache site on April 7th, that contained 30 individual weapons, (SKS, Mausers, and rifles) and 4 crew served weapons (BAR's).

The following day the battalion started its move back to CAMP EAGLE for stand down. On April 9th the entire battalion was relocated at CAMP EAGLE for a nine-day refresher stand-down. Stand-down time proved to be great booster of morale for the "men in the bush". The battalion had gone 100 days without a stand-down and the relaxation was sorely needed as well as much deserved.

Emphasis in training was put on tactics and skills that would be used in the upcoming operation. High speed extraction techniques, field SOP, Medevac, Comsec, employment of ARA, Arty, and Air Strikes, and safety classes were presented to the men in the battalion. Still there was time allotted for athletics, Commanders time, administrative time, and general free time. Entertainment was readily available as movies were shown every night and some of Vietnam's best floor shows were presented to the battalion.

During the stand-down, the battalion was honored by a visit from the Division Commander, Major General Tarpley. At a ceremony on the STRIKE Force Parade Grounds, the 2-502 IN BN, "STRIKE FORCE", received the Presidential Unit Citation for actions in an operation during August 1970 in the vicinity of "Comeback Ridge" and FSB BARNETT.

On April 7, the 2-502 IN BN returned to the field. This time the TOC located at FSB JACK. Most of the remaining time in April was spent getting ready for Operation LAM SON 720, and the returned into the "Big Valley". (2d Battalion, 502d Infantry; Unit History, Approved by LTC John C. Snodgrass, IN, Commanding)



26 February 1971

A/1-501 IN, vicinity 178734 observed a bird take small arms fire. SEL was engaged by 20 82mm mortars. Results unknown. A/1-501 IN taking small arms fire and B-40 rocket fire vicinity 178734. Returned 82mm mortar and 105 fires. B/1-501 IN received 14 rounds of 60mm impacting 400 meters north of their position vicinity 282275. A-1 received two rounds of an unknown type. They impacted 300 meters northeast of FSB.



27 February 1966

Long range recon team of 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV, prepare for "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The troops will be moved by helicopter into Viet Cong territory to gather vital information needed for the success of the operation. Troops of the 2-502 IN BN, were moved by helicopter to an area near TUY HOA, RVN, during Operation "HARRISON", a search and destroy mission. Here, UH-1D helicopters prepare to land to move troops to operation area.



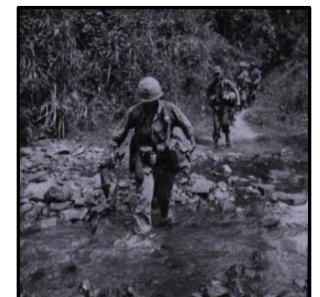
27 February 1966

Long range recon team of 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV, prepare for "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The troops will be moved by helicopter into Viet Cong territory to gather vital information needed for the success of the operation. UH-1D helicopters loaded with personnel of 2-502 IN, fly over small Vietnamese village on way to combat area during "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA.



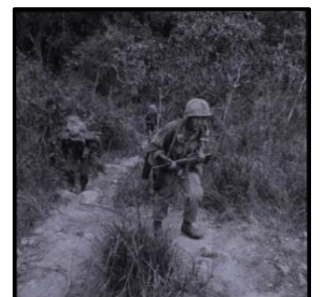
27 February 1966

Long range recon team of 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV, prepare for "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The troops will be moved by helicopter into Viet Cong territory to gather vital information needed for the success of the operation. Personnel of C/2-502 IN, cross a small stream searching for the Viet Cong near TUY HOA, RVN, during "Operation HARRISON".



27 February 1966

Long range recon team of 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV, prepare for "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The troops will be moved by helicopters into Viet Cong territory to gather vital information needed for the success of the operation. Personnel of C/2-502 IN move through rough terrain searching for the Viet Cong near TUY HOA, RVN during "Operation HARRISON".



27 February 1966

Long range recon team of 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV, prepare for "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The troops will be moved by helicopter into Viet Cong territory to gather vital information needed for the success of the operation. Troops of C/2-502 IN, move downhill side near TUY HOA, RVN, during Operation "HARRISON", searching for the Viet Cong.



27 February 1966

Long range recon team of 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV, prepare for "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The troops will be moved by helicopter into Viet Cong territory to gather vital information needed for the success of the operation. (L-R) PFC William Riddick (Norfolk, Virginia) and PFC Charles Gipson (Brewster, Alabama) of 2-502 IN BN, at observation post at Bn CP during "Operation HARRISON", a search and destroy mission against the Viet Cong.



27 February 1966

Long range recon team of 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV, prepare for "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The troops will be moved by helicopter into Viet Cong territory to gather vital information needed for the success of the operation. PFC Leo Beaulieu (Augusta, Maine), 2-502 IN BN, moves equipment from pack after arrival into operation area near TUY HOA, RVN, during "Operation HARRISON", a search and destroy mission against the Viet Cong.



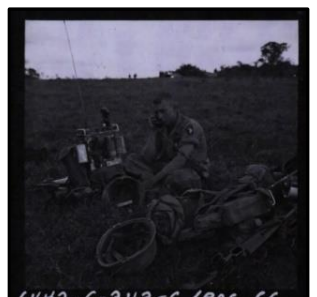
27 February 1966

Long range recon team of 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV, prepare for "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The troops will be moved by helicopter into Viet Cong territory to gather vital information needed for the success of the operation. SP4 Clarence Baker (New Hope, Alabama), C/2-502 IN, gives captured Viet Cong suspect a drink of water from his canteen. The Viet Cong was captured near TUY HOA, RVN, during "Operation HARRISON".



27 February 1966

Long range recon team of 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV, prepare for "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The troops will be moved by helicopter into Viet Cong territory to gather vital information needed for the success of the operation. During "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN, a radio operator from 2-502 IN BN, checks with other companies in the search and destroy mission against the Viet Cong.



27 February 1967

PFC Salvatore Ambrico (Brooklyn, New York), a member of the Long-Range Reconnaissance Team, C/2-502 IN, fills a canteen from a stream during "Operation HARRISON", a search and destroy mission against the Viet Cong in the TUY HOA area.



27 February 1966

Long range recon team of 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV, prepare for "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The troops will be moved by helicopter into Viet Cong territory to gather vital information needed for the success of the operation. 1SG Theofilo Macias (Clarksville, Tennessee), 2-502 IN BN, with pony used by the battalion as an ammunition bearer during "Operation HARRISON" near TUY HOA, RVN. The pony had been captured from the Viet Cong.



27 February 1966

Operation HARRISON: B/2-502 IN discovered 1 squad size camp site vicinity BQ888568 at 1435H containing 3 huts, 500lbs of rice and 4 hand grenades; results: All were destroyed. C/2-502 IN discovered 3.5 tons of rice cache vicinity BQ871606 at 1532H. Results: Could not be evacuated so it was destroyed. Battalion RECONDO Platoon effected linked up with 2-327 IN vicinity BQ927590 at 1532H. CHECKERBOARD operations were continued through the afternoon and night with negative contact. A/2-502 IN and AT Platoon continued to secure Battalion base and C/2-502 ARTY. Commanding 1900H, A/2-502 IN deployed 2 RECONDO patrols to the Northeast of Battalion Base to vicinity BQ915628 and BQ982618. (HQ, 2-502 IN; After Action Report, Operations HARRISON; 1 April 1966)

27 February 1968

1-502 IN BN continued search and destroy operations southeast of QUANG TRI and cleared and secured QL #1. Two combat assaults resulted in heavy contact by B/1-502 IN and light contact by C/1-502 IN. Results: Friendly 12 WIA; 2 NVA KIA (BC)

27 February 1968

Operation TACOMA/HOUSTON: At 1240H, C/2-502 IN reported friendly convoy had a truck hit a pressure mine, results: 2 US WHA, 1 2 ½ ton truck damaged. (HQ, 2-502 IN BN; Operation TACOMA-HOUSTON After Action Report; 20 March 1968)

27 February 1970

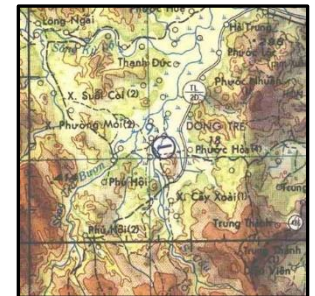
D/1-502 IN, 3rd platoon has 18 personnel from the 114 PF platoon. They will be trained on grenades, M-16 quick kill and first aid. A LOH helicopter received ground fire in the vicinity YC802986 and was shot down. Three personnel were hurt, two seriously hurt, and one with minor injuries. At the same location and time B/1-502 IN (-) was in contact. They received S/A fire resulting in 1 US WIA with minor flesh wound and 1 US WIA evacuated to 85th Evac. After sweep of the area, B/1-502 IN found new bunkers and hootch complex and several miscellaneous items.

