The distinctive insignia is an Indian in breech cloth and war bonnet, mounted on a galloping pony, brandishing a rifle in his right hand and holding a single rein in his left hand, all in gold, displayed upon a five-bastioned fort in blue edged with gold. The five-bastioned fort was the badge of the Fifth Army Corps in Cuba, of which the 9th Cavalry was a part. The yellow outline is for the Cavalry, and the blue for active service in the Spanish-American War. The mounted Indian represents the Indian campaigns of the regiment.

The 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, was constituted July 28, 1866, in the Regular Army as Company A, 9th Cavalry, and was organized in October 1866 at Greenville, Louisiana. The unit was officially designated a troop in 1883 as were all other cavalry companies.

The 9th Cavalry was composed of Negro enlisted men and white officers, one of two such regiments whose men won fame as the “Buffalo Soldiers.”

In World War II the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, was credited with participation in the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater, New Guinea, Bismarck Archipelago, Leyte and Luzon. The squadron also fought in the Korean War.

In Vietnam the unit has received the PUC, streamer embroidered PLEIKU PROVINCE (1st Squadron cited); PUC, streamer embroidered KIM SON PLAIN (1st Squadron cited); Valorous Unit Award, streamer embroidered PLEI ME (Troop B, 1st Squadron cited).

FIRST SQUADRON
NINTH CAVALRY

COMMANDERS

LTC John B. Stockton ....................................... July 1965—December 1965
LTC Robert M. Shoemaker ................................ December 1965—May 1966
LTC James C. Smith ........................................ May 1966—November 1966
LTC A. T. Pumphrey ........................................ November 1966—April 1967
LTC R. W. Nevins ........................................ April 1967—December 1967
LTC James M. Peterson ................................ January 1969—June 1969
LTC James W. Booth ..................................... June 1969—August 1969
LTC James W. Booth ..................................... September 1969—December 1969
LTC Clark A. Burnett ...................................... December 1969—

“"The Cav of the Cav." That's one of the unique names given to a unique unit, the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

The 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav, is a battalion size unit, 100 percent mobile with organic transport, which includes nearly 100 helicopters. The unit has three air cavalry troops, and each troop has an aero scout platoon, an aero weapons platoon and an aero rifle platoon. Delta Troop is a ground cavalry unit with three platoons mounted on wheeled vehicles.

The mission of the aero scout platoon is to find the enemy. Until 1968 these platoons used OH-13 observation helicopters. By mid-1968 these ships were being replaced by the faster, more maneuverable OH-6A Light Observation
Helicopter (LOH). The scouts skim low over terrain, searching for any sign of enemy movement or activity. The scout platoon is known as the “White” platoon.

The aero weapons, or “Red” platoon, is made up of Huey Cobra (AH-1G) gunships, which replaced UH-1B (Huey) gunships in 1968. Armed with rockets, miniguns and grenade launchers, the “Red” gunships join the “White” LOH to form the “Pink” team, the basic working unit of the 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav. The gunship protects the LOH, and can immediately attack a target.

The aero rifle platoon, the “Blue” platoon, complements the aerial reconnaissance capabilities of the Pink Team by providing ground reconnaissance. Transported by Huey slicks, the Blues can be quickly inserted to check the sightings of the aerial observer, assess the damage inflicted by Cobra or B-52 strikes and pursue enemy elements. Generally only a patrol-size element will be inserted initially, then the rest of the platoon.

Although the 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav, is highly effective in destroying the enemy, its primary mission is to find and fix the enemy. Once it has done that it may call in air strikes, aerial rocket artillery, artillery and infantry rifle units as needed.

The ground cavalry group is designed to perform reconnaissance and surveillance operations, provide security, and engage the enemy as an economy of force unit. It may secure a road, escort a convoy, or collect information with roving patrols through hamlets and villages.

Although most of the 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav, did not arrive in Vietnam until mid-September 1965 when the USNS Darby docked at Qui Nhon, an advance party had landed in August to begin the search for the enemy. On August 17, 1965, Major Donald G. Radcliff, the squadron’s executive officer, became the 1st Air Cavalry Division’s first casualty. He was killed in action on an aviation mission. The division base camp at An Khe was later named in his honor.

