The 20th Artillery insignia shows a red background crossed diagonally by a gold bar. On the bar is a red diamond. At the bottom of the shield is a scroll with the battalion motto, “Duty Not Reward.” The red is the traditional color of the artillery. The 20th Artillery won the right to bear the golden bar on the shield for its part in breaching the Hindenberg Line in 1918. The red diamond is the same design as the shoulder patch of World War I’s 5th Division, to which the 20th Artillery was organic. The motto typifies the spirit of the artilleryman.

The 20th Artillery was constituted June 3, 1916, as the 20th Field Artillery in the Regular Army. The regiment was organized June 1, 1917, at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, as an element of the 5th Division. On September 5, 1921, the unit was inactivated at Camp Bragg, North Carolina.

The 20th Field Artillery was relieved from its assignment to the 5th Division on October 16, 1939, and activated June 1, 1940, at Fort Benning, Georgia, and concurrently assigned to the 4th Division (later the 4th Infantry Division). The unit was reorganized and redesignated as the 20th Field Artillery Battalion on October 1, 1940. The battalion was inactivated February 13, 1946, at Camp Butner, North Carolina.

The battalion was activated October 15, 1957, in Korea and concurrently assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division. The unit was redesignated the 2nd Rocket Howitzer Battalion, 20th Artillery, on July 1, 1960. It was redesignated 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery, on September 1, 1963. On July 1, 1965, the battalion was transferred (less personnel and equipment) from Korea to Fort Benning, Georgia, and reorganized.

The battalion has campaign participation credit for St. Mihiel and Lorraine (1918) in World War I and for Normandy (with arrowhead), Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe in World War II.

The battalion received the Belgian Fourragere, 1940, for action in Belgium (cited in the Order of the Day for the Belgian Army) and for action in the Ardennes (cited in the Order of the Day for the Belgian Army). In Vietnam the unit received the Presidential Unit Citation (streamer embroidered PLEIKU PROVINCE) and the Valorous Unit Citation (streamer embroidered TAM QUAN).

The men of the world’s only aerial rocket artillery battalion stepped ashore at Qui Nhon, Republic of Vietnam, on September 15, 1965. Two days later they flew their first combat mission, as Charlie Battery fired 2.75 inch rockets in support of elements of the 101st Airborne Division. Sixty-four Viet Cong were killed.

That was the enemy’s first taste of the rockets of the 2nd Battalion (Aerial Artillery), 20th Artillery. At that time the rockets of this unique unit were mounted on UH-1B Huey helicopters. The battalion had the ability to provide...
immediate artillery fire support to airmobile units, often operating beyond the range of conventional artillery. Because the aerial artillery pilot was at the target site, his fire could be quickly adjusted for maximum accuracy and could provide extremely close fire support.

On September 18 the battalion demonstrated another new technique, the “light ship,” a Huey mounted with seven landing lights. The illumination the ship provided proved extremely effective as a tool for base security. On October 3 the battalion fired the first SS-11 guided missile to be used in combat, destroying a villa and the 10 Viet Cong inside. In all, from September 17 to October 20 the battalion flew 78 missions, expended 2,870 rounds of rockets and killed 411 Viet Cong.

In late October the battalion was called upon to provide support in the Pleiku Campaign, for which the division would win the Presidential Unit Citation. Alpha Battery saw the first major action in the campaign when Plei Me came under attack the night of October 29-30. By the light of flares dropped by the Air Force, battery pilots bombarded enemy forces assaulting and mortaring the camp. As one platoon expended its ordnance another would take its place.
The action continued until 4:30 a.m., with rockets fired within 100 meters of the friendly forces.

Charlie Battery was positioned for the campaign on a small strip on a tea plantation south of Pleiku City. On the night of November 12-13 the enemy attacked the position in battalion strength. As the first mortars hit the camp, pilots dashed to their helicopters and quickly had them all in the air, the first instance in Vietnam when all aircraft evacuated without loss from an airstrip under attack. Despite wounds, battery operations officer Captain Charlie D. Hooks and operations NCO Sergeant First Class Francis L. MaGill directed the ARA fire against the VC, who withdrew under the battery's counterattack.