27 February 1971

D/1-501 IN vicinity 221736 found one antipersonnel mine. A/1-501 IN vicinity 182754 received small arms fire M-79 fire was returned with negative results. Vicinity 179745 A/1-501 IN received RPG fire. Results 2 US WIA. B/1-501 IN vicinity 284765 found 2 – 60mm mortar round on a trail oriented north to south. A/1-501 IN vicinity 851745 found one booby trap constructed of a 155 round. Results destroyed.

28 February 1966

Operation HARRISON: At 0800H, A/2-502 IN displaced to vicinity BQ950631 to sweep village vicinity BA950643 and link up with CIDG forces from DONG TRE SF camp; negative enemy contact. B/2-502 IN and C/502 IN continued CHECKERBOARD operations to the west and southwest of the Battalion base to the limit of Artillery range. Commencing 0900H, both companies were withdrawn over multiple routes. At 0910H, B/2-502 IN RECONDO patrol (B-1) engaged 12 VC vicinity BQ875558; results: 1 VC KIA (BC), 1 Mauser rifle captured, remainder broke contact to northeast. At 1230H, B/2-502 IN RECONDO patrol engaged 10 VC porters and 3 VC guards with weapons vicinity BQ889519; results: 2 BC KIA (BC), 3 VC WIA (EST). RECONDO platoon had 1 squad remain at link up point vicinity BA927590 until 1000H. Commencing 1200H, RECONDO platoon helilifted to TUY AN vicinity CQ112677 with mission of conducting RECONDO patrols, discovered a platoon size VC camp vicinity BQ953613 with barracks, sleeping quarters and mess hall; results: All were destroyed. CHECKERBOARD operations continued to include additional RECONDO and Ambush patrols provided by the reserve company with emphasis in the western portion of area VULTURE, vicinity position LION. RECONDO platoon engaged and estimated 5 VC vicinity CQ069704 at 0730H on 01 March 1966; results: No casualties. (HQ, 2-502 IN; After Action Report, Operations HARRISON; 1 April 1966)



28 February –
07 March 1967

Operation: FARRAGUT III Location: SONG MAO, TUY PHONG, VINH HOA, TUY TINH CHAM, TUY TINH VIET, BINH THUAN and NINH THUAN Provinces. **Type:** search and destroy, cordon and search. **Controlling headquarters:** 1BDE, 101st ABN DIV. **Task organization:** 1-327 IN BN, 2-327 IN BN, 2-502 IN BN, 2-320 FA, B/1-30 FA, A/2-17 CAV, A/326 ENG. **Execution:** During this phase of FARRAGUT, the brigade secured a beach unloading site near HOI TAN to help establish a forward supply point at SONG MAO. On 1 Mar, 2-327 Inf conducted an airmobile assault north of TUY PHONG and searched the hamlets of TUY TINH CHAM and TUY TINH VIET, killing 6 VC. On 3 Mar, the same battalion executed a night airmobile raid under flare illumination to cordon and search the village on VINH HOA, an important VC tax collection center between PHAN THIET and PHAN RANG. No enemies were found but the entire population of 500 was relocated to TUY PHONG. That same day, 1-327 IN BN and 2-502 IN BN were combat-assaulted north of SONG MAO, conducting search and destroy operations with negative result and on 6 March, both battalions were extracted to SONG MAO. During the period, A/2-17 CAV and 4th Troop, 8th ARVN ACS provided convoy security on Route 1 between PHAN RANG and SONG MAO. (Vietnam Combat Operations; A chronology of Allied combat operations in Vietnam – 1967; Stephane Moutin-Luyat)

28 February 1968 1-502 IN BN moved to FSB NORA, 14km northwest of HUE. The Battalion began operations in new AO and C/1-502 IN occupied positions for preparation for LZ SALLY.

28 February 1969 **Operation SHERMAN PEAK/ Operation NEVADA EAGLE:** C/1-502 IN was released OPCON to 1-501 IN BN and returned to LZ SALLY. At YD595174, D/1-502 IN, 2nd platoon found 4 hooches, 1 60mm mortar, various tools and some ammunition. Recon platoon continued to operate with a platoon of PF. Operation NEVADA EAGLE ended.

28 February 1969 The month drew to a close with an important day in 101st ABN DIV history: Operation NEVADA EAGLE terminated at midnight (See “288 Days of Nevada Eagle”). On the last day of NEVADA EAGLE, four enemies were killed, and one crew-served weapon was captured. 2-502 IN BN and 3-187 IN BN continued to probe deeper into enemy base areas. In rocket belt RIF operations, D/1-502 IN captured a complete 60mm mortar. Also, terminating with NEVADA EAGLE was the 3BDE operation as elements of 1-506 IN BN discovered four enemy dead. In the 36-day operation, Screaming Eagles accounted for 40 enemy killed, one prisoner and 46 individual and 10 crew-served weapons captured. (Rendezvous with Destiny (Volume 2, Number 1); Spring 1968-69)

28 February 1970 A/1-502 IN, 1st platoon departed FSB NORMANDY for an in-country 3-day R&R at Eagle Beach which was actually only a day and a half due to a call to return to FSB NORMANDY for a combat assault and stand by as ready reserved/rapid reaction force.

28 February 1970 **Operation RANDOLPH GLENN:** B/1-502 IN destroyed the bunker located on 27 February. The 1-502 IN BN continued Operation RANDOLPH GLENN with negative results.

28 February 1971 1-501 IN BN A-2 received 10 to 12 60mm mortar rounds impacting 50meters outside the wire. There were negative casualties. B/1-501 IN received 6 82mm mortar rounds vicinity XD265745. An SEL vicinity YD254769 was employed with ten rounds of 155. Results unknown. B-1 requested illumination. HE was fired instead. Results one US KIA five US WIA.

28 February 1971 Troopers from B/1-502 IN engaged an enemy force while on patrol near FSB BARRACUDA. The ensuing action resulted in two enemy killed, two AK-47 rifles captured, and 20 pounds of rice destroyed. (Rendezvous with Destiny (Volume 3, Number 4) Winter – Spring 1971)

29 February 1968 1-502 IN BN began search and destroy operations in new AO. A/1-502 IN and D/1-502 IN moved northwest from AN LO Bridge. A/1-502 IN taken under fire by estimated company of NVA, A/1-502 IN pulled back and called for and received air strikes, artillery and gunships. Results: 5 NVA KIA (BC)

29 February 1968 **Operation TACOMA/HOUSTON:** B/2-502 IN was removed from AO to rear base for refitting. They were reinserted by road at 1420H on 01 March to continue mission of Search and Destroy in assigned AO. (HQ, 2-502 IN BN; Operation Tacoma-Houston After Action Report; 20 March 1968)

March – April 1969 **A SHAU VALLEY:** During this period, five Battalions of the 101st ABN DIV including A/2-501 IN and the rest of 2-501 IN BN, air assaulted into the A SHAU VALLEY. Combat assaults and fast-moving reconnaissance in force quickly determined the NVA were avoiding contact and moving its main forces back across the border. The operation yielded many large caches, one that included 14 trucks, 600 brand new SKS rifles, ChiCom radios and field telephones.



