The shield of the 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery, is silver divided by a red band. In the upper corner is a gold demi-sun charged with an Aztec banner. In the lower corner is an eagle with closed wings and a collar. The red band denotes that this is an artillery unit. The sun and banner were symbols of the 3rd Field Artillery, from which the 21st was formed. The eagle is one of the supporters of the arms of St. Mihiel, site of the most important World War I engagement in which the regiment participated.

Cav cannoneers (right) move to clear the area as a CH-47 Chinook brings in a 105 mm howitzer and a load of ammo for a new 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery, gun emplacement and landing zone. Another 1st of the 21st artillery crew (opposite page) readies its howitzer for a sling out and move from FSB Jerri, located in III Corps.
The 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery, was organized June 1, 1917, in the Regular Army at Camp Wilson Texas, as Battery A, 21st Field Artillery. The unit was assigned to the 5th Division on December 12, 1917. The battery was relieved from assignment to the 5th Division on November 4, 1920, and inactivated at Camp Bragg, North Carolina, on September 23, 1921.

The unit was assigned to the 9th Division on March 24, 1923. It was relieved from this assignment on January 1, 1930, and assigned to the 5th Division (later 5th Infantry Division). The battery was activated on October 6, 1939, at Fort Knox, Kentucky. On October 1, 1940, the unit was reorganized and redesignated as Battery A, 21st Field Artillery Battalion.

The battery was inactivated June 1, 1957, at Fort Ord, California, and relieved from assignment to the 5th Division. Concurrently it was reorganized and redesignated 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery, and assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division and activated in Korea. Organic elements were simultaneously constituted and activated. In July 1963, the battalion became part of the 1st Cav Division (Airmobile).

In World War I the battalion participated in the St. Mihiel and Lorraine (1918) campaigns. In World War II the battalion was at Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe.

In Vietnam the battalion was decorated with the Presidential Unit Citation (streamer embroidered PLEIKU PROVINCE) and with the Meritorious Unit Citation (streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1967). Bravo Battery received the Valorous Unit Award (streamer embroidered QUANG NAM) for extraordinary heroism in defense of LZ Leslie in January 1968.

The most important battles of the Pleiku action came at LZs Albany and X-Ray in mid-November. The 1st Bn, 21st Arty, fired artillery support for both, its batteries pumping out more than 4,400 high explosive rounds from their position at LZ Falcon to protect the embattled Skytroopers at LZ X-Ray on the night of November 14.

The battalion also participated in the last major action of 1965, Operation CLEAN HOUSE, in which the 3rd Brigade swept a valley northeast of Binh Khe in Binh Dinh Province. Operation MASHER/WHITE WING was the battalion's first important action in 1966. The battalion fired 27,920 rounds in close support of 3rd Brigade maneuver elements, and was given credit for part of the 806 enemy killed in the operation.

The next significant operation for the battalion was DAVY CROCKETT. The operation began on May 4 and was concluded on May 16. The 21st Artillery was credited with 64 KIA.

On Operation NATHAN HALE/ HENRY CLAY in late June 3rd Brigade elements made heavy contact with VC forces. Continuous artillery fire was provided until contact was broken. Of the 131 VC KIA, 34 died from artillery fire, and it was estimated that 43 more died as a result of artillery inflicted wounds. The battalion fired 21,594 rounds during the 10 day operation.

As a result of heavy contact in the...
vicinity of the Catecka Tea Plantation between the U.S. 25th Division and the 630th NVA Division, the 3rd Brigade was committed to LZ Oasis with the battalion for support. Thus began Operation PAUL REVERE II, which lasted from August 1 to August 25, 1966, with a net result of 687 NVA KIA and 78 NVA detained.

One of the artillery highlights of the operation occurred on August 8. Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, came under heavy fire in the vicinity of LZ Juliet. Charlie Battery quickly answered an urgent call for artillery support, delivering 1,408 high explosive rounds in two hours that eliminated 98 NVA.

Through the rest of 1966 the battalion alternated between base defense of division headquarters at Camp Radcliff and support for 3rd Brigade search and clear operations throughout the division's II Corps AO.