The first major operation the squadron participated in was SHINY BAYONET in October 1965. Contact was constant, but involved mainly small bands of Viet Cong who were engaged with air to ground fire.

In late October the squadron moved to Pleiku Province, where the Pleiku Campaign was beginning. The squadron became the first unit in the division to capture any North Vietnamese soldiers when Charlie Troop took three NVA prisoners on October 30 near Pleiku.

On the morning of November 1 Bravo Troop scouts spotted eight enemy hiding in foxholes and in nearby trees. Soon Charlie Troop scouts spotted 34 more NVA in the area. An hour after the first sighting the Bravo Troop rifles were on the ground and in contact.

As the battle intensified, the squadron...
ron’s other rifle platoons were committed. The greatly outnumbered Blues fought off enemy counterattacks and refused to yield to enemy mortars and snipers, even though the closeness of the contact excluded the use of artillery or aerial rocket support. After fighting 10 hours, the Blues were extracted and the task of finishing off the remaining enemy given to the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry. The operation cost the 3rd NVA Regiment its aid station, $40,000 worth of medical supplies and 99 killed.

Two nights later the squadron again drew blood. The evening was clear and brightly lit by a full moon. The squadron had established a patrol-ambush base near the Ia Drang River and had set out ambushes. Charlie Troop Blues, manning the southernmost site, spotted a large, heavily laden NVA unit of company size. The enemy paused to take a rest break just outside the killing zone. As the NVA smoked and joked for an hour and a half, the Blues quietly sweated it out. Finally the NVA unit moved noisily along the trail. The lead element was allowed to pass, then the trap was sprung.

Eight claymore mines simultaneously detonated, and the ambushers opened up with their M-16s. The enemy’s lead element was blasted by three claymores and rifle fire from the flank security element. No fire was returned.

Deciding that the ambushed unit was probably the vanguard of a larger force, the platoon leader, Captain Charles Knowlen, quickly withdrew to the patrol-ambush base. He was right. At 10:20 p.m. a battalion-size enemy force hit the base. When attempts to overrun the base failed, the NVA had snipers firing from trees, using the bright moonlight to their advantage.

It was some time before enough space was established between defenders and attackers to permit gunships to blow the snipers from the trees. Daring night helicopter landings on the tiny LZ carried the squadron’s wounded to safety and brought them reinforcements.

The ambush marked two significant firsts for the 1st Cav Division and the 1st Squadron. It was the first heliborne reinforcement at night of a unit in contact, and the first time that ARA had been employed at night in such close support—within 50 meters of friendly troops. Ninety-eight NVA were killed and 10 detained, and more than 120,000 rounds of 7.62 ammunition evacuated or destroyed.

The squadron continued to find and fix enemy elements throughout 1965, initiating most of the division’s contacts. Christmas was celebrated in real airborne style: As the squadron’s helicopters buzzed the village of An Khe, the men threw toys to the children below.

Operation MASH/WHITE WING was launched on January 25, 1966, in Binh Dinh Province near the Vietnamese coast. As it began the squadron operated with excessive activity away from the true target areas for deception purposes. As the campaign picked up momentum, the squadron operated in earnest locating numerous targets and
Bravo Troop “Blues” gather before moving out in pursuit of a suspected enemy into force. If they make contact, the Blues are more than capable of holding their own until regular reinforcements can be assaulted the fight. Once relieved in the action, the Blues are taken out and returned to their base of operations to wait for another shot at the enemy.

inflicting many casualties. The unit also performed its own operation, nicknamed “Kidnap,” as Charlie Troop swooped into the An Lao Valley to detain two residents for questioning about enemy activity. As the suspects were extracted heavy enemy fire was received from the area, and the pair proved to be VC cadre.

The squadron was operating near the Chu Pong Massif on the Cambodian border when on March 30 Bravo Troop scouts sighted 32 enemy in well entrenched positions. Squadron gunships raked the area and the Air Force hit it with napalm. Alpha Troop’s Blue platoon assaulted and took a prisoner, who informed them that there were 1,000 enemy in the area. The platoon started to withdraw to the LZ for extraction when it came under fire from enemy troops in foxholes and bunkers.