01 March 1966 **Operation HARRISON:** Commencing 0730H, A/2-502 IN conducted a sweep from position LION to link up with CIDG forces from DONG TRE SF camp vicinity BQ957643. At 0740H, RECONDO platoon engaged an unknown number of VC vicinity CQ056715; results: 2 BC KIA (BC). The 2-502 IN BN was alerted for possible deployment by air vicinity CQ0672. (HQ, 2-502 IN; After Action Report, Operations HARRISON; 1 April 1966)



01 March 1966

Operation HARRISON: Commencing 1200H, 2-502 IN BN conducted heliborne assault to seize and secure position SNAKE vicinity CQ065724. 113 sorties of UH1D helicopters were utilized in 5 lifts. The 1st lift touched down vicinity CQ065724 at 1120 hours and all lifts were completed at 1645H; negative enemy contact on LZ. One helicopter crashed and burned on LZ vicinity CQ065724; minor injuries sustained, 3 M-16 rifles destroyed. The alternate LZ, vicinity CQ068715 was utilized for the 5th lift. A/2-502 IN secured objective 3 vicinity CQ061722 (LZ), B/2-502 IN moved to and secured Objective 1 vicinity CQ050725 and C/2-502 IN moved to and secured Objective 2 vicinity CQ011745. The 2-502 IN BN CP closed battalion base vicinity CQ061722 at 1400H. Objective 1 was secured at 1519H, Objective 2 at 1745 hours and Objective 3 at 1400H. CHECKERBOARD operations were initiated immediately to include Search and Destroy operations in sector. A/2-502 IN provided security for battalion base, vicinity CQ061722, assumed mission of battalion reserve and conducted RECONDO and ambush patrols vicinity battalion base. B/2-502 IN initiated RECONDO patrolling in sector immediately and commencing 1615H initiated a Search and Destroy operations to the South of position SNAKE. At 1811H, C/2-502 IN also initiated a Search and Destroy operation to the South of position SNAKE. B/2-502 IN was in the West and C/2-502 IN was in the East of B/2-502 IN. At 1818H, C/2-502 IN engaged unknown number of VC vicinity CQ049690; results: 2 VC KIC (BC), 2 VCG evacuated. RECONDO platoon engaged approximately 7 VC at 1940H vicinity CA068731; results: 3 VC KIA (EST). At the end of the day, A/2-502 IN was located at battalion base vicinity CQ061722, B/2-502 IN vicinity CQ030697 and C/2-502 IN vicinity CQ049686. (HQ, 2-502 IN; After Action Report, Operations HARRISON; 1 April 1966)



01 March 1968

C/2-501 IN at 0045H received three WP grenades and one frag grenade; trip flares went off with negative results and no personnel sighted. C/2-501 IN requested illumination and has spotted heavy movement in area. At 0125H, C/2-501 IN received 3 more grenades and threw grenade into the village on the other side of the creek. C/2-501 IN didn't fire SA or have they received any casualties. At 0135H, C/2-501 IN received two more grenades; C/2-501 IN, 26 element is the main element being fired upon. At 1010H, A/2-501 IN reported finding a blood trail and sandal where personnel have been dragged in vicinity 681230. At 1100H, C/2-501 IN reported finding 60 crates of 40mm ammo to their front, it was too heavy for personnel to carry and will be sending it out by mule to be evacuated. At 1330H, A/2-501 IN requested MEDEVAC at N1 for man who stepped on a booby trap 200m N/E of N1. Medevac completed at 1340H. At 1705H, C/2-501 IN reports finding 3 NVA bodies. At 1910H, C/2-501 IN found 1 NVA body and 1 RPG, body appeared to be approximately 5 days old vicinity 695250. At 1945H, D/2-501 IN ambush patrol came across ARVN unit in the vicinity of their ambush site. They were firing illumination and fired 1 SA round with negative results. (HQ, 2-501 IN BN; Daily Staff Journal or Duty Officer's Log; 01 March 1968)

01 March 1968

1-502 IN BN began operations in QUANG TRI district from FSB NORA, AN LO Bridge and continued construction of FSB SALLY. A/1-502 IN moved to AP LAI XA (YD 638310) where they had made heavy contact on 29 February 1968. They found no enemy, but villagers stated that there had been approx. 200 NVA/VC in the village and that they had been up most of the night dragging off their dead. D/1-502 IN made light contact in vicinity YD 642298 and Battalion CO's C&C ship used to kill 16 NVA. Results: 16 NVA KIA (BC) by Strike's C&C.

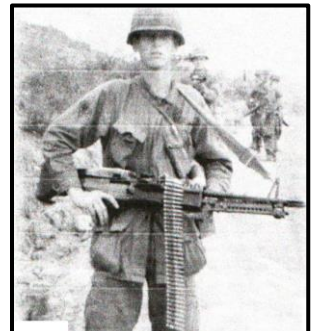
01 – 26 March 1968

U.S. intelligence reports warned in early 1969 that North Vietnamese Army (NVA) troops were busy stockpiling weapons and ammunition in key areas of South Vietnam's Northern provinces. The NVA viewed one such area, the A SHAU VALLEY, as a relatively safe haven from which they could launch an attack on HUE, some 26 miles to the northeast. The 28-mile-long A SHAU VALLEY, located in rugged country in southwestern THUA THIEN province along the Laotian border, branched off from the Ho Chi Minh Trail and provided a natural thoroughfare toward HUE and DA NANG. The A Shau ran south down the Laotian and Cambodian border areas to some 37 miles from Saigon.

As of March 1969, it was apparent to U.S. commanders that NVA troops were on the move into the area. Maj. Gen. Raymond Davis, then-commander of the 3rd Marine Division, said the Communists had hacked a road to within 17 miles of HUE. Davis said the road, if extended another four miles, would have allowed the NVA to bring their 122mm guns within range of the former imperial capital.

The goal for U.S. forces, therefore; was clear: prevent the NVA from using the valley as a staging area for an attack on HUE and the coastal provinces, as the Communists had done the previous year during the TET Offensive.

On March 1, 1969, the 101st ABN DIV, 1-502 IN BN launched the first of three operations (MASSACHUSETTS STRIKES; APACHE SNOW and MONTGOMERY RENDEZVOUS) designed to drive out or destroy NVA forces in the valley. Working from the southern end, the unit's A/1-502 IN, B/1-502 IN, and C/1-502 IN companies moved north.



Above: Dave Nesbitt, holding an M-60 machine gun, pauses while on patrol on Jan. 1, 1969, the day before his 21st birthday. Nesbitt was later wounded at DONG A TAY on March 20.



On March 12, C/1-502 IN assaulted an area near Fire Support Base (FSB) VEGHEL, a U.S. position in the central valley that had been abandoned the previous year, to establish a landing zone for the battalion. Awaiting the troopers was the 816th NVA Battalion. Fighting from about 4:30 p.m. through the night, C/1-502 IN soldiers secured the base, losing 2 KIA while killing 12 NVA. The rest of the NVA troops tied some four miles southwest to the 2,640-ft. DONG A TAY Mountain, described as a "round, squat hill with a large razorback ridge flowing out of it to the north."

Initially, U.S. commanders thought the enemy force guarding the area around FSB VEGHEL was only squad-sized, and after it was cleared thought it might be a company. But soldiers in the field knew differently.

"The first couple of nights near DONG A TAY, we could hear the ticking of generators in the background of our radio communications," said 1LT John Eastham, commander of B/1-502 IN, 2nd platoon. We knew then we had something big."

The Noise Was Ungodly'

On the morning of March 19th, American commanders called in Air Force fire-power to blast NVA troops out of their labyrinth of bunkers on DONG A TAY. 1LT Ed Donaldson, who commanded A/1-502 IN, 2nd platoon, recalls an Air Force jet dropping a 10,000-pound "daisy cutter" bomb (used to clear landing zones) on the hilltop. Immediately thereafter, 2nd and 3rd Platoons led the attack.

"We were running into delaying contacts as we moved toward the hill," "Every so often we would get contact from two or three NVA. But we kept getting pressured by division to get to the top, so we didn't chase them."

LT John Sorge, who commanded 3rd Platoon, recalled that his unit suffered the first casualties. "My platoon sergeant Sandy Muhlengraft was the first one wounded and my RTO (radio telephone operator) Lawrence Olive was the first KIA," Sorge said.

Donaldson says his platoon saw "bunkers everywhere" as they moved forward. Upon reaching the top of DONG A TAY, "we noticed commo wire and there were clothes and other debris up in the trees," that he surmised was caused by the huge daisy cutter explosion. "Just then a couple of NVA went running down a ridge, and my guys, who were really aggressive, went after them," Donaldson said. "I yelled at them to return but it was too late."