The battalion began 1967 on base defense. In mid-February it departed Camp Radcliff for the Bong Son Plains and Operation PERSHING, which would continue until January of 1969. The battalion would participate in PERSHING until September of 1968. The battalion supported the operations of the 3rd Brigade, which were mainly centered in the An Lao Valley.

In mid-June the battalion temporarily moved to the area north of Kontum for Operation GREELEY. There was only limited contact, and in July the battalion returned to the PERSHING AO.

In late September 1967 the 3rd Brigade and the 1st Bn, 21st Arty, moved into the I Corps Tactical Zone to relieve the 5th Marine Regiment at Hill 63, which Skytrooper units renamed LZ Baldy. This was Operation WALLOWA,
the principal opponents being the 3rd and 21st NVA regiments.

On the morning of October 10, 1967, Charlie Battery at LZ Colt was attacked by sappers who broke through the perimeter wires and attempted to destroy the battery. Continuous self-illumination and direct fire by the battery during the four hour attack were instrumental in turning back the enemy.

For its operations in the period from February 1 to October 31 of 1967, the 1st Bn, 21st Arty, was awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation. The citation praised the battalion for highly responsive and effective artillery support that contributed immeasurably to the success of 3rd Brigade operations. The unit was cited for detecting and engaging well-concealed targets and consequently disrupting enemy plans and inflicting numerous casualties.

Intelligence information indicated the presence of three NVA regiments in the Hiep Due area in November, prompting an air assault by the battalion's batteries on November 6. The battalion gave close support to the infantry in several clashes. In December intelligence reports indicated the enemy planned attacks on 3rd Brigade bases.

The intelligence was right. Early in the morning of January 2, 1968, LZ Leslie, location of Bravo Battery, was hit by 82 mm mortars, 122 mm rockets and an NVA ground attack. Alpha Battery blasted the enemy with direct fire. By dawn the Communists gave up and retreated, leaving 58 bodies behind.

LZ Leslie was attacked again later in the month. The enemy again was repulsed. For its part in stopping the NVA attack, Bravo Battery received a Presidential Unit Citation. According to the citation, the men of the battery "exhibited profound discipline under fire, exemplary courage and a determination to defend their position regardless of personal risk.” The citation said the battery's direct fire was instrumental in halting the enemy onslaught and praised the artillerymen for not seeking shelter during the attack. Those who were not manning the guns used their rifles to pick off enemy soldiers approaching the battery’s perimeter.

The Communists began their all-out Tet Offensive in January of 1968. The battalion moved to I Corps and the area around Hue in February, where its task was to support the 3rd Brigade in the liberation of Hue.

The drive into Hue was characterized by fierce, close contact. With the guns almost as exposed as the infantry, the 1st Bn, 21st Arty, continued to make things uncomfortable for the enemy.

By the time Hue was captured at the end of February the battalion had fired 52,171 rounds to support the brigade's advance.

In late October the battalion received word that it was going south. The divi-(Continued on P. 269)
COMMANDERS

MAJ Robert W. Blum .................................. May 1967—July 1967
LTC John G. Kloke .................................. July 1967—June 1968
LTC Richard M. Jennings .............................. June 1968—December 1968
LTC Dwight L. Wilson ................................. December 1968—July 1969
LTC Howard R. Guffey ................................ January 1970—

The shield of the 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery, has a red background, the traditional color of the artillery. The star at the top of the shield symbolizes the North Star and the regiment's World War II service in the Aleutian Islands. The two wavy lines, called "barrulets," are for the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean, indicating that the unit has seen action in lands bordering both. The dragon ("Lindwurm passant") at the bottom of the shield stands for the unit's World War II service in Germany. "Striving to the Highest" is the regiment's motto, indicating its desire to excel.

1st BATTALION
30th ARTILLERY

The unit was organized August 10, 1918, in the Regular Army at Camp Funston, Kansas, as Battery A, 30th Field Artillery, an element of the 10th Division. The unit was demobilized on February 5, 1919, at Camp Funston.

The battalion was reconstituted March 24, 1923, in the Regular Army. It was activated June 4, 1941, at Camp Roberts, California. On May 18, 1944, the unit was reorganized and redesignated Battery A, 521st Field Artillery Battalion. The unit was redesignated Battery A, 30th Field Artillery Battalion, on May 1, 1945. The battery was inactivated February 9, 1949, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It was activated February 22, 1950 at Fort Bragg.