The platoon continued to move in dispersed elements toward the LZ while squadron gunships provided fire support. As the gunships exhausted their ammunition the crews resorted to M-16s and side arms to keep the pressure off their comrades on the ground. The Blues were relieved by the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, but the squadron’s extraction was marred by the crash of two lift ships. The Viet Cong left 197 bodies on the field of battle, and some 200 more were estimated killed.

In the summer of 1966 the squadron played a major role in the division’s search and clear operations, providing road security and gaining intelligence.

Bravo Troop moved with the 2nd and 3rd Brigades back to the Pleiku area in August for Operation PAUL REVERE II. Once again the division smashed enemy activities in the Chu Pong-Ia Drang area. Bravo Troop was at the forefront of the fighting, earning a Valorous Unit Citation for its actions from August 9 to August 16 near Plei Me. According to the citation the men of Bravo Troop “not only engaged hostile forces with lightning-like strikes, but also exposed themselves to extreme danger in locating and capturing numerous enemy soldiers.” The troop took credit for a large number of the 861 enemy killed in the action.

On October 2 the squadron made the division’s first contact in Operation IRVING. A scout team saw seven men in green and tan uniforms carrying packs on Hung Lac Peninsula near Hoa Hoi Village. The Alpha Troop commander was on the scene almost immediately, drawing enemy fire to determine their precise location. Racing through the enemy bullets he made a gun run, killing three VC, then hovered his ship 20 feet above the rice paddies to kill five more VC.

Alpha Troop’s infantry platoon was inserted with the mission of passing through the village and searching it. Within minutes of landing the Blues made contact. The rifle platoon moved toward the village under heavy fire. In a daring display of courage, Private First Class John F. Wiegart, a grenadier with the third squad, expended all his grenades attempting to knock out two
Travelling “light to fight” (carrying only weapons, ammo and water), Bravo Troop’s Blues prepare to move out on a sweep through the An Lao Valley on July 28, 1967. Their commander (center) is Lieutenant Billy Johnson. At that time the Blues sported blue and white neck scarves. 

.50 caliber machinegun positions, then charged one with his .45 caliber pistol, killing the two man NVA crew. Out of .45 ammo, he grabbed one of the dead soldiers’ AK-47 rifles and continued the firefight.

The second enemy machinegun was firing directly into the main body of the platoon and was well covered by automatic rifles. Having returned from refueling his gunship, the troop commander hovered 20 to 30 feet above the enemy while Specialist Five Larry Wright and Private First Class Robert Andrews climbed out onto the Huey’s skids to pour machinegun and M-79 fire into the enemy position, killing more than 30 NVA.

As the Blues continued their advance they found that every courtyard and field in and around the village was encircled by trenches and hedgerows two and three deep in which well-armed NVA in squad sized groups were either hiding, delivering fire on the platoon or crawling to the west to escape. At one point, the troop aircraft placed their fire three feet in front of friendlies to eliminate two machineguns.

Private First Class Lynn Gaylord was moving with his squad of Blues toward the village when he spotted a machinegun no one else had seen. To warn the others, Gaylord stood up and ran from position to position until he drew fire, an enemy round ripping into his shoulder. His action enabled his fellow riflemen to spot the gun and destroy it with 18 hand grenades. Gaylord later received the Silver Star.

While the rest of the platoon had advanced toward the village, the fifth squad had been pinned down. Two weapons teams brought their ships to the squad’s aid, raking the enemy positions with rockets and miniguns. The troop commander flew his aircraft to the squad and hovered between it and the enemy, hoping to draw fire long enough to permit the squad to break contact and withdraw to the LZ. Because of its casualties the squad could not withdraw, but did move to a covered position.

The troop commander had his ship touch down to pick up the squad’s seriously wounded medic, although by this time the crew had exhausted all the ammunition for its organic weapons. As the crew chief dismounted to retrieve the medic, the ship’s pilot, First Lieutenant Patrick Haley, saw an NVA approaching from the rear. The pilot raised the Huey and swung the tail rotor into the NVA, killing him.

In a hail of enemy fire the Huey lifted off. Enemy rounds splattered into the fuel cell, the hydraulic and transmission lines. The wounded bird limped the 150 meters to the LZ where the medic was evacuated by another bird and the lieutenant called in for a new aircraft.