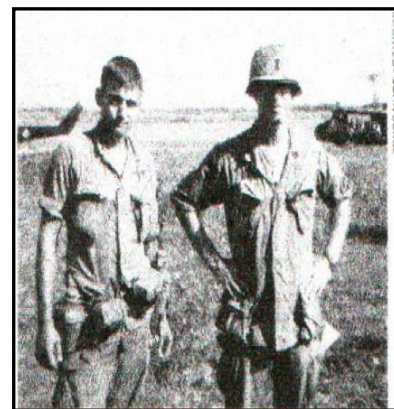
An NVA ambush lay in wait. "The whole jungle erupted," he recalled. "We got pinned down on a little saddle on a very narrow ridge." Donaldson called in artillery fire, estimating that 1,700 rounds—some landing only 25 yards from 2nd Platoon's position—blasted the hilltop for the next three hours.

"They laid down a wall of steel," he said, "We would've been in a lot worse shape if not for the artillerymen." Freddy Baker, a rifleman with A/1-502 IN who was awaiting a helicopter for a planned R&R leave, says he was ordered back to his platoon when the shooting started. "The noise was ungodly," Baker said. "Arty, machine guns, rifle fire. RPGs, as well as gunships and jets. I remember the F-4 Phantoms releasing their ordnance and you could see it tumbling right toward you."

Dave Nesbitt was a 21-year-old specialist 4 serving with A/1-502 IN, 1st platoon. He says he and another soldier were digging foxholes when they heard small-arms fire erupt down the ridge from them. "He jumped up, grabbed his M-16 with only one magazine and ran down toward the firing," Nesbitt, a VFW member of Post 3034 in Sumter, S.C., said. "It was a very bad mistake. I helped retrieve his body the next day."

Nesbitt was wounded the following day, March 20, when "a big ball of fire from a mortar or command-detonated artillery round" exploded as he manned an M-60 machine gun behind a tree. He remembers a couple of his fellow troopers pulling him up the hill and out of firing range where A/1-502 IN, 1st platoon medic, James "Doc" Feliciano, could apply first aid.

"I had a hole in my knee big enough to put in a grapefruit," said Nesbitt, who later had his knee fused together instead of amputating his leg. Feliciano recalls Nesbitt as the last casualty he treated that day. "Wally Morrow gave me cover fire as I worked on Dave," said Feliciano, a VFW life member from New York. "Besides an ambush in Tam Ky in July 1969, this operation was the worst for me. We were making contact daily and it was pretty hectic."



Above: RTO Lawrence Olive and LT John Sorge. Olive became the 1st KIA at DONG A TAY.



'The Best Thing I Ever Did in My Life'

The next two days, March 21-22; were particularly bad for B/1-502 IN when it lost seven KIAs. On March 21, 1LT William Dent, who commanded 3rd Platoon, was wounded in an ambush and later died. "I put him on a chopper alive," said B/1-502 IN, 1SG Royce Burkett, a life member of VFW Post 6018 in Fayetteville, N.C. "He had three bullet holes in him. I guess he must have lost too much blood. I remember him asking me to secure his Ranger knife."

1SG Burkett, also a Korean War vet, was wounded March 22 when fragments from an RPG hit him in the head, leg and arm. "It knocked me back into a bomb crater," he said. "I had blood sloshing around in my boots, but I didn't think my condition was had enough to be evacuated then. I spent that night on the hill and was medevac'd out the next day. I spent 45 days in the hospital with an infection."

Casualties were taking such a heavy toll on B/1-502 IN platoons that SP4 Dean Smith, an RTO with 1st platoon, remembers a fellow RTO, SP4 Robert E. McAferty, walking point for a squad because all other point men had been wounded.

"He walked past me and down a trail," said Smith, a former five-time commander of VFW Post 2494 in Irving, Texas. "All of a sudden I heard him screaming, 'they're all around us, and then hell broke loose. It sounded horrible?"

Smith says his unit later found McAferty's lifeless body tied to a tree. Donaldson says A/1-502 IN secured the hilltop on March 24. He was then ordered to take command of Recon Platoon. "It was the most intense time of my year in Vietnam," said Donaldson, who became a lawyer and judge as a civilian. "It also was the best thing I ever did in my life."

The next day, B/1-502 IN would make the final push to move the NVA off DONG A TAY,

'Jane Fonda Stuff Found in Bunker'

Around 10:35 a.m. on March 25, 2nd platoon discovered a deserted NVA hospital bunker complex that Eastham said contained Communist propaganda leaflets depicting U.S. POWs and "Jane Fonda stuff," like blankets and towels sent by sympathetic Americans.

According to the book *Hamburger Hill* by Samuel Zaffiri, soldiers found a list "of medicines that had been shipped to the hospital, followed by the words: 'Donated by your friends at the University of California at Berkeley: "

At 11 a.m., 1st platoon soldiers discovered a small bunker complex, and three were killed "instantly" upon entering it. It is unclear how they died, but 1SG Burkett believes the bunker was booby-trapped. The other four soldiers who died that day—from both 1st platoon and 2nd platoon—were killed by sniper fire.

Firefights continued throughout the afternoon as 2nd platoon moved to reinforce 1st platoon. By 6:30 p.m., the enemy had broken contact with B/1-502 IN. All seven Americans killed March 25 were from B/1-502 IN 1st platoon and 2nd platoon. Overall, from March 19-25, 1st Battalion's official death toll shows 20 U.S. KIA. According to daily after-action reports, 1st Battalion members had 39 WIA while killing 56 NVA troops.

"It was most certainly the worst day of my Vietnam tour," said Eastham, a member of VFW Post 201 in Waterbury, Conn. "I think about it every day."

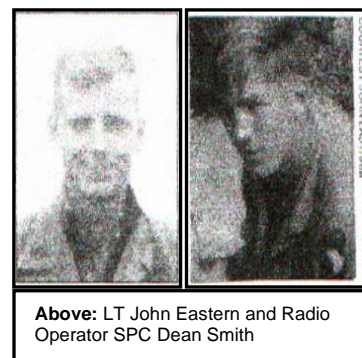
B/1-502 IN was airlifted off DONG A TAY on March 26. But more bloody battles awaited U.S. troops in the A SHAU VALLEY, 1st Battalion had merely fulfilled the first objective in a campaign that would last throughout the summer of 1969. (DONG A TAY: A Costly Victory in the A SHAU VALLEY; By Tim Dyhouse)

01 March 1969

Operation KENTUCKY JUMPER: The first day of March was also a red-letter day for the 101st as the Division-wide Operation KENTUCKY JUMPER started. D/2-501 IN conducted a combat assault south of FSB TENNESSEE to construct FSB WHIP. A/1-327 IN accounted for the first enemy killed during operation KENTUCKY JUMPER when the paratroopers engaged two VC, killing one and taking his weapon. Elements of the 1BDE and 3BDE began assuming new positions in expanded AOs in preparation for a combined force thrust by the 2BDE and ARVN troops deep into the A SHAU VALLEY – Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER. The 101st ABN DIV was going back into the valley, hopefully to strike a fatal blow to the enemy. (Rendezvous with Destiny (Volume 2, Number 1); Spring 1968-69)

01 March 1969

Operation KENTUCKY JUMPER: Operation KENTUCKY JUMPER, succeeding NEVADA EAGLE, begins. A 2BDE thrust into the A SHAU VALLEY, MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER, also begins, but is hindered by bad weather. (Rendezvous with Destiny (Volume 2, Number 2); Summer 1969)