The battalion was attached to the 23rd Artillery at Fort Lewis, Washington October 2, 1963. The battalion was attached to the 1st Cav Division February 10, 1968, and assigned to the division June 1, 1968.

The battalion participated in the Aleutian Islands, Rhineland and Central Europe Campaigns of World War II. It received the Meritorious Unit Commendation for Vietnam actions from October 1966 to September 1967, and another MUC for actions from January to September 1968. Bravo Battery won a Presidential Unit Citation for actions in Dak To in 1966.

A CH-54 "Flying Crane," for the first time in actual combat, lifts a 155mm medium howitzer into a fight. The gun belonged to Bravo Battalion, 30th Artillery, and the gun was being moved to LZ Brass during Operation MASHER/WHITE WING. LZ Brass was "an isolated outpost" atop a ridgeline between the An Lao Valley and the Bong Son Plain. The date was January 25, 1966.
The men and 155 mm howitzers of the 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery, left Oakland, California, on the USNS Sultan in early November 1965. On November 26 the battalion landed in the Republic of Vietnam.

In 1965 and 1966 the battalion, organic to the 1 Field Force, was opcon to several units. In February 1966, while working with the 1st Air Cavalry in operation Masher/White Wing, the unit made history when howitzers from Bravo Battery were airlifted by CH-54 "Sky cranes" to a mountaintop firing position, the first time that a 155 mm towed how itzer was transported by helicopter to a combat position. In 1967 the battalion was committed to the support of the division in Operation PERSHING, the longest Skytrooper action of the war. While the battalion would not become organic to the division until June 1, 1968, from PERSHING forward the two units consistently worked together.

During PERSHING the battalion fired more than 300,000 rounds, supporting the division in actions from the Bong Son Plains and the An Lao Valley to Duc Pho. Observed fires showed some 300 enemy killed by the battalion's batteries, and that was only part of the destruction of enemy personnel, positions and supplies wrought by the battalion.

For its part in Operation PERSHING, and for Charlie Battery's earlier role in Operation PAUL REVERE IV, where it accounted for 81 enemy dead when it blasted apart an NVA ambush near Cambodia, the battalion received the Meritorious Unit Citation. The battalion was praised in the citation for its efficiency in making numerous moves, for the accuracy of its fires, and for a civic action program that provided medical and dental care and hygiene training to 6,000 Vietnamese citizens.

On January 28, 1968, the battalion displaced from the II Corps Tactical Zone to I Corps and the division's new headquarters, Camp Evans. The battalion's operations were concentrated in the Hue-Phu Bai area. Alpha and Bravo Batteries landed inside the walls of Hue on February 19, and churned out 51,000 rounds in direct support of the division's 3rd Brigade as it drove the enemy from their strongholds in and around the imperial city.

The division launched Operation PEGASUS in March, aimed at relieving the beleaguered Marine base at Khe Sanh. The battalion headquarters moved to LZ Stud on March 25 with Charlie
The one millionth round to be fired in action by 1st of the 30th gunners in Vietnam stands ready for loading (above), painted and decorated for the occasion. Weighing at least 96 pounds each, one million rounds of 155 mm ammo represent some 48,000 tons of ordnance thrown against the enemy—a good portion of it fired with the heavy 155s turned down to fire point blank into attacking enemy soldiers at isolated Cav firebases. Less decorative and more businesslike shells (right) stand fused and ready for action.

Battery, which soon was blasting enemy anti-aircraft positions on route to the valley. Alpha and Bravo batteries followed in April, firing ground preparations for combat assaults of the division. In three weeks the battalion’s batteries moved 10 times by air and ground and fired 20,000 rounds.

The division’s next major operation was DELAWARE, the invasion of the NVA’s longtime sanctuary in the A Shau Valley on the Laotian Border. Once again the 1st Bn, 30th Arty, was there. Despite frequent shellings by enemy 130 mm artillery, the battalion’s Bravo and Charlie Batteries continued to provide covering fire until the maneuver battalions completed their operations in May.