The squadron had fulfilled its mission of locating and fixing the enemy, and units of the 1st Bn, 12th Cav, were moving to the village to engage the NVA. As they did so, they also came under enemy fire. A scout team located two enemy machinegun positions. Despite serious damage to the bird from the enemy fire, the crew destroyed one by dropping grenades and marked the other for the gunships. With both positions out of commission the scout aircraft made a forced landing next to the downed command helicopter.

By 11:05 a.m. Alpha Troop Blues were ready for extraction. Alpha Troop aircraft continued to support friendly elements in the area for the rest of the
day. When the action was over, the enemy had sustained 233 confirmed KIAs.

For this and other actions in October 1966 the 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav, was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for "unparalleled application of exceptional imagination, fearless courage and unrelenting determination."

The squadron maintained a high level of activity for the rest of 1966. The division was sweeping the Kim Son Valley on November 30 when squadron scout ships spotted movement in the hamlet of Phu Huu. Charlie Troop Blues were inserted and spent the night. When the infantrymen began to move forward in the morning they were pinned down by automatic and semi-automatic weapons fire. The squadron having made the initial contact, additional troops were piled on. By the time the squadron withdrew, 40 dead enemy were accounted for.

Operation THAYER II, which began in 1966, carried over to 1967 as the division continued search and destroy operations in the Binh Dinh Province. Troops Alpha and Bravo participated until the operation's end in February.

THAYER II was succeeded by Operation PERSHING, the division's longest operation, which continued until early...
A 1st of the 9th Cobra comes home late from a mission (above). Another Cobra pilot is seen in a cockpit mirror as he scans the terrain for the enemy (right), and a Pink Team, one Red Platoon Cobra gunship and one White Platoon LOH, entice the enemy for their special one-two punch.

1968 from Qui Nhon to Quang Ngai.

Impetuous enemy riflemen touched off the first major engagement of PERSHING when they fired on a squadron gunship the morning of March 6. A squadron infantry platoon was air assaulted into the area and immediately made heavy contact. Other units moved in to block escape routes. Seventy-six enemy were killed before the fighting stopped.

In April 1967 Bravo Troop deployed from the PERSHING area of operations to LZ Montezuma at Duc Pho to support the division's 2nd Brigade in Operation LEJEUNE. Although the division's infantry units returned to Operation PEGASUS on April 22, the troop remained until June supporting the 25th Infantry Division. When the troop returned it had killed 471 enemy and detained 2,100 suspects. The 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, commander said of Bravo Troop, “I have seen 'Can Do' units and 'Will Do' units but you are the first 'Do Do' unit I have ever seen.”

After LEJEUNE, Bravo Troop joined other squadron units in continuing to compile an outstanding record in Operation PERSHING. In June the squadron started five battalion size battles and accounted for more than 300 enemy dead. Probably the highest point for the squadron in PERSHING came in October of 1967. The squadron's actions were concentrated in the An Lao Valley-Bong Son Plain area and the Que Son Valley, although Bravo Troop made important contacts in the Chu Lai vicinity as a part of Operation WALLOWA.

Among the major actions of the month was one on October 10 when squadron elements located an enemy infiltration group and destroyed 54 NVA soldiers. On October 20 gunships killed 51 NVA from a sapper battalion. Squadron troops in the PERSHING AO killed a total of 514 enemy in October, the highest for any month since the squadron arrived in Vietnam, and that was only a partial count, for B Troop accounted for 350 enemy while working with the Americal Division.

Bravo Troop made a significant intelligence find on December 5, 1967. A few kilometers from a firebase, the troop commander's gunship cut down four khaki-clad NVA. More NVA popped up and the troop eliminated 13 more. The Blue platoon went into the area to investigate. They reported something unusual: nine of the enemy soldiers were armed with pistols and had numerous documents and maps in their packs. They were rushed back to brigade headquarters where a read-out revealed that the gunships had slain the commander of the 3rd Regiment, 2nd NVA Division, the political officer (a full colonel) of the division, the division intelligence officer and the operations officer. The documents further revealed a battle plan, fully detailed with maps and operations orders for an attack on the 1st Cav Division's bases in the area. The warning of the squadron was instrumental in turning back the NVA attack when it came a month later.