Bravo Battery flew a unique mission in the closing days of the campaign when on November 28, Special Forces requested that the battery destroy the gates of a fortified VC village. The gate's heavy timbers were protected by booby traps and weapons positions from which the enemy delivered withering fire. Three well-aimed SS-11 wire-guided missiles blasted the gates open.

In December the battalion was engaged in supporting operations from the Cambodian border to the South China Sea. Charlie Battery destroyed 56 enemy and numerous weapons emplacements on December 18, and over the next 10 days accounted for an additional 313 enemy casualties, killing 75 VC on December 22 alone.

The first major campaign of 1966 was Operation Masher/White Wing in the plains and foothills around Bong Son. The operation marked the first successful firing of the combination SS-11 missile/2.75 inch rocket weapon by Warrant Officer Robert W. Maxwell of Bravo Battery. Before, the battery's helicopters had carried one rocket or the other. By enabling the helicopters to carry both simultaneously, the new system combined the pinpoint accuracy of the SS-11 missile and the area fire superiority of the 2.75 inch rockets. This flexible and responsive system added greatly to ARA capability.

The battalion fought numerous engagements during the Masher/White Wing operation. During the period from January 26 to January 31, low ceilings and reduced visibility forced the aircraft to fly at extremely low altitudes and reduced speed. Often the Hueys were at 50 feet or less. Despite their vulnerability they continued to seek out the enemy, and were credited with 100 VC killed.

Information was received on February 12 that a Viet Cong heavy machinegun was holding up the advance of infantry near Bong Son. Major Roger J. Bartholomew, Charlie Battery commander, located the 12.7 mm anti-aircraft gun, attacked it with rockets and killed all six crewmen. He then landed and captured the weapon to prevent the enemy from putting it back into service.

By the time the campaign in the Bong Son area ended, ARA inflicted 574 casualties on the VC and destroyed 157 enemy fortified positions.

Operation Lincoln took place in March near the Chu Pong Massif on the Cambodian border. Several company-size units of the division were in heavy contact in the area where both extraction and reinforcement were difficult. At 5 p.m. ARA was committed. There were solid layers of fog and haze up to 5,000 feet, but the aircraft remained on station until 7:30 the next morning, firing 1,250 rockets to support the hard pressed troops. ARA fire killed 138 enemy in the campaign.

The battalion also began a major civil affairs program in early 1966, donating clothing, toys and sundries to villagers in the hamlet of Tu Luong, near Camp Radcliff. The program proved its effectiveness in February when a battalion helicopter crashed in the mountains south of An Khe. The villagers volunteered to search the VC-infested hills for the aircraft and its crew, and successfully located it in time to save two
seriously injured crewmen.

On May 16 the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Morris Brady, and MAJ Bartholomew, the Charlie Battery commander, volunteered to fly two ARA birds in support of a company in contact and in danger of being overrun by a large VC force. They inched their aircraft through fog, rain and darkness up the slopes of a mountain peak east of An Khe, until they were hovering directly over the beleaguered company; then, directed by the artillery forward observer below, they unleashed ripple after ripple of rockets into an enemy assault force. Their timely fire support was credited by the ground commander with stabilizing an extremely grave situation.

On May 22, 1966, the battalion fired its 100,000th rocket in Vietnam. The rocket was fired in support of Operation CRAZY HORSE, aimed at clearing the area around east of An Khe of VC elements planning attacks on newly pacified areas. Despite heavy anti-aircraft fire from the enemy, ARA killed 202.

Captain Frederick S. Beck of Alpha Battery was operating in the Kontum area June 11 when two 12.7 mm anti-aircraft machineguns opened fire and four armor piercing rounds tore into the helicopter, setting the rocket pods on the right side on fire. Disregarding the natural inclination to jettison the burning rockets, the irate CPT Beck swung his aircraft sharply around and emptied his remaining 41 rockets into the enemy positions, silencing them.

The battalion continued to support division operations through the summer and fall of 1966. The battalion demonstrated just how much the enemy feared its weapons on October 9. Alpha Battery received a fire mission against an enemy bunker that could not be effectively engaged with 2.75 inch rockets. Two SS-11 guided missiles were fired at the bunker; the first exploded a foot away from the one by six foot aperture. The second entered the aperture and exploded inside, destroying it. The 55 VC in the adjoining bunker decided not to test the pilot's accuracy. They laid down their arms.