On Thanksgiving Day 1969, the cannoneers of Charlie Battery, 1st of the 30th, were in the middle of their meal when called for a fire mission in support of infantry troops who had made contact with the enemy—as usual, the war did not observe the holiday. Old Glory, flying from an engineer stake near one of the battery’s 155 mm guns, shudders in the breeze and muzzle blast put out by the hefty cannon.

For its performance during the Hue, Khe Sanh and A Shau operations the battalion was awarded a second Meritorious Unit Citation. The citation praised the men of the battalion for their knowledge, skill and fast accurate firepower, which “inflicted heavy losses on enemy infantry, destroyed enemy havens and supply installations and gave vital support” to maneuver elements.

In June Charlie Battery’s guns combined with those of a 105 mm battery to fire on two NVA companies moving along a river west of Camp Evans. An aerial observer counted the bodies of 25 enemy.

Just before the division left I Corps for its new area of operations the battalion fired its 750,000th round since arriving in Vietnam. Charlie Battery launched the projectile from LZ Jack at an enemy bunker complex.

By November 10, 1968, all elements of the battalion had arrived in Vietnam’s III Corps Tactical Zone. The batteries would now support the division as it operated north of Saigon near Cambodia, interdicting major enemy supply routes. Charlie Battery was located at Quan Loi, Bravo at LZ Rita, Alpha at Tay Ninh.
and Headquarters and Headquarters Battery at Camp Gorvad, the division basecamp at Phuoc Vinh.

The battalion's first major operation in the new AO was TOAN THANG II. The 155 batteries expended more than 54,000 rounds and were credited with 75 observed enemy dead.

This period from February on would see the men of the battalion repel a number of enemy ground attacks. The first came on February 23 to Alpha Battery on LZ Grant. The battery fired 595 rounds of direct fire and killed at least 13 of the attacking enemy. Grant was hit by a bigger attack on March 8. Alpha Battery again lowered its tubes straight at the onrushing enemy. This withering fire helped account for the 39 NVA killed by artillery in the attack.

LZ Carolyn, a firebase north of Tay Ninh, came under attack on May 6.

1969. Shortly after midnight a trip flare went off and a B-40 rocket slammed into the perimeter. The explosion was followed by many more B-40 and 107 mm rockets, then heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire as the enemy tried to overrun the LZ and succeeded in occupying six bunkers.

"There were several NVA in the bunker 10 feet to the front of our gun position," said Private First Class Jerry Peck, assistant gunner with Bravo Battery's Section 6. "Four of them began to jump over our berm, and throw satchel charges into the pit. But I killed three of them before they could make it."

"(Specialist Four Thomas D.) Pullen kept 'Charlie' off our backs with his M-16 so we could continue to pump rounds from our 155 howitzer," added Peck. The next day the PFC received the Silver Star from Major General E.B. Roberts, 1st Cav Division commander. The battery fired 597 rounds of direct fire, killing 25 of the 170 enemy who died in the attack.

On May 12 LZ Grant was attacked again, this time by an elite NVA sapper battalion. Alpha Battery's Sergeant First Class Norman A. Wilfong exposed himself...
On the 77th Artillery insignia are five gold "fleur-de-lis" on a red background. Above is a green, prickly pear cactus on a golden-yellow background. Below is the regimental motto, "En Garde" (On Guard). The shield is red for artillery. The golden-yellow symbolizes the formation of the organization from cavalry. The cactus indicates service as cavalry on the Mexican border. The fleur-de-lis signify the five major engagements of the unit as artillery in France (WWI).

The 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery, was organized June 11, 1917, in the Regular Army as Troops A and B, 19th Cavalry, at Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont. The unit was converted, consolidated, reorganized and redesignated as Battery A, 77th Field Artillery on November 1, 1917, and assigned on November 19, 1917, to the 4th Division. The battalion was inactivated on September 21, 1921, at Camp Lewis, Washington. The unit was relieved from assignment to the 4th Division and assigned to the 7th Division on March 24, 1923.