The day after that find the squadron was responsible for starting one of PERSHING'S biggest battles. On the afternoon of December 6 squadron scout ships noticed antennas protruding from huts on the lush Bong Son Plain at the village of Dai Dong. A Blue platoon airlifted into the area was quickly in heavy contact, as was another Blue platoon sent to reinforce them. They were fighting the 3rd NVA Division's

(Continued on P. 272)
ARTILLERY
DIVISION ARTILLERY

COMMANDERS

COL William A. Becker ......................... July 1965—January 1966
COL William F. Brand ........................ January 1966—March 1967
COL George W. Putnam, Jr ...................... March 1967—September 1967
COL William R. Wolfe .......................... March 1968—February 1969
COL James A. Munson ............................ February 1969—October 1969
COL Morris J. Brady ............................. October 1969—

The Division Artillery (DIVARTY) shield is the same shape as the division's shoulder patch. The background is yellow and a black horse's head is in the upper right hand corner, a black cannon in the lower right and a yellow rocket is located in the red band. The golden-yellow background and the horse indicate that the unit is part of the 1st Cavalry Division. The band of red symbolizes the traditional artillery color and the rocket and cannon, of course, denote the weapons used. The motto "First and Foremost" across the top of the shield depicts the unit's pride and desire for excellence.

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery earned the Presidential Unit Citation for the Pleiku Campaign. In addition, the battery has been awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period September 13, 1966, to July 31, 1967.

The "Redlegs" of Division Artillery (DIVARTY) sailed to Vietnam aboard the USS Upshur, arriving at Qui Nhon September 5, 1965. Their last two weeks in September were spent setting up unit headquarters at Camp Radcliff, the then division basecamp at An Khe.

Under DIVARTY control artillery units participated in their first major actions during the month of October. That operation was called SHINY BAYONET. DIVARTY's role, as it would be in all division operations, was to coordinate tube artillery, aerial rocket artillery, air strikes and artillery forward observers to provide "accurate, fast and massive firepower."

They shifted a forward element to the Catecka Tea Plantation some 14 kilometers south of Pleiku in late November. Then began the Pleiku Campaign, one for which the division would eventually win the Presidential Unit Citation. DIVARTY's fire support was instrumental in breaking up enemy efforts to
A cannoneer shields his face from dust, dirt and small stones flying in the 100-mile-an-hour rotor wash of a huge Chinook helicopter as it slings in a 105 mm howitzer for Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery, on the Bong Son Plain.

Division had taken another step forward in air mobility. The other historical “first” was the successful firing of the combination SS-11 missile/2.75 inch rocket system on February 2. Designed by 1st Cav Warrant Officer Robert W. Maxwell, the weapons system was the first that allowed Cav aerial rocket helicopters to carry both the SS-11 and the 2.75 inch rocket at the same time.

From March 25, 1966, to April 8, 1966, DIVARTY participated in Operation LINCOLN in the central highlands southwest of Pleiku, centered in the Chu Pong Massif—Ia Drang River area. Artillery accounted for more than 200 enemy killed during the operation. Operations later in May resulted in little contact, but provided valuable training in employment and movement of the 105 mm howitzer, Model 102.

DIVARTY saw action in numerous other areas throughout 1966. By the end of the year it had participated in 14 major combat operations from the South China Sea west to Vinh Than Valley in Binh Dinh Province, and from the Binh Dinh-Quang Ngai Province boundary in the north to Phu Cat in the south. Forward elements of the artillery headquarters shifted with the combat operations, but an element always remained at Camp Radcliff to perform the vital missions of providing counter mortar coverage, survey and metro support, and coordination for defensive fires.

The unit's civic action program continued to aid Tu Luong. A medical dispensary in the village was completed and furnished with supplies. The artillerymen also helped in the construction of a school and supplied surplus fruit.

(Continued on P. 270)
The eagle in the upper right hand corner of the shield is the eagle of Amnedes, one of the 19th Artillery’s major battles in World War I. The crown on the eagle’s head is the crown of the king of battle. The red bar is for service. The diamond in the lower left corner represents the 5th Infantry Division shoulder patch. The regiment served with the 5th Infantry in World War I. The gold background is the secondary color of the artillery. Red is the artillery’s primary color.