At 1:05 a.m. December 27, LZ Bird was attacked by the 18th NVA Regiment and Alpha Battery responded to the call for support. Despite the night, fog and heavy rain the battery delivered a withering fire on the attacking enemy half an hour after the battle began. Charlie Battery soon joined the fight, and the aircraft stayed on station until the attack was repelled and the enemy force destroyed.

In 1967 the battalion continued a vigorous civic action program with emphasis on schools, medical aid and long range civic improvement programs. This was a joint effort with the communities providing the labor and those materials within their resources and battalion providing material and technical support.

Operation PERSHING, which was to be the division's longest operation, began in February. Its aim was to root out the enemy forces in the Bong Son Plain, An Lao Valley and the mountains adjacent to An Lao. The battalion moved its command post, with Alpha and Charlie Batteries, to LZ Two Bits.

During this period the battalion had added to its arsenal CH-47s, Chinooks armed with grenade launchers, two pods of rockets and two .50 caliber machineguns. In March a five man recon team on the ground came under heavy automatic weapons fire. Lift ships wouldn't make an extraction of the team from a sharp ridgeline obscured by clouds, so a CH-47 hovered near the ledge, which was too small to allow a landing, set its rear wheels on the ground and took the men aboard. Enemy fire made several hits but the extraction was completed successfully without injury.

The battalion continued to support Operation PERSHING actions throughout 1967. During the year the unit added the mortar aerial delivery system to its arsenal. The 81 mm mortars were used on interdiction targets with canopy cover. By the end of the year the battalion had fired 500,000 rockets since arriving

The call for Cobra gunship support from troops in the field brings immediate response from the pilots of the 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery. These pilots race to their ship and within minutes will be on station with their deadly ordnance.
A cluster of 17-pound rocket warheads stick out of the portside pod of an ARA rocket and gunship Cobra, ready for flight.

The rockets are on their way to any enemy position (below) as the ARA Cobra, “The Blue Max,” streaks down on its target at 180 knots. The target area (lower right) jumps under the rapid succession of bursting warheads.

in Vietnam.

For actions from December 6-10, 1967, the battalion won the Valorous Unit Citation. According to the citation, “the officers and men of the battalion displayed extraordinary valor in accomplishing all assigned tasks in the face of almost certain death.” The battalion’s aircraft flew at ground level between the division’s forces and the enemy, providing a screen for the Skytroopers to withdraw so heavy artillery could destroy the enemy bunkers.

The division moved from II Corps to I Corps in 1968, meeting the enemy head on in the battle for Hue, Khe Sanh and the A Shau Valley. In numerous close firefights aerial rocket artillery blasted the enemy, foiling his plans for victory. The deadly accuracy of the SS-II missile penetrated his bunkers and fortifications. Psychological operations leaflets used pictures of ARA aircraft to frighten enemy soldiers into surrendering.

Men of the battalion pulled off a daring rescue of surrounded Cavalrymen east of Khe Sanh during the operation to relieve the Marine base. Crew members of Captain Charles D. Dorr’s ship spotted two wounded men on the ground. Despite the presence of the enemy CPT Dorr salvoed all his rockets to make his ship lighter, and set his helicopter on the edge of a bomb crater. The crew dragged the wounded men to the helicopter and took off, while supporting rocket fire hit within 30 meters of the aircraft. All three members of the crew received the Silver Star for their action.

During the assault into the A Shau Valley in May another ARA pilot earned the Silver Star. Warrant Officer Clint Stanley was flying in support of a unit being airlifted into the valley when his chopper came under intense enemy fire. Several times anti-aircraft explosions rocked the helicopter as it made firing runs on the enemy. After expending all his ammunition Mr. Stanley continued flying over the area, making low level dummy passes that kept the enemy pinned down, enabling the Skytroopers to be successfully airlifted.

Later in May, Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, forces were only a short distance from wounded men, but unable to reach them because of an overwhelming barrage of enemy automatic weapons fire. Because of the close proximity of the enemy troops to the American forces, the ARA ships of Captain David J. Whitlinh and Major Daniel J. Delaney flew at a much lower than normal altitude, laying down a heavy volume of rockets that permitted the evacuation of the wounded.