Above: LT John Eastern and Radio Operator SPC Dean Smith



01 March 1969

Operation KENTUCKY JUMPER: A Division wide operation – was initiated at the termination of Operation NEVADA EAGLE and continued through the reporting period. The primary mission of the operation is: to interdict enemy base and infiltration routes; to seek out and destroy the NVA/VC forces; to detect, capture or destroy local Viet Cong Infrastructures and their sympathizers; and to disrupt the routes of supply between the rice producing lowlands and population center, and the mountain base areas. In addition, the 101st ABN DIV in cooperation and coordination with the 1st ARVN Division and Government of Vietnam agencies continued to conduct combined operations throughout the THUA THIEN Province to increase the effectiveness of the ARVN Forces and to maintain the favorable environment for the Government of Vietnam's overall pacification plan. All of the following Brigades and Battalion operations are a part of the overall Divisions Operations KENTUCKY JUMPER: MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER, BRISTOL BOOTS, APACHE SNOW, MONTGOMERY RENDEZVOUS and CAMPBELL STREAMER. (HQ, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile); Operational Report – Lesson Learned, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) for period ending 31 July 1969; 09 December 1969)

01 March – 08 May 1969

Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER: In February intelligence, had indicated an increase in the enemy activity in the southern A SHAU VALLEY. This activity included road, bunker and way station construction, and in addition three NVA battalions were identified in the area. Construction was begun on two fire bases – FSB FURY and FSB WHIP – on the edge of the valley, but poor weather conditions made it impossible to conduct airmobile assaults. As a diversion when the weather cleared C/1-502 IN was air assaulted into FSB VEGHEL and immediately gained contact, killing fourteen NVA. Subsequent air assaults of the 1-502 IN BN, 2-501 IN BN, 2-327 IN BN (OPCON to 2BDE on 22 March later replaced by 1-501 IN BN on 15 April), and 2nd and 3rd BN 3rd ARVN Regiment, bringing the total number of units on the ground to five battalions. Combat assaults and reconnaissance in force operations indicated the enemy was delaying and moving his units back into LAOS. Reaction to a captured document resulted in the discovery of one of the largest caches to date in the 101st ABN DIV area of operation. The operation was ended on 8 May with the following results: 176 NVA/VC KIA, 2 POW's, 859 weapons captured. (DA, Senior Officer Debriefing Report; MG Melvin Zais, CG, 101st ABN DIV; Period 19 July 1968 – 25 May 1969) (Operational Report – Lessons Learned 101st ABN DIV; Period Ending 30 April 1969)

01 – 08 March 1969

Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER: Task Organizations: 1-501 IN BN; 1-502 IN BN; 2-327 IN BN; 2-501 IN BN. Operation Massachusetts Striker continued to conclusion during this reporting period. The mission was to conduct combined airmobile operations in the vicinity of Southern A SHAU VALLEY and astride Highway 614, to locate and destroy enemy forces, caches and lines of communications. Throughout the operation several fire bases were constructed – FSB WHIP, FSB FURY, FSB THOR, FSB PIKE, FSB LASH and FSB SHIELD – with the accelerated fire base construction concept extending the Division's area of influence into the northwest corner of QUANG NAM Province. Reconnaissance in force operations in the area of operations yielded several large caches which depleted the enemy's arsenal and his capability of launching offensive operations in the THUA THIEN and QUANG NAM Provinces.

On 1 May, the 1-502 IN BN reacted rapidly to captured documents and subsequent readouts to discover a hospital complex and a heavy machine repair shop near the Laotian Border which yielded over 100 pounds of medical supplies, eight vehicles and ten weapons. On 6 May, 1-502 IN BN combat assaulted into an area five kilometers from the Laotian Border again in response to intelligence reports and discovered a recently used medical aid station that contained eighteen weapons and forty cases of medical supplies. This operation was concluded on 8 May with the following results: 175 NVA/VC KIA, 2 NVA POW's, 1 HOI CHANH, 857 individual weapons captured, in addition to 40 crew-served weapons and 30 vehicles captured. (HQ, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile); Operational Report – Lesson Learned, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) for period ending 31 July 1969; 09 December 1969)

01 March 1969

Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER: The 2BDE, 101st ABN DIV begins Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER in the southern A SHAU and RAO NAI Valleys on THUA THIEN Province, vicinity of Route 548.

01 March 1969

Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER: The 1-502 IN BN began Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER in NAM HOA District and QUAN THUONG District. The mission of the battalion in this operation was to conduct combat assaults on FSB VEGHEL and conduct reconnaissance in force operations and detailed search, to locate and destroy enemy forces and caches. The 1-502 IN BN was to prepare to continue operations south-east, astride highway 614 in QUANG NAM Province. MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER was an extremely successful operation. It resulted in 115 NVA/VC KIA and 3 POW's. The most significant part of the operation was the caches discovered along the "Yellow Brick Road", a supply and infiltration route which runs from Laos east toward DA NANG. The equipment was unearthed approximately 45 miles west of DA NANG. Among the equipment found were 13 Soviet and Chicom trucks, 1 Soviet scout car, 2 bulldozers and 1 ambulance. Other finds were large quantities of ammunition and weapons, including 632 SKS rifles packed in their original containers. Also found were large quantities of medical supplies and a large number of field phones, radios and other electronic equipment. There were enough signal supplies to equip and maintain a NVA Division for one year. Operation Massachusetts STRIKER ended on 8 May.

01 – 07 March 1969

Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER: 1-502 IN BN began Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER. During the period of 1-4 March, the 1-502 IN BN operated with 1 company in the field in the vicinity of QUAN DIEN District, one company providing security for FSB T-BONE, one company OPCON to 1-501 IN BN and one company OPCON to 2-501 IN BN. On 4 March the OPCON companies were returned to the 1-502 IN BN control and on 5 March security of FSB T-BONE was assumed by elements of 3BDE. The entire 1-502 IN BN moved to LZ SALLY to marshal and begin preparation to deploy into the area of operations, vicinity A SHAU VALLEY. During this period the 1-502 IN BN was marshalled at LZ SALLY, elements provided the 2BDE reaction force and conducted night ambushes in the vicinity of LZ SALLY. Due to inclement weather, the air assault of the 1-502 IN BN was delayed and on 8 March the 1-502 IN BN assumed an AO south of LZ SALLY and conducted RIF operations.

01 March 1969

2-502 IN BN launched the first of three Operations (MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER, APACHE SNOW and MONTGOMERY RENDEZVOUS) designed to drive out or destroy the NVA forces in the valley. Working from the southern end, the unit's A/2-502 IN, B/2-502 IN, and C/2-502 IN moved north.



01 March 1970 A/1-502 IN requested a medivac for non-hostile cause. A Soldier was given plague and cholera shots and was allergic to both.

01 – 31 March 1971 During this period the 1-501 IN BN conducted search and attack operations in its assigned area of operations. The battalion occupied FSB A-2 vicinity YD215743 from 01 March to 04 March conducting operations in the area. D/1-501 IN provided security for the FSB and also conducted nightly ambushes. On 04 March the battalion moved to DONG HA by air and ground. On 05 March the 1-501 IN BN moved to FSB VANDERGRIFT and HHC/1-501 IN provided the security. D/1-501 IN was OPCON to 2-502 IN BN at FSB ANNE from 04 March to 11 March. On 21 March the battalion moved to FSB T-BIRD III vicinity XD90539 conducting search and clear missions in their assigned areas of operations. During the reporting period a light mortar platoon was organized in A/1-501 IN, B/1-501 IN and C/1-501 IN respectively. These elements consisted of one 81mm mortar tube and fifteen to twenty men. The platoon remained in the companies' area of operation. Its purpose was to provide the Company Commanders with fire support under his direct control.

02 March 1966 **Operation HARRISON:** B/2-502 IN received fire from vicinity CQ026703; negative results. A/2-502 IN engaged and unknown number of VC vicinity 073723 at 1000 hours; results: 2 Friendly WIA. At 1200 hours, C/2-502 IN engaged approximately 8 VC vicinity CQ034674; results: 1 VC KIA (BC) and 2 VCS. At 1530 hours, C/2-502 IN made contact with unknown number of VC vicinity CQ057677 and returned fire. Results: unknown. Link up with 2-327 IN BN was affected by B/2-502 IN at 1620H, vicinity CQ044646 and CQ 029669 and by C/2-502 IN at 1615H, vicinity CQ055677. A total of 9 VCS were apprehended during the day and evacuated to brigade. B/2-502 IN, Recondo patrol received automatic weapons fire from vicinity CQ030669 at 1826H. Fire was returned; results unknown. CHECKERBOARD operations continued. At 0700H, B/2-502 IN platoon engaged 1 VC squad vicinity CQ013695; results unknown. RECONDO platoon discovered VC KIA (BC) by ARTY vicinity CQ018675 at 1516 hours. (HQ, 2-502 IN; After Action Report, Operations HARRISON; 1 April 1966)

At 1900H, CHECKERBOARD operations were initiated by A/2-502 IN and B/2-502 IN to the west in sector. There was negative enemy contact during the night.