The battalion was redesignated on July 1, 1960, as the 1st Howitzer Battalion (105/155 mm: Self-propelled), 77th Arty. The unit was assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division and activated in Korea. On September 1, 1963, the unit was reorganized and redesignated as the 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery. In July of 1965 the battalion was transferred less personnel and equipment and assigned to the newly organized 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

The battalion participated in five European campaigns of World War I. In World War II the battalion had campaign credit for Sicily (with arrowhead), Naples-Foggia, Anzio, Rome-Arno, Southern France (with arrowhead), North Ardennes, Ardennes-Alsace, Rhineland, Central Europe and the Po Valley.

With the rest of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) the 1st Bn, 77th Arty, received the Presidential Unit Citation (streamer embroidered PLEIKU PROVINCE) for action in the Ia Drang Valley in 1965. Battery A’s Forward Observer Section and the battalion’s 3rd Liaison Section received the Valorous Unit Citation for action in March of 1967.

### 1st BATTALION
### 77th ARTILLERY

**COMMANDERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LTC Harold C. Smith</th>
<th>July 1965—August 1966</th>
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<td>LTC Arthur L. Kelly</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAJ George P. Dawson</td>
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<td>LTC James White</td>
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<td>LTC Richard Thompson</td>
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<td>LTC William J. Harrison</td>
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<td>LTC Thomas J. P. Jones</td>
<td>December 1969—</td>
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The 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery, sailed to Vietnam on the USNS Buckner, leaving Charleston, South Carolina, in August 1965 and coming ashore at Qui Nhon, Vietnam, on September 13.

The "On Guard" battalion's first assignment in Vietnam was direct support of the 2nd Brigade in defense of the division's An Khe basecamp. Bravo Battery became the battalion's first battery to fire in support of combat operations in Vietnam when it supported offensive operations of the 101st Airborne Division in September.

In October and November of 1965 the battalion was fully committed to extended combat operations. Alpha Battery kicked off October with an air assault to support a CIDG camp, and Charlie Battery followed to support a relief-in-position.

The 77th Artillery moved out by road convoy on October 8 for what was to become a 42-day operation. The destination was Vinh Thanh Valley; the mission was to aid 2nd Brigade in clearing the valley to permit reestablishment of a Special Forces camp. The combination of infantry and artillery soon drove the enemy from the valley and the camp was reestablished. The On Guard battalion also helped clear an area nearby for a base for the Republic of Korea's Tiger Division.

To the west the battle for the Ia Drang Valley in the Pleiku area had begun and the 2nd Brigade was assigned to assist the 3rd. On November 21, the 1st Bn, 77th Arty, moved to the Pleiku area of operations. Approximately 500 missions and 4,400 rounds later, enemy resistance was broken and the unit returned to An Khe on November 28 to resume base defense.

The unit's batteries spent much of December supporting the 2nd Brigade as it worked to clear the northwest sector of the division AO. It closed the year on base defense at An Khe.

The year had just begun when, on January 4, 1966, the battalion moved out in support of the 2nd Brigade's Operation MATADOR I, an eight-day operation in which the base area for the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, was secured at Pleiku. MATADOR II began on January 12 when the 77th Artillery assaulted into two LZs west of Kontum to assist search and destroy operations along the Cambodian border.

The battalion was involved in February in its heaviest fighting to that time, when the action switched to the Bong Son area and Operation Masher/White Wing. The 77th Artillery would spend over a month in this operation. Before it was over the battalion would be responsible for direct support of five infantry battalions. Not only did the unit fire 2,012 missions and 20,433 rounds, but it coordinated the reinforcing fires of 155 mm, 175 mm, 8-inch and aerial rocket artillery. During the An Lao Valley phase of the campaign the battalion fired Division Artillery's 200,000th round in Vietnam.

Through July the 77th Artillery batteries alternated between base defense and operations characterized by light contact. Increased enemy activity southeast of Pleiku in early August signaled the beginning of Operation Paul Revere II. The battalion was immediately deployed to western Pleiku Province to

A 1st of the 77th cannoneer quickly dispatches the slightly warm cannonister from a 105 mm round just fired during a high angle mission.
support the 2nd Brigade in a major campaign against the 630th NVA Division. The brigade hit heavy contact when it assaulted into the Chu Pong Massiff on the Cambodian border. The battalion fired steadily in ground assault preparations, suppressive fire, and harassment and interdiction fire. By the end of August the enemy fled across the border.