During 1968 the battalion made the transition between Huey ARA ships and the AH-1G Cobra. Unlike the Huey, the Cobra was specifically designed for fire support, and carried firepower equivalent to that of three conventional

(Continued on P. 281)
AVIATION
The 11th General Support Aviation Company was constituted and activated on March 1, 1957, in Germany as the 11th Aviation Company, an element of the 11th Airborne Division.

It was inactivated on July 1, 1958, in Germany and transferred to the control of the Department of the Army.

On February 1, 1963, it was redesignated as the 11th General Support Company and assigned as an organic element of the 11th Air Assault Division.

The next day the unit was activated at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

On July 1, 1965, the company was released from its assignment to the 11th Air Assault Division and assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

The 11th General Support Aviation Company received a Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period September 1965 to November 1966.

On August 19, 1965, the advance party of the 11th General Support Aviation Company landed at Nha Trang, Republic of Vietnam. It moved to An Khe and began clearing the area in preparation for the rest of the company, which was to arrive at Qui Nhon on September 17.

On September 18, a UH-1D Huey flown by Captain Gerald Burns and Chief Warrant Officer Gilbert D. Scheff made the first combat assault mission of the division, to relieve an American force pinned down by heavy enemy fire.

The company, with 509 assigned personnel, fulfills an important mission in the division, "providing aviation support for the division headquarters, 11th Aviation Group Headquarters, DISCOM and other units without organic aircraft." What that means is that 11th GS cranks up at least seven Hueys daily to ferry around the division's skies such personages as the division commander, the two assistant division commanders, the aviation group commander, the DISCOM commander, not to mention the division's chief of staff and his G-2 and G-3.

And that's just the part played by the UH-1H folks. The light observation helicopter pilots handle such diverse tasks as carrying the division liaison officers from the division to corps headquarters and back; transport visitors for the protocol and information offices and generally make themselves handy to anyone who wants or needs a bird.

For its outstanding performance of duty from September 1965 to November 1966, the 11th GS Company received the Meritorious Unit Commendation.

Until late summer of 1969, 11th GS was the parent unit for the Aerial Surveillance and Target Acquisition Platoon (ASTA), which consisted of several OV-1B/C Mohawks. The "Hawks" were transferred by theater order to Vung Tau, where they now support the Cav on the same basis as do the Flying Cranes. The transfer was, in reality, a paper transaction, because ever since the Cav arrived in III Corps, the flying portion of the ASTA platoon had been stationed in Vung Tau.

During Operation PERSHING, the ASTA platoon was brought forward to Bong Son, and when the Cav moved to I Corps in February 1968, it moved along, too, and, for a period, was reasonably close to the division's main area.

But then came the move to III Corps and a gradual divorcement of the platoon from the company.

The 11th General Support Aviation Company now, as always, is devoting itself to providing the best aviation support possible. And they have done just that. The devotion to duty and efficiency of the officers and men of the unit has made the "Angry Hornets" a respected name throughout the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

One of the many helicopters supplied and maintained for the 1st Cav Division by its 11th General Support Company is this UH-1H Huey, the division commanding general's personal "command and control" helicopter.
A Nighthawk team (above) takes off at dusk to begin its night mission around Camp Gorvad. The special Huey is armed with a minigun and a powerful night-probing searchlight, and is backed up by the rocket artillery of the accompanying “Blue Max” Cobra from 2nd of the 20th. A closer view of the special Huey (right) shows Specialist Four Harold W. Boatz manning the 50,000 watt searchlight and starlight scope with the minigun (operated by another gunner) to his right. Another special purpose aircraft operated by the 11th GSC (below right) is the Iroquois Night Fighter and Night Tracker (INFANT). The INFANT’s rotating miniguns and fixed rocket pods are aimed through infrared cameras which give the pilot a daylight-like television picture of the terrain—and the enemy—in the dark of night. At lower left is one of the two identical weapons mounts on the INFANT: infrared camera, minigun and rocket pod. The camera swings with the minigun to pick up the jungle area “illuminated” by the infrared search-lights mounted on the ship’s nose.
The crest of the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion pictures a tern against the background of a red arrowhead. The tern, one of the fastest flying birds, denotes the speed of the battalion’s attack; and the arrowhead is representative of the accuracy of the attack.