02 March 1968 2BDE closes its CP at LZ Jane and moves to LZ SALLY, eight miles north of HUE.

02 March 1968 1-502 IN BN continued search and destroy operations and made light contact throughout the day. Booby-Traps caused 3 WIA.

02 March 1968 At 0347H, C/2-501 IN elements reported receiving small burst of automatic weapons fire. At 0359H, C/2-501 IN received on more burst of automatic weapons fire and one of their men fire back with negative results. At 0655H, D/2-501 IN request medivac for ambush personnel that detonated a mine at YD671266 moving southeast along RR track; Medevac completed at 0730H. At 0932H, B/2-501 IN found sandal track at XD671222 leading up to trail toward the mountain, approximately 10-20 personnel appeared to be the night before last. At 1045H, 2BDE, 101st have assumed AO & OPCON responsibility effective 1040H. At 1155H, A/2-501 IN captured a POW vicinity YD659248 with AK-47, fire 1 round and weapon jammed; POW taken to LZ SALLY. A/2-501 IN also reported that the POW was wounded by a hand grenade in the hand and needed to be medevaced. At 1325H, D/2-501 IN found 4 bodies in bunker from ASK R 4.3 U 2.6 vicinity YD693246; 2 personnel were in Khaki uniform, 1 female body appeared to be 10-12 days old. At 1350H, B/2-501 IN spotted individual in Black shirt carrying a weapon and engaged with 3 rounds of SA with negative results vicinity 671230; company will hold up at this location for approximately 10 minutes. At 2110H, A/2-501 IN received mortar fire approximately 10-50 meters from position. Negative casualties received approximately 30 rounds. (HQ, 2-501 IN BN; Daily Staff Journal or Duty Officer's Log; 02 March 1968)

02 March 1970 Condor 29 located a spider hole used about 1 week ago. Condor 29 also spotted various trails some indicated recent usage. B/1-502 IN located elephant tracks and other tracks approximately 1 week old.



During this week, in the span of 8 years since the 501st Infantry Regiment, 502nd Infantry Regiment and 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division deployed in support of the Vietnam War the following awards were awarded to the service members during combat operations.

8 x Silver Star Medal (2 x Posthumously)
5 x Bronze Star Medal with Valor (1 x Posthumously)
8 x Bronze Star Medal (6 x Posthumously)
34 x Army Commendation Medal
13 x Purple Heart Medal (11 x Posthumously)
1 x Prisoner of War Medal

25 February 1967



PFC William J. Franks (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from small arms gunfire wounds southwest of DI LINH in the LAM DONG Province, Republic of Vietnam.

25 February 1967



PFC Earlie C. Hamilton Jr. (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death while in Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington D.C. on 22 March 1967 as the result of pneumonia and multiple fragment wounds received in Vietnam on a combat mission southwest of DI LINH in the LAM DONG Province, Republic of Vietnam.

25 February 1969



1LT Phil D. Johnson (C/1-502 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor, Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his deaths from fragment wounds from a hostile booby trap in the THUA THIEN Province, Republic of Vietnam.

25 February 1969



SP4 Truman J. Walsh (C/1-502 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his deaths from fragment wounds from a hostile booby trap in the THUA THIEN Province, Republic of Vietnam.

26 February 1968



PFC Dennis J. Kromrey (A/1-502 IN) was awarded the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple wounds received while in a night defensive position when hit by metal fragment from a hostile satchel charge during a probe of its position southeast of QUANG TRI City that night in the QUANG TRI Province, Republic of Vietnam.

26 February 1970



SGT David S. Reid (B/2-501 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from an explosive device while on a combat operation when the area came under attack by a hostile force in the THUA THIEN Province. SGT Reid was admitted to a military medical facility and later expired the THUA THIEN Province, Republic of Vietnam.



27 February 1968



PFC Jimmy M. Trollinger (D/1-502 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from gunshot wounds when he engaged a hostile force in a firefight while on combat operations during a probe of its position southeast of QUANG TRI City that morning in the QUANG TRI Province, Republic of Vietnam.

27 February 1970



PFC Freddie C. De Foor (C/1-501 IN) was awarded the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple fragmentation wounds while on combat operation when a hostile force was encountered in the THUA THIEN Province, Republic of Vietnam.

27 February 1970

MAJ Wood R. De Levil (HHC/1-502 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor (1-OLC) for heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam.

27 February 1970

CPT Alvin Hennigan (B/1-502 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam.

27 February 1970

PFC William G. Cox (B/1-502 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam.

27 February 1971



CPL Zbigniew J. Dalenta (C/1-502 IN) earned Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from small arms gunfire wounds while on a military mission when a hostile force was encountered 14km south of PHU BAI Airfield in the THUA THIEN Province, Republic of Vietnam.

28 February 1970



SP4 Larry E. Dailey (C/1-501 IN) was awarded the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death when a booby trap detonated while on combat operation in the THUA THIEN Province, Republic of Vietnam.

28 February 1971



SP4 Earl E. McCarty (B/1-501 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal (Posthumously) when he died while on a military mission when an artillery round fired by a friendly force impacted the area 7km E-NE of GIO LINH Village in the QUANG TRI Province, Republic of Vietnam.

29 February 1968



SGT Gerald Cervantes (D/1-501 IN) was awarded the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from small arms gun fire wounds while on a combat operation in support of USMC retaking HUE City, in the THUA THIEN Province, Republic of Vietnam.

01 March 1966



SP4 Bruce L. Marosites (HHC/2-502 IN) was awarded the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from gunshot wounds to both thighs during hostile ground action in the Province not reported, Republic of Vietnam.



01 March – 31 July 1968

The following Soldiers from D/1-502 IN:

PFC Thesus E. Taylor	SGT Juan C. Terlaje	SP4 Raymond C. Tracy	SP4 Francisco Vasquez
SGT Dennis C. Vincent	SP4 Jerome W. Ward	SGT Lawrence D. Watson	CPL Thomas E. Zundel

Was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement of action in the Republic of Vietnam. (HQ, 101st ABN DIV; General Orders Number 5345; 04 September 1968)

01 March – 31 July 1969

The following Soldiers from C/1-501 IN:

PFC William R. Ingle	PFC Joseph E. Lehmer	PFC James A. Sgroi
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Was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement. (HQ 101st ABN DIV (AM), General Order Number 10612; 16 August 1969)

01 March – 31 July 1969

The following Soldiers from D/1-501 IN:

1SG Paul C. Purcell	SFC Juan Jose	PFC Charles C. Sergeant
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Was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement. (HQ 101st ABN DIV (AM), General Order Number 10612; 16 August 1969)

01 March – 31 July 1969

The following Soldiers from E/1-501 IN:

PFC Calvin W. Bailey	PFC Jerome F. Favors	PFC Paul Hernandez	SP4 Phillip E. King
SP4 Thomas M. Ray	PFC Leslie Skelly	PFC Wilbur Stewart	SGT Norman M. Takeoka
PFC Lionel S. Tatsutani	PFC Clifton J. D. Walker		

Was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement. (HQ 101st ABN DIV (AM), General Order Number 10612; 16 August 1969)

01 March – 31 July 1969

The following Soldiers from HHC/1-501 IN:

SSG Alfred F. Bustin	SP4 Ronald A. Feiertag	SP6 Wallac Nakandakari	PFC Robert Ramirez
SP4 Ernest L. Taintor			

Was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement. (HQ 101st ABN DIV (AM), General Order Number 10612; 16 August 1969)

01 March – 31 July 1969

The following Soldiers from D/2-501 IN:

SP4 Victor G. Brothers	PFC Gregory H. Bucknor	PFC Steven L. Tropf	PFC Thomas J. Wells
PFC Larry C. Williams			

Was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement. (HQ 101st ABN DIV (AM), General Order Number 10612; 16 August 1969)

02 June 1978



SSG Robert L. Platt Jr. (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Prisoner of War Medal and Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit for action on 10 June 1967 while as a member of a ten-man patrol on a search and destroy mission operating about five miles southwest of the City of MO DUC in QUANG NGAI Province, Republic of Vietnam. During the patrol, the team was ambushed and then PFC Platt was reportedly wounded in the shoulder. When the patrol withdrew under fire, PFC Platt was carried a short distance when the man carrying him was wounded and PFC Platt was again wounded in the back. At this point, PFC Platt was left behind.