The 1st Cav Division's longest operation began in February 1967 and would last until January 1968 as Skytroopers worked in Operation PERSHING to clear the enemy from the coastal areas of I Corps, the terrain ranging from rugged hills to valleys and sandy plains. On more than half a dozen LZs south of the Bong Son River in the Phu My District the guns of the 1st Bn, 77th Arty, boomed their support for 2nd Brigade operations.

In March the battalion's 3rd Liaison Section and its forward observer section, working with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, won the Valorous Unit Citation. The infantry battalion made heavy contact March 11 on the Bong Son
Plain. In a vicious firefight lasting throughout the night, skillful employment of artillery enabled the wounded to be evacuated and helped reduce two NVA battalions to ineffectiveness.

While other battalion units continued their support of Operation PERSHING, Charlie Battery moved out of the PERSHING AO in September to support the 3rd Brigade in Operation WALLOWA.

In early January 1968, both Alpha and Charlie Battery were operationally controlled by the 3rd Brigade at LZ Ross. On January 2 the NVA blasted Ross with 200 82 mm mortars and 20 122 mm rockets, then launched a ground attack. The batteries decimated the enemy with direct counter-mortar fire. After the NVA retreated, 143 enemy bodies were found around the perimeter.

Later in January the Communists launched their all-out bid for power, the Tet Offensive. In February, as the 1st Cav’s infantry units moved toward Hue to drive the enemy from that important city, the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, ran into stiff resistance. The unit desperately needed artillery support, therefore two howitzers from the 77th Artillery were airlifted to an ARVN camp within range of the firefight. Although the enemy hit the camp with mortars 14 times that day, the “Redlegs” kept pumping out their rounds at the NVA.

The battalion moved to LZ Stud in April to prepare for movement to firebases south of Khe Sanh, where the batteries supported the division’s drive to relieve the besieged Marine base. For those two weeks in May the battalion shifted its operations to the Dong Ha area, then moved to LZ Jane to support the 2nd Brigade in rice denial operations in the vicinity of the “Street without Joy” on Highway 1.

In June an aerial observer spotted two NVA companies in a dense jungle. Alpha Battery, combined with air strikes, poured heavy fire into the area, accounting for 25 NVA killed. The observer estimated the number of dead “perhaps closer to 80 or even 100. The ones we found were floating in the river. The others had been carried away.”

Through the summer and fall of 1968 the battalion supported operation JEB STUART III, firing a total of 155,094 rounds. In October Charlie Battery moved to the III Corps AO and the rest of the battalion followed in November.

The unit’s Headquarters Battery began 1969 in Quan Loi, then the 2nd Brigade basecamp. The battalion’s firing battery at Quan Loi fired an average of 10 missions nightly.

Charlie Battery, stationed at LZ Grant, played a vital role in February and March in repulsing several ground attacks against the small LZ.

The worst attack came March 8. Shortly after midnight a barrage of rockets and mortars hit the base; simultaneously, two reinforced NVA battalions began their assault.

Enemy rockets, mortars, recoilless rifle and machinegun fire fell throughout the base as the NVA reached LZ Grant’s barbed wire. The artillerymen cranked their howitzers down and fired point blank. Several NVA broke through the wire. Charlie Battery, firing with short fuses timed to tenths of a second, shot airbursts just above the wire. The battle rocked back and forth until first light. When it was over, 157 NVA were dead.

(Continued on P. 283)

This Ist of the 77th battery has just been landing on a mountain top near Quang Tri and is immediately called upon to shell the slopes beneath it.
The red background of the shield of Battery E, 82nd Artillery, is the traditional color of the artillery. The dragon in the upper left box comes from the arms of the 1st Cavalry Division, the regiment’s parent organization. The black projectile on the wavy bar symbolizes the shell fired by the regiment across the Rio Grande River in clearing Juarez of Villasias on June 15, 1919. It was the regiment’s first hostile shot.

The battery was organized June 5, 1917, in the Regular Army at Fort D. A. Russell, Wyoming, as Troops I and K, 24th Cavalry. The unit was consolidated, converted, reorganized and redesignated November 1, 1917, as Battery E, 82nd Field Artillery, and concurrently assigned to the 15th Cavalry Division.