At the bottom of the crest is the battalion’s motto, “Pouvoir,” meaning “Able To.”

227th ASSAULT HELICOPTER BATTALION

COMMANDERS

LTC Jack Cranford ....................................... July 1965—July 1966
LTC A. T. Pumphrey ..................................... July 1966—November 1966
LTC James F. Hamlett .................................. November 1966—June 1967
LTC George C. Horton .................................. June 1967—November 1967
LTC Willie F. Dixon ..................................... November 1967—June 1968
LTC George R. Thayer .................................. June 1968—December 1968
LTC Edward Couington III ............................... December 1968—June 1969
LTC Willard M. Bennett, Jr. ............................ June 1969—December 1969
LTC David Johnson ....................................... December 1969—

Originally the 31st Transportation Company, the unit was enlarged and redesignated the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, an element of the 11th Air Assault Division, in 1963.

On July 1, 1965, the battalion was reorganized, relieved from assignment to the 11th Air Assault Division and reassigned to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

The battalion was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation in the Republic of Vietnam for the Pleiku Campaign. It also earned a Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period October 1965 to November 1966.


The aircraft carrier Boxer had a special cargo aboard as it neared Qui Nhon in September 1965. Among the aircraft aboard were the helicopters of the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, the world’s first such unit.

The “Pouvoir” (Able To) men soon cleared a landing area out of the dense jungle growth near An Khe in the central highlands of the Republic of Vietnam and helped establish the world’s largest heliport.

The battalion had arrived in Vietnam —soon to write new chapters in the history of the FIRST TEAM, the Army’s first airmobile division.

The 227th is divided into four companies. Company D’s gunships fly support for the lift ships of the other three companies, as well as special missions, such as “Nighthawk.”

Throughout such operations as the Pleiku Campaign, NATHAN HALE, THAYER and BYRD, the 227th proved that airmobility is a vital factor in the success of the Army’s most successful division in Vietnam, the 1st Cavalry.

In fall of 1965 the battalion participated in the Pleiku Campaign, airlifting troops into the rugged province near Cambodia, often in the face of heavy enemy resistance.

During the campaign, the 227th airlifted the equivalent of 65 infantry companies, flying a total of 6,066 sorties. With the rest of the division, the battalion received a Presidential Unit Citation for this operation.

Throughout 1965 and 1966 the battalion provided integral support and
transportation for the division, developing new techniques and perfecting old ones to meet the challenging conditions in the Republic of Vietnam. For its outstanding air support the battalion received the Meritorious Unit Commendation.

No one who has been to Vietnam needs to be told that war and combat is a serious business that wears and grinds both body and mind. But like everything else, it has its moments of humor, relief and counterpoint—sorely needed moments. So it was that the Great Helicopter Race took

Delta Company’s Cobra gunships serve as escort for the Huey lift ships enroute to a combat assault, flying in flanking formation (bottom), and then dive ahead to strafe and rocket the landing zone as the troop-laden Hueys descend to the assault. The Cobras and their firepower fill the gap between the end of the artillery prep and the actual Huey lift birds’ touch down. And they also provide cover for the assaulting troops after the Hueys lift out.

Company C, 227th lift ships drop 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, troopers into the An Lao Valley (left) during Operation MASHER in February 1966.

A Cobra gunship pilot (center left) checks the sky above him as he lifts off from an airstrip while departing on a support mission.

A 227th lift ship heads in for a jungle clearing on a combat assault (below center) as a white phosphorous artillery shell explodes ahead, signaling the end of the artillery prep of the landing zone.
place while Lieutenant Colonel Jack Cranford, a master Army aviator, was commanding the 227th. It was mid-March 1966.

In those pre-Cobra days of combat assault, the UH-I Huey filled the role of gunship escort, fitted with rocket pods and front-firing 7.62 mm machineguns. As an escort gunship the Huey had but one drawback; it could fly no faster than the Huey slicks it was escorting and could therefore make only one or two gun passes on the LZ as the troop-carrying Hueys dipped in to land.

To boost the Huey gunships' speed, the Army had the ships fitted with new, extra-width rotor blades designed to take a bigger bite out of the air and add speed with the same engine power. The change worked well. The gunship Hueys were significantly faster than before.