The 19th Artillery was constituted on June 3, 1916, in the Regular Army as the 19th Field Artillery. It was organized June 1, 1917, at Camp Wilson, Texas. On December 12, 1917, the regiment was assigned to the 5th Division (later 5th Infantry Division). The unit was inactivated on September 6, 1921, at Camp Bragg, North Carolina.

The 19th Field Artillery was activated October 5, 1939, at Fort Knox, Kentucky. It was reorganized and redesignated October 1, 1940, as the 19th Field Artillery Battalion.

The battalion was redesignated on October 15, 1957, as the 2nd Howitzer Battalion, 19th Artillery, and activated and assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division in Korea (concurrently, organic elements were constituted and activated). On September 1, 1963, the unit was redesignated 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery.

The battalion was transferred (less personnel and equipment) from Korea to Fort Benning, Georgia, on July 1, 1965, and reorganized as part of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

The 19th Artillery participated in the campaigns of St. Mihiel and Lorraine (1918) in World War I, and Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe in World War II.

With the rest of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), the battalion received the Presidential Unit Citation for the Pleiku Province Campaign in 1965. A 13 man detachment won the Presidential Unit Citation (First Oak Leaf Cluster) for actions in October 1966. Battery B won a PUC for action on LZ Bird in December 1966.

As the gunner checks his aim, another artilleryman prepares to yank the lanyard that will start the 105 mm howitzer’s 38-pound high explosive shell on its way.
The USNS Geiger steamed into the harbor at Qui Nhon, Vietnam, on September 19, 1965, carrying the 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 19th Artillery, 1st Cav Division (Airmobile). At the time the battalion was not only airmobile, but airborne, the only artillery battalion in the Army to share those designations.

The battalion's batteries were soon in place in the vicinity of the division's Camp Radcliff base camp at An Khe. Their first missions were harassment and interdiction fires and fires at suspected Viet Cong locations.

On October 23 the battalion received a warning order to be prepared to move to the vicinity of Pleiku near the Cambodian border. The Pleiku Campaign, for which the division would win a Presidential Unit Citation, had begun. The battalion's batteries moved to firing positions on Highway 14. An ARVN column was rolling down the highway toward the beleaguered Plei Me Special Forces Camp. When the column was ambushed, Bravo Battery provided close-in defensive fires that assisted the armored vehicles in beating off the Viet Cong.

In November elements of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, attacked an NVA staging area. Charlie Battery's RTO with the infantry unit, Private First Class Joseph G. Brown, called very close artillery fire to smash the enemy; he called it so close, in fact, that the rounds were bursting around him. The enemy retreated leaving 30 dead.

The battalion returned to the An Khe area in mid-November. The battalion at Pleiku had given the batteries valuable combat experience and improved their methods of operations. Lessons such as the importance of sling loading ammunition and equipment, rather than loading it internally, had been learned and would be put into effective use in the future.

The first day of the new year saw the battalion leave Camp Radcliff for Pleiku to support 1st Brigade operations in search of the enemy. Light contact characterized the action and the battalion was back at An Khe on January 20, 1966.

After supporting several 1st Brigade operations in the east, the battalion went to Pleiku once more for Operation LINCOLN in late March. There was continuous contact with squad size units by the brigade's infantry, and the battalion's supporting fires caused 68 NVA casualties.

In April the battalion was equipped with the M102 howitzer. They soon put them to use in Operation CRAZY HORSE, an action marked by the heaviest use of artillery up to that time. Routes of enemy movement in the Vinh Thanh Valley were continually sealed by artillery interdiction. The operation lasted from mid-May to June 5. The battalion fired more than 37,000 rounds of ammunition and was credited with 75 Viet Cong killed.

For action on October 2 and 3 a 13 man detachment of the battalion, elements of the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, and the entire 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, won the Presidential Unit Citation. The artillerymen were observers with the infantry companies as they battled well-entrenched enemy in Hoa Hoi village. The citation praised the Skytroopers for “determination and extraordinary courage.”

In December Bravo Battery won more fame for the battalion when LZ Bird in the Kim Son Valley was attacked. The attack from the east surprised First Lieutenant Charles R. Campanella, a forward observer for the battalion. But he reacted quickly taking command.