The battery was absorbed by Battery B, 82nd Field Artillery Battalion, on January 3, 1941. Battery E was reconstituted June 1, 1958. It is entitled to share history and honors of Battery B, 82nd Field Artillery Battalion, for the period from January 3, 1941, to June 1, 1958. The battery was redesignated July 31, 1959, as Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 5th Battalion, 82nd Artillery.

Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Battery, 5th Battalion, 82nd Artillery, was reorganized and redesignated Battery E, 82nd Artillery, and concurrently transferred (less personnel and equipment) on July 1, 1965, from Korea to Fort Benning, Georgia, reorganized and assigned to the new 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

The battery participated in the New Guinea, Bismarck Archipelago, Leyte (with arrowhead) and the Luzon Campaigns of World War II. In Korea the battery participated in the UN Offensive, UN Countercampaign, UN Counteroffensive, CCF Spring Offensive, UN Summer-Fall Offensive and Second Korean Winter Campaigns. The battery has been decorated with the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (streamer embroidered OCTOBER 1944 to JULY 1945), the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation (streamer embroidered WAEGWAN-TAEGU), the Chryssoun Aristion Andrias (Bravery Gold Medal of Greece) (streamer embroidered KOREA), the Presidential Unit Citation (streamer embroidered PLEIKU PROVINCE) and the Meritorious Unit Commendation (streamer embroidered VIETNAM, 1966–1967).

A light observation helicopter (LOH) of Battery E, 82nd Artillery, is silhouetted in the sun as it searches for signs of the enemy in the jungle below. The maneuverable LOH—almost like a hummingbird in its aerial actions—can often use the sun to its advantage in avoiding enemy fire. The darting LOH is hard enough to draw a bead upon, even when the sun isn’t in the enemy’s eyes. The battery’s aircraft are used for Division Artillery reconnaissance missions.
Another of the 82nd’s aircraft, the U-6 Beaver, wings off from Camp Gorvad on a cloudy day for a mission of observation. The four-seater monoplane is also used to transport personnel in the business of conducting the artillery war. Along with the Cav’s OV-1 Mohawk (twin engine observation and radar aircraft) and the O-1 Bird Dog (single engine observation and radar aircraft) and the O-1 Bird Dog (single engine observation and spotter aircraft), the Beaver is one of the minority of fixed-wing aircraft in the primarily helicopter populated skies over “Cav Country.”

The mission of Battery E (Aviation), 82nd Artillery, is to provide aerial reconnaissance, adjustment of artillery fire and command liaison for the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), with secondary functions of aerial surveillance, limited resupply of artillery elements, personnel lift and medical evacuation. The battery is organic to Division Artillery (DIVARTY).

Elements of the battery began to arrive in Vietnam in August 1965. By September 30 Echo Battery pilots had logged 359 hours in 382 missions. At the time the battery’s main aircraft was the OH-13 observation helicopter. The unit also had four Huey UH-1B helicopters.

Throughout the rest of 1965 the battery provided observation helicopters to support the division’s artillery units in various operations. The helicopters enabled effective reconnaissance and location of targets and aerial adjustment of fires.

The most important action in 1965 was in Pleiku Province near the Cambodian border. This operation would win the entire 1st Cavalry Division the Presidential Unit Citation. During the campaign the battery’s aircraft flew 1,234 hours and 2,489 sorties.

In the early days of the 82nd Artillery’s deployment in Vietnam, the OH-13 helicopter served as the main observation platform for the unit’s fire missions. The OH-13 first saw combat action in the Korean War, and the familiar “Egg Beater” filled a vital role in the Vietnam conflict before being replaced by the OH-6A “Cayuse.”

Operation CLEAN HOUSE, a brigade-size operation in the Binh Khe area began on December 18. The operation marked the battery’s first use of airplanes to supplement its mission capability. The added flexibility led the battery to request permanent assignment of fixed wing aircraft to the unit.

As 1965 ended the aviation battery had participated in three major combat operations and innumerable small unit actions. In three and a half months in the Republic, Echo Battery flew 3,076 missions, 3,564 hours and 6,737 sorties. Enemy fire damaged eight aircraft, forcing two down. Only one slight wound from enemy action was received by a member of the battery.