After the patrol regrouped, search operations were begun and continued until 16 June. During the search, items were found that were believed to belong to PFC Platt, but he was not found. A captured enemy document indicated that an individual whose first name was Robert had been captured and died the next day from wounds. This report was not specific enough to classify PFC Platt as a prisoner of war. Subsequently, Vietnam acknowledges that SSG Platt had been captured alive and classified as missing in action and was posthumously promoted to Staff Sergeant. Remains and body has not been recovered.



STRIKE HISTORY (Citation's and Awards):

25 February 1967

1LT David M. Belding (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against an armed hostile force on 25 February 1967 near SONG MAO, Republic of Vietnam. Lieutenant Belding's platoon was air-lifted into an area where a blocking action was to be set up. After landing, the platoon left the landing zone and moved down a jungle trail. Approximately eleven hundred meters away from the landing zone, the point man encountered three hostile soldiers. Both elements began firing at the same time. Lieutenant Belding quickly deployed the platoon and started maneuvering them toward the enemy force when the right flank erupted into a hail of hostile fire. Before he could effect a reorganization of his platoon, to cope with the fire from the right flank, the left flank also came under heavy fire. Receiving fire from three sides, Lieutenant Belding began to move the platoon to the rear so that the men could replenish their ammunition, which was stored back at the landing zone with the rest of the equipment. A small element of insurgents had maneuvered behind them, leaving the friendly platoon completely surrounded and cut off from their source of supply. With total disregard for his own personal safety, Lieutenant Belding rushed through the intensive hail of fire and began directing the fire of his men. After identifying the targets, Lieutenant Belding called in artillery and exposed himself to the hostile fire. After calling in air strikes he moved through the area, under fire, giving aid to the wounded and comforting them as best he could. The air strikes coupled with the renewed efforts of the platoon, resulted in the retreat of the enemy forces. Lieutenant Belding then directed the preparation of a landing zone for the evacuation of the wounded personnel. Lieutenant Belding's heroic actions while engaged in close combat with a numerically superior hostile force were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, Task Force Oregon and the United States Army. (HQ, TFO; General Orders Number 480; 2 September 1967)

25 February 1967

SP5 Dolfey Jenkins (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against a hostile force on 25 February 1967 near SONG MAO, Republic of Vietnam. As Specialist Five Jenkins' company moved along a jungle trail, they were suddenly engaged by an estimated reinforced enemy platoon. As the battle progressed, elements of the enemy succeeded in maneuvering and encircling the friendly platoon. As the intensity of the enemy fire increased, the majority of the platoon became pinned down and several casualties were sustained. When Specialist Jenkins heard his comrades shouting for a medic, he immediately, and with complete disregard for his own personal safety, charged through the withering enemy fire to the location of a wounded man. On two different occasions Specialist Jenkins braved the intense fire as he crawled approximately twenty meters in front of his perimeter and pulled wounded men to a safe area and gave them medical aid. On the second trip, Specialist Jenkins was forced to drop his medical bag, but immediately upon reaching a covered position, he again returned through the withering fire and retrieved his medical supplies. For more than two hours, Specialist Jenkins moved through the battlefield, treating the wounded and constantly exposing himself to the enemy fire. Specialist Five Jenkins' outstanding display of gallantry in action and his devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, AD; General Orders Number 1418; 27 November 1967)

25 February 1967

PFC Donald H. Moon (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for action in combat. Private First Class Moon's platoon was conducting a search and destroy mission when it suddenly became engaged in a fire fight with an estimated platoon-size enemy element. The platoon was receiving a tremendous volume of enemy fire from three sides. When a friendly machine gun position was threatened to be overrun, because an enemy grenade had wounded the gunner and assistant gunner, Private Moon, with complete disregard for his own personal safety, charged across fifty meters of open terrain through the withering enemy fire to the aid of his wounded comrades. As enemy soldiers continued to advance on the friendly machine gun position, Private Moon stood fully exposed to the enemy fire and placed effective fire into the ranks of the enemy while a medic pulled the two wounded men to a safe area. His actions saved the lives of his two wounded comrades and stopped the enemy element from breaking through the perimeter and undoubtedly prevented a major disaster. Private Moon's outstanding display of gallantry in action and his devotion to duty are within the highest military tradition and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 610; 1 August 1967)

25 February 1967



PFC John W. Hudgens (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) for gallantry in action against an armed hostile enemy on 25 February 1967 near SONG MAO, Republic of Vietnam. After landing on a landing zone, the third platoon of B Company 502d (Airborne) Infantry had moved approximately eight hundred meters when they became heavily engaged with a numerically superior enemy element estimated to be a reinforced enemy platoon. Private Hudgens exposed himself to the enemy fire in an effort to place more effective fire into the enemy positions. Both the squad leader and the fire team leader being wounded, Private Hudgens began to direct the fire of his fire team. Private Hudgens along with one of his comrades assaulted two enemy positions. When his comrade was seriously wounded, Private Hudgens continued forward with complete disregard for his own personal safety and knocked out both enemy positions, killing two enemy soldiers. Private Hudgens then dragged his wounded comrade through seventy-five meters of bullet swept terrain to a safe area. Private Hudgens again with complete disregard for his own personal safety crawled through fifty meters of vicious enemy fire to direct the fire of a machine gunner by personally pointing out an enemy machinegun position. While returning to his position Private Hudgens was struck in the knee and wounded. Refusing medical aid Private Hudgens crawled to the perimeter where he was wounded again while distributing ammunition to his men. Again, with complete disregard for his own personal Private Hudgens refused to be evacuated and crawled to the most forward point of the perimeter where he succeeded in killing another enemy soldier who was attempting to throw a grenade into a friendly position. Private Hudgens' outstanding display of gallantry in action and his devotion to duty are within the highest military tradition and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and United States Army. (HQ, TFO; General Orders Number 79; 6 July 1967)



25 February 1967

SSG Josiah Blue Jr. (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against an armed hostile force on 25 February 1967 near DI LINH, Republic of Vietnam. While on a search and destroy mission southwest of DI LINH, the third platoon of Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry came under an unusually heavy volume of hostile fire from an estimated reinforced North Vietnamese weapons platoon. Staff Sergeant Blue quickly tried to lead his squad through the fire in a flanking movement but was halted by the intense fire from an enemy machinegun position. Realizing the situation had become critical, he had his men withdraw and set up a perimeter with the rest of the platoon. While withdrawing, Staff Sergeant Blue, with complete disregard for his own safety, ran back through the increasing enemy fire to retrieve a wounded comrade and carried him back to safety. During the ensuing two-hour battle, Staff Sergeant Blue moved from position to position throughout the perimeter pointing out targets, aiding the wounded and shouting words of encouragement. He also manned a machinegun position and killed two hostiles and wounded a third. When another machine gunner took his place, Staff Sergeant Blue exposed himself again to enemy fire and destroyed an enemy machinegun position with a hand grenade which killed both occupants. His courageous acts were instrumental in helping his platoon rally and hold off a numerically superior enemy force for two hours until help arrived. Staff Sergeant Blue's outstanding display of gallantry in action and his devotion to duty against a numerically superior hostile force is in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, Task Force OREGON, and the United States Army. (HQ, TFO; General Orders Number 173; 3 August 1967)