In October 1968, artillerymen of the 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery, were sitting astride the rolling and forested terrain of LZ Davis in the rugged foothills near Dak To. They were there to provide fire support for infantrymen in Operation COMANCHE FALLS.
of the LZ's rifle company when all its officers were either killed or wounded. Before the night was over he had won the Silver Star.

Bravo Battery's Captain Leonard L. Schlenker was asleep but fully clothed when the attack started. As he scrambled outside "a line of red tracers went between me and the FDC (fire direction center)." When the fire broke off for a moment Schlenker dashed to the FDC tent and called for supporting fires. Seconds later the radio was knocked out. The captain headed for his guns. He, too, won the Silver Star.

Specialist Four Charles S. Tournage, a medic for the battery, was hit by white phosphorous from an ammo bunker that had taken a direct mortar hit. When his clothes started to smoke, Tournage stripped them off as he wallowed in a mud puddle to stop the smoldering. Later, the unclad mud-covered medic was mistaken for an NVA by an NVA leader who started waving and giving him directions. Tournage shot him point-blank with an M-79 shotgun round.

Perched on a windblown mountaintop landing zone called Laramie, the gun crews (above) of "Boom Boom" wait for final word on target coordinates during a fire mission in support of Operation PERSHING. A 228th ASHB Chinook (below) hovers in to deliver a sling load of artillery ammunition atop LZ Laramie for the men and guns of the 2nd of the 19th.
Then he turned to treating the wounded, ignoring the enemy forces swarming through the camp. Tournage was another Silver Star winner.

First Lieutenant John D. Piper was helping man number two 105 howitzer when he decided to use a Bee Hive round—a cannister of steel darts designed to be fired at massed infantry at close range. The battery executive officer and Staff Sergeant Robert L. Underwood loaded the round and pointed his gun toward a 155 position now overrun by some 150 NVA. Lacking a flare to alert friendlies of the firing of the round, the lieutenant screamed “Bee Hive! Bee Hive!” Cavalrymen between the 105 and the 155 laid flat and the Bee Hive flew over them, sounding, said one, “Like a million whips being whirled over my head.” The lieutenant fired one more Bee Hive and the enemy advance in that section of the LZ came to a dead stop.

Throughout the LZ the “Redlegs” used everything from M-14s to 45s to keep the enemy from destroying their guns, and in the face of impossible odds they kept several of the howitzers firing. With the help of aerial rocket artillery and a thousand supporting rounds fired by the battalion from other LZs, the enemy attack was broken. By the time the pursuit of the enemy was finished 266 enemy had died as a result of the unsuccessful assault and the battery ultimately was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

In 1967 the battalion continued to support 1st Brigade operations throughout the II Corps area, primarily in the division’s longest action, Operation PERSHING, aimed at clearing the Bong Son Plains and An Lao Valley near the Vietnamese coast of the enemy. The battalion fired its 500,000th round in Vietnam in September of 1967.

As 1968 began, the battalion continued to support the 1st Brigade’s search and clear operations in the An Lao Valley and Bong Son Plain. In the latter part of January the division moved to the I Corps Tactical Zone. The battalion made eight moves, fired 1,470 missions and 27,812 rounds from January 18 to January 31.

Throughout this period and the month of February the city of Quang Tri was threatened by five NVA regiments. Three of the regiments in succession tried to take the city, but the combination of 1st Brigade infantry and battalion howitzers crushed their efforts. In April and May the battalion provided artillery fire as division elements entered the enemy’s longtime sanctuary in the A Shau Valley. The operation was characterized by light to heavy fighting requiring continuous artillery support.

In October and November the division and the 2nd Bn, 19th Arty, left Vietnam’s northernmost provinces for the III Corps Tactical Zone, with the assignment of interdicting the enemy infiltration routes that led from Cambodia toward Saigon. The battalion’s new home was Tay Ninh.

In March the battalion fired its one (Continued on P. 294)

Sergeant Jesse Thomas, a gunner with Battery A, 2nd of the 19th, brings steel on steel as he stakes in a 105 mm howitzer shortly after arriving at the battery’s new temporary home, LZ Carolyn. The landing zone is located in III Corps.