In 1966 the battery continued to serve as the eyes of the artillery, and to provide transportation for DIVARTY and battalion officers. The unit’s request for airplanes was met with the assignment of O-1 “Bird Dogs” giving the battery new capabilities.

The battery supported all the division’s major operations in 1966, including Masher/White Wing, Lincoln, Paul Revere, Thayer and Crazy Horse.

At the commencement of Operation PERSHING on February 12, 1967, the battery moved from LZ Hammond to LZ Two Bits. During PERSHING, the longest operation in the division’s Vietnam history, the battery was responsible for several of the enemy’s losses on the Bong Son Plains as the aviators...
carried out their mission of direct support for three artillery batteries and DIVARTY.

The battery also reconnoitered in front of advancing division elements and brought DIVARTY personnel to the head of the action so better command control would be maintained. For its performance of these assignments from November 1966 to April 1967 the aviation battery received the Meritorious Unit Commendation. The citation praised the men of the unit for their untiring devotion to duty and to the crucial role their observations played in assessing enemy strength and permitting accurate artillery fires.

During the first month of PERSHING Second Lieutenant Geoffrey Birchard won a Distinguished Flying Cross. In a fierce fight between American and NVA troops Birchard hovered and zigzagged his unarmed OH-13 over enemy positions so his observer could direct artillery fire. His helicopter was hit 11 times by enemy bullets and he and his observer were wounded but he kept flying until artillery was on target.

In the middle of June Echo Battery provided a Huey for support of the Aerial Auto Tape Survey System (AATSS) being tested by DIVARTY. The test was essential to the eventual successful use of the system.

On October 1 the 3rd Brigade was put
under the operational control of the American Division in the Chu Lai area. Echo Battery sent a direct support section of OH-13s and one Huey to work with the 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery, in Operation WALLOWA.

Operation PERSHING ended in January 1968, and the division moved to a new AO, I Corps. Echo Battery headquarters arrived at the new division basecamp, Camp Evans, on January 22. The battery’s first mission in the new AO was to provide surveillance for the drive to force the enemy out of dug-in positions in and surrounding the enemy-held city of Hue.

February 28 was the day five OH-6A aircraft were received by the battery. The OH-6A, Light Observation Helicopter (LOH), with advantages in speed and maneuverability, would be the unit’s main aircraft by the end of the year.

On October 26, 1968, the aviation battery sent its advance party south to III Corps to prepare for the battery’s movement there. The main body of Echo Battery departed Camp Evans on November 2, arriving at the division’s new basecamp in III Corps, Phouc Vinh, on November 3.

Operation SHERIDAN SABRE began on November 8, 1968, to interdict movement of major enemy forces using the division’s area of operations as an infiltration route. LOH sections were located in Tay Ninh, Ton le Chan and Quan Loi in support of 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery, 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery, and 1st Bn, 21st Arty, respectively. The general support section, now consisting of four Hueys, eight LOHs and the fixed wing section, remained at Phuoc Vinh.

During the last two months of the year Echo Battery was engaged in general logistics support and aerial reconnaissance in the northwestern sector of III Corps. This action continued into early 1969, as all sections engaged in continuous flight and aerial reconnaissance south of the Cambodian border.

The battery developed a new technique in 1969 with the “Blue Pecker” team, in which an ARA Cobra from the 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery, combined with a battery LOH. The LOH added close observation capabilities to the Cobra’s quick strike firepower. The team derived its name from the Cobra’s “Blue Max” and the LOH’s “Woodpecker” nicknames.

Throughout the rest of the year, the battery’s efforts were concentrated in the northern part of III Corps near Cambodia. The area was one of thick jungle covering numerous bunker complexes, caches and infiltration trails. The planes and helicopters of the battery were invaluable in spotting targets and adjusting artillery fire on them with maximum effectiveness. They also enabled artillery battalion and DIVARTY officers to make frequent visits and thus keep in close personal contact with artillery batteries at firebases scattered through the combat zone.

Utilizing the aircraft of two units with entirely different missions, a LOH of E Battery, 82nd Artillery, and an aerial rocket artillery (ARA) Cobra of the 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery, give Echo Battery its own hunter-killer teams. Nicknamed “Blue Pecker,” the combination flies daily patrols against enemy infiltration along numerous trails in the III Corps jungle.