Pleased with his high-speed Hueys, LTC Cranford offered a challenge to Lieutenant Colonel Max Clark, then commander of the 228th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion, the Cav's fleet of mighty CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

The Chinooks (then known as Max's Mobile Homes), big and ungainly looking aircraft, give an appearance that belies their speed. LTC Clark, proud of his ships and his pilots, duly accepted the gauntlet from Cranford.

The race was set over a 10-mile course, a straight flight between Mang Yang Pass in the mountains west of An Khe and the flight control tower at the An Khe airstrip. It would be a race against the clock with one of LTC Cranford's modified, speedy Hueys getting first crack at the course. Men were stationed at the mountain pass, including an Army radio reporter who gave the auspicious event live coverage through the radio station at An Khe.

There was more at stake than a contest between aircraft. Unit pride was, of course, involved, and a rumor had it that the two commanders had also made a wager on the race—the loser to buy a round of beer for the winner's battalion. That was a lot of suds. Attention was high.

Both colonels were at the An Khe tower, and each had a stopwatch in his hands. A third clock was kept by Colonel Al Burdett, 11th Group commander.

As the Huey lifted off from the pass and nosed over into a high-speed profile toward An Khe, the clocks were started by word from an RTO atop the pass. The unseen Huey became a speck in the distance, grew quickly and then flashed by the tower. Three colonels mashed their watch buttons and marked the time. It was a good time; a fast, classified time.

At Mang Yang Pass the Chinook cranked its rotors and lifted into the mountain sky, all noise and wind. The Huey hare had run. What looked like a city bus was taking off.

The pilot pointed the Chinook's nose for An Khe and opened up with everything the Chinook had in her. As he barrelled down on what he thought was An Khe, the Chinook pilot knew his

With the landing zone of a combat assault secured and declared "green," a Skytrooper guides in the birds of the secondary lifts. Soldiers on the chopper stand on the skids ready to hop off as soon as the chopper nears the ground. Why? Because a "green" LZ can quickly turn into a "hot" one, so the helicopters are not unnecessarily risked by allowing them to linger on the ground in unfriendly territory.

Whipping up a small gale, lift ships of the 227th arrive at a firebase to take on a load of infantrymen for a combat assault into the III Corps jungle. Another mission begins.
time would be good, very good. The colonels sat immobile, watching the approaching Chinook speck grow larger. The radio commentator filled air time with words about the two aircraft while he, too, watched for the Chinook.

At first, no one noticed it, but it was soon apparent that the distant dot of the Chinook was not getting any bigger at all. It was, in fact, getting smaller. The pilot was lost. He was not headed anywhere near An Khe.

After a few long seconds spent frantically checking his map against terrain features, the pilot quickly discovered his navigational error and swung the pounding Chinook back toward An Khe and the awaiting colonels.

The Chinook lumbered on, drew near and finally thundered past the tower. LTC Clark smiled. LTC Cranford grunted.

The Chinook had bettered the Huey's time by "a significant number of seconds," even though the pilot had lost time in wandering off course.

LTC Clark and his Chinook crew professed to be possessed by a great thirst. The Great Helicopter Race was over.

Operation PERSHING in 1967 presented new problems to the airmobile division as it rooted out the enemy from Binh Dinh Province. But the Cav and the 227th didn't expect to go where the going was easy.

The mountainous terrain surrounding the plain, with its inherent clouds and heavy rainfall, made low-level flying through the valleys a necessity. Ceiling and visibility were often reduced to zero.

"It was a different war then," said Major Edward Colburn, deputy commander of the 11th Aviation Group, who commanded Company B of the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion during his first tour in Vietnam with the Cav. "There were more enemy, more contact and more aircraft shot at and hit; and all of these problems were compounded many times over by the weather conditions."

In those days airmobile operations were generally large. "I once led a 64-aircraft lift going into the Bong Son," reminisced MAJ Colburn, "but you don't see anything like that anymore."

On January 31, 1968, a member of the 227th distinguished himself under heavy enemy fire. Chief Warrant Officer Frederick E. Ferguson, commander of a resupply helicopter, monitored an emergency call from the wounded passengers and crew of a downed helicopter under heavy attack within the enemy-held imperial city of Hue. He unhesitatingly volunteered to go in and attempt evacuation. Despite warnings for all aircraft to stay away from the area due to heavy anti-aircraft fire, Mr. Ferguson headed in.