25 February 1967



PFC William J. Franks (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) for action in combat. Private First Class Franks' platoon, while on a search and destroy mission near BAN ME THUOT, was suddenly brought under a tremendous volume of enemy fire from an estimated company size element in fortified positions. As the platoon moved forward in the assault, Private Franks observed an enemy machine gun position to his front that was placing murderous fire on an element of his platoon. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, Private Franks exposed himself to the enemy fire and began firing his weapon into the enemy position. Realizing that his fire was not effective and that he must act quickly, Private Franks jumped up and charged the enemy position, firing as he ran. When Private Franks was approximately twenty meters from the enemy machine gun he was struck by an enemy bullet and knocked to the ground. Getting on his feet Private Franks continued to assault the enemy position until he was struck by another enemy bullet and mortally wounded. As a result of Private Franks' courageous actions, the enemy position was destroyed and many lives were saved, Private Franks' outstanding gallantry in action and his avid devotion to duty even at the cost of his life are within the highest military traditions and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 253; 15 March 1967)

27 February 1968



CPT Paul M. Pritchard (HQ/1-502 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for heroism in ground combat against hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam on 27 February 1968. Captain Pritchard distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous action on 27 February 1968 while serving as a Company Commander during a combat operation in the vicinity of HUE, Republic of Vietnam. Upon receiving word that one of his elements had become pinned down by heavy enemy fire, Captain Pritchard led a squad size force across one hundred and fifty meters of open terrain to try and relieve them. Although he and his men received heavy enemy fire, he managed to give the pinned down element covering fire so they could withdraw. Afterwards Captain Pritchard remained forward to direct artillery fire and Aerial Rocket Artillery on the enemy. Through his courage and outstanding leadership, he contributed immeasurably to the success of the mission. Captain Pritchard's personal bravery and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, 101st ABN DIV; General Orders Number 3266; 7 July 1968)

28 February – 1 March 1966

SFC Lawrence N. Koontz (HHC/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal (1-OLC) for actions in combat. SFC Koontz, Platoon Sergeant of the "Recondo" platoon Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry, was given the mission of securing a landing zone deep in Viet Cong infested jungle prior to a battalion size operation the following day. With a South Vietnamese Army platoon attached to his force late in the afternoon of 28 February 1966, Sergeant Koontz moved toward his objective 8000 meters away. After moving approximately 3000 meters, the two-point squads suddenly came under hostile fire. Sergeant Koontz quickly and expertly led two squads from the rear around the embattled front squads in an effort to out-flank the enemy. Shortly after moving toward his new objective, his element came under a murderous hail of enemy fire. With his element and the point squads pinned down by automatic weapon and machine gun fire, Sergeant Koontz organized an assault on the entrenched enemy. When this failed and it became apparent that his whole force was surrounded, Sergeant Koontz grabbed an M60 machine gun and tried to infiltrate the enemy defenses. As he rose and ran for the tree line, he became the target of several enemy automatic weapons. Forced to crawl, Sergeant Koontz continued his daring assault and reached the enemy lines. His ammunition expended, and the enemy regrouping for a charge, Sergeant Koontz then returned to his platoon. He again started out by himself, with a fresh load of ammunition, this time assaulting a weaker portion of the enemy defenses. His men, inspired to great heights by this extraordinary act of gallantry, rushed forward and overran the bewildered Viet Cong. Sergeant Koontz, not satisfied with simply freeing his platoon from enemy fire, pursued the fleeing, disorganized enemy. Still carrying the machine gun, Sergeant Koontz killed three Viet Cong who tried to make a last ditch stand against the inspired, aggressive paratroopers.

After extraction of the wounded, the Recondo platoon then Recondo platoon then reorganized and continued their mission toward the landing zone. Shortly before reaching the main objective, Sergeant Koontz inadvertently stepped on a punji stake. However, he told no one of his injury and refused medical aid. As the Recondo platoon approached the landing zone, it again came under hostile fire from a small group of huts. Sergeant Koontz braved the withering fire to position himself close enough to effectively call artillery fire on the determined enemy. After the artillery was lifted, he again personally led an assault on the Viet Cong. Although limping quite noticeably and obviously in great pain, Sergeant Koontz was able to overrun the enemy and thus secure the landing zone for the forthcoming assault. Through his untiring efforts and conspicuous gallantry, the mission was accomplished, and the battalion was able to land without incident. Sergeant Koontz's avid professionalism and personal intrepidity were unparalleled. His actions are in keeping with the highest standards and traditions of the military service and reflect immeasurable credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 736; 11 September 1967)



01 March 1966

SP4 Robert E. Bean (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for action in combat. SP4 Bean distinguished himself on 1 March 1966 while serving as point man for a squad size patrol during a search and destroy mission near TUY HOA, Republic of Vietnam. While his squad was moving through the dense jungle terrain, the patrol leader stopped his squad to make a map orientation. Since he was the forward security, Specialist Four Bean had already taken cover in the dense foliage. As he lay observing to his front, he spotted fifteen Viet Cong advancing in his direction. Realizing that the Viet Cong would be upon them before he could return to warn his comrades; SP4 Bean, with complete disregard for his safety, single handedly attacked the insurgents. Although he was outnumbered, he caught the Viet Cong by surprise. Charging forward, he killed two and wounded four. After the initial burst of fire, the Viet Cong split into two groups. Later, Specialist Four Bean ran across approximately 100 meters of open terrain and attacked six Viet Cong, killing one and wounding four more. When his squad reached the area, it deployed into an assault line and began delivering suppressive fire onto the insurgent force. Determining that they were outnumbered, the Viet Cong broke contact and fled. Through his courage and determination, Specialist Four Bean contributed immeasurably to the defeat of the Viet Cong force. His extraordinary heroism in close combat against a hostile force was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, USARV; General Orders Number 5781; 22 September 1966)

01 March – 1 June 1969



MAJ Jerome A. Bruschette (HHC/2-502 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal (1-OLC) for distinguishing himself by meritorious achievement during the period of 1 March to 1 June 1969 while serving with the 101st Airborne Division in the Republic of Vietnam. He performed in a highly efficient and professional manner and accomplished his assigned mission with superior results. His initiative, zeal, and demonstrated devotion to duty throughout the cited period proved to be significant contribution in support of the United States counterinsurgency effort in the Republic of Vietnam. Working long arduous hours, he set an example that inspired his associates to also strive for maximum achievement. His many fine attributes have been in the best tradition of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 101st Airborne Division and the United States Army. (HQ, 101st ABN DIV; General Orders Number 6522; 9 June 1969)



ACRONYMS

ACAV: Armored Cavalry
ACD: Air Cavalry Division
AD: Americal Division
AD: Airborne Division (Would be after numeric numbers)
AO: Area of Operations
ARA: Aerial Rocket Artillery
ARCOM: Army Commendation Medal
ARVN: Army of the Republic of Viet Nam (also known as the South Vietnamese Army (SVA))
BDE: Brigade
BN: Battalion
BSM: Bronze Star Medal
BBT: Booby Traps
CA: Combat Assault
CANOPY: Heavily Wooded Terrain
CAV: Cavalry
CO: Company
CP: Command Post
DIV: Division
DSC: Distinguished Service Cross
DZ: Drop Zone
ENG: Engineer
FSB: Fire Support Base
HQ: Headquarters
IED: Improvised Explosive Device
IFFV: I Field Force Vietnam
IN: Infantry
KBA: Killed by Air or Artillery
KHA: Killed by Hostile Action
KIA: Killed in Action
KNHA: Killed by Non-Hostile Action
LZ: Helicopter Landing Zone
MI: Military Intelligence
MOH: Medal of Honor
MP: Military Police
NDP: Night Defensive Position
NVA: North Vietnamese Army
OBJ: Objective
OP: Observation Post
PAVN: People Army of Vietnam
POW: Prisoner of War
PF: Popular Forces
PZ: Helicopter Pick-up Zone
Recon Platoon: Reconnaissance Platoon
RIF: Reconnaissance in Force
RF: Regional Force
ROK: Republic of Korea
SA: Situational Awareness
SIGINT: Signal Intelligence
SSM: Silver Star Medal
STRIKE FORCE: 2d Battalion, 502d Infantry
SVA: South Vietnamese Army
TF: Task Force
TOC: Tactical Operations Center
USARV: United States Army Vietnam
USARPAC: United States Army Pacific
WIA: Wounded in Action
WHA: Wounded by Hostile Action
WNHA: Wounded by Non-Hostile Action
"V": Valor
VC: Viet Cong