He began a low level flight at maximum speed along the Perfume River toward the tiny, isolated South Vietnamese Army compound in which the crash survivors had taken refuge. Coolly and skillfully maintaining his course in the face of intense, short-range fire from enemy occupied buildings and boats, he displayed superior flying skill and courage by landing his craft in an extremely confined area under heavy mortar and small arms fire.

Although the helicopter was severely damaged by mortar fragments during the loading of the wounded, Mr. Ferguson disregarded the damage, and, taking off through the continuing hail of mortar fire, he flew his crippled ship on the return route through the rain of fire that he had experienced earlier and returned his passengers to friendly control.

For his gallantry, Mr. Ferguson received an interim award of the Silver Star, and, one year later, became the first Army aviator to win the Medal of Honor.

Operation DELAWARE brought the 1st Cav into the A Shau Valley, a slit in the mountains near the Laotian border which the NVA considered as a sanctuary. No Allied forces had penetrated the valley since 1966, when a Special Forces camp closed.

Much of the success of the operation was due to the men of the "Garry Owen" Brigade. And they, in turn, owed a large debt of thanks to the men of the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion.

Entering the A Shau brought many, but not unexpected, problems to the pilots of the 227th's helicopters. With a large concentration of enemy troops in the area, a large volume of ground to air fire was expected. The NVA had 37 mm anti-aircraft guns, capable of hitting an aircraft at 25,000 feet. Numerous .50 caliber machinegun emplacements added a wall of red tracers for the helicopters to penetrate.

Aside from the enemy there were other problems. The valley, nestled among the high peaks, was constantly overcast with heavy cloud cover, and rain and heavy fog were commonplace.

To counter these hazards the pilots adopted new flight tactics. Contour flying became the rule of the day. A dangerous maneuver, the low-level flight tested and proved the skill of the pilots.

The same tactics proved worthwhile.

(Continued on P. 269)
On April 26, 1966, the United States Institute of Heraldry granted the 228th Battalion its blazon, based on an original crest designed by Captain David L. Boivin in January of 1964.

The crest depicts Pegasus, the winged horse of Greek mythology, a symbol of the strength and stamina of the battalion. It is placed between four silver stars on a field of blue. The four stars are indicative of the unit's world wide deployment.

LTC Benjamin S. Silver ........................................... July 1965—November 1965
LTC Max. A. Clark ............................................ November 1965—July 1966
LTC Robert A. Michelson ..................................... July 1966—February 1967
LTC Frank W. Nadeau, Jr. ..................................... February 1967—August 1967
LTC Robert C. Kerner .......................................... August 1967—January 1968
LTC Richard Speedman ........................................ January 1968—June 1968
LTC Dean R. Paquette .......................................... June 1968—December 1968
LTC David D. Dukes ........................................... December 1968—June 1969
LTC Emory W. Bush ............................................. June 1969—November 1969
LTC Lawrence C. Davis ........................................ November 1969—December 1969
LTC Francis J. Toner ............................................. December 1969—
A 228th Chinook hitches a ride (above) aboard an aircraft carrier in the division’s move from I to III Corps in December 1968. The big Chinook sports a full bank of instruments (right) and keeps pilots busy. Despite its great bulk, the Chinook mission demands precision flying skills to gently bring the cargo hook within reach of a ground rigger (center left) without knocking him over. The Chinook crew chief oversees maintenance on the ground, and in flight he serves to keep an eye peeled on the sling loads (two center) through “the hole.” A waist gunner (center right), one of two on each “hook” watches dawn paint III Corps with a promise of heat. Both gunners must have sharp eyes and quick reactions to out-gun enemy anti-aircraft gunners who would, given the chance, down the hook. When not delivering artillery or supplies (bottom right), the big hooks also ferry full platoons of infantry (bottom left) to the fighting.
During the month of October the battalion supported the division in Operation SHINY BAYONET.

During the Pleiku Campaign the Chinooks lifted the equivalent of 67 artillery batteries. The 28th flew a total of 7,692 sorties, delivering 6,852 tons of supplies into forward LZs.

During their first three and one-half months in the Republic of Vietnam, the men of the battalion were awarded 772 Air Medals, proof of the long hours and dedication of the "Winged Warriors."

General William C. Westmoreland visited the 228th during the Christmas holidays and praised the men for their hard work. "The Chinook has added a new dimension to the battlefield heretofore unthought of in Vietnam. To be able to move an entire artillery battalion by air was a tremendous stride in defeating the VC."

The first six months of 1966 were ones of experience and innovation, and the last half of the year was one of industry and refinement. During this period the artillery raid was born. A standardized procedure for downed aircraft was conceived and infusion and exchange programs came into being.

The artillery raid technique marked a departure from tactical and terrain limitations on artillery support that had fettered field commanders in the American Civil War and the Korean War alike. In both of those conflicts, despite the vast differences in technology they represented, commanders knew that they could not rely on close artillery support for their troops unless there were good roads in the battle area over which they could tow the ponderous guns. When the 228th began operations in Vietnam with the Chinook it broke that age-old restriction; roads were no longer needed because light and medium artillery, the latter moved by CH-54 Flying Cranes, could go virtually anywhere the airmobile foot soldier could go. And it could get there with the speed of flight. Artillery was no longer ground-bound.

Beginning in March 1966 the Chinooks were also used in an innovative technique of making combat assaults into the extremely thick jungles of Bong Son. The technique required much coordination. First the chosen spot was heavily bombed by tactical air support jets. A small team then rappelled from Hueys to the jungle floor through the small opening in the canopy left by the air strikes. When the team had secured
the area the Chinooks of the 228th arrived, hovered just above the jungle opening and lowered ladders to the ground. The queue of combat laden troops flapped in the breeze of the Chinook rotors, clinging to the rungs of the flexible ladder as they descended to the ground.

The “hook ladder,” an invention of the 1st Brigade’s deputy commander, Lieutenant Colonel Harlow Clark, was found to be a successful technique and was used by elements throughout the Cav wherever the terrain was appropriate.

During the latter half of 1966, the battalion was called upon to participate in civic action projects. Many strange loads resulted. Cattle and horses were rounded up and corralled in the Chinooks. Tons of rice and grain were transported. Refugees were moved. On one occasion, due to an impending attack on a Vietnamese village, a record of 162 refugees were transported in one sortie—by one Chinook—out of the danger area.

In recognition for the outstanding job done by the battalion since its arrival in the Republic of Vietnam, the 228th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion received the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period September 1, 1965, to October 31, 1966.

The battalion’s work load for the year speaks for itself in the grand totals column. More than 150,000 passengers were carried, more than 75,000 tons of cargo delivered and better than 64,000 sorties were flown with nearly 22,000 flight hours on the birds.

Firmly established as the movers of the division, the 228th continued its outstanding service through the next years. Even though the battalion was flying long hours under all weather conditions, it repeatedly set safety records. Time and again the battalion recorded more than 20,000 flying hours without an accident.

In 1968 the division fought many important battles, at Hue, Khe Sanh and the A Shau Valley. Chief Warrant Officer Frederic L. Wilken, a pilot with 228th Assault Helicopter Battalion in 1969, was also in Vietnam during March-November 1968.

During the siege of Khe Sanh, Mr. Wilken was one of many 228th pilots who flew into the embattled base to haul out Marine Corps supplies and equipment in preparation for the Marine evacuation. Stopping at Khe Sanh even for a momentary hover brought enemy 175 mm artillery shells whistling in from across the DMZ. “When we went in to pick up a sling load the shelling would start,” said Wilken, “so we had to sling the loads ourselves—the crew chief would hop out, attach the sling to our hook and then hop back inside. The Marines couldn’t be standing around on the hook pad when we came in because we always brought enemy artillery fire with us, so the Marines prepared the sling loads and then stayed in the bunkers—which was sensible.”

In October 1968 the battalion moved with the rest of the division to the III Corps Tactical Zone, where the 1st Cav was given the mission of blocking enemy infiltration routes.

In August of 1969, Lieutenant Colonel Emory W. Bush, battalion commander, received an award from the Boeing Corporation, makers of the CH-47 Chinook, for the unit’s completion of 100,000 flying hours in Vietnam. The 228th was the first battalion to reach this mark. Just two months later: the battalion

(Continued on P. 268)