The 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion was constituted on March 18, 1964, and activated the next day as part of the 11th Air Assault Division (Test) at Fort Benning, Georgia.

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

In Vietnam, the battalion received a Presidential Unit Citation for the Pleiku Campaign, and the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period September 1965 to November 1966.

"Stacking the deck" in a card game usually results in a winning hand. The same is true with the 1st Air Cavalry Division's "Stacked Deck" battalion—the 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion. Due to its performance, the battalion is constantly dealing itself a winning combination.

The first aircraft of the 229th landed on Vietnamese soil at Qui Nhon on September 13, 1965. The next day they began the move to An Khe, where an advance party had already been clearing land in preparation for the building of the battalion area.

Although the unit had not planned or packed to immediately conduct combat operations upon its arrival in Vietnam, a warning order was received on September 18 to assemble available aircraft, which consisted of 13 UH-1Ds and two UH-1Bs, to support operations of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, in the area northwest of Qui Nhon.

Very little protective equipment was available to the crews. Gunners had not yet been assigned for lift ships—cooks, clerks and communications personnel were being used—newly assigned pilots were not adequately trained in formation flying and operations in and out of relatively confined areas. However, the battalion made three lifts on the 18th and 19th of September into the combat area carrying personnel and ammunition. All the aircraft returned safely with no casualties.

The battalion was soon operating to full capacity and realizing its missions of providing tactical mobility for combat troops and transporting supplies and equipment to units of the division during airmobile combat operations. The battalion proved able to provide continuous support (day and night) during

LTC Robert S. Keller ............................ July 1965—July 1966
LTC Leo D. Turner ............................... July 1966—December 1966
LTC John M. Blair ............................... December 1966—May 1967
LTC John E. Bell ................................. May 1967—May 1968
LTC Gene E. Brown ............................... May 1968—June 1968
LTC Charles A. Dawdy ........................... June 1968—December 1968
LTC Quay C. Snyder ............................... December 1968—August 1969
LTC Arthur F. W. Liebel ........................... August 1969—
marginal visual and weather conditions.

As more aircraft became available and more crews were trained, the battalion increased its combat operations in the An Khe area and the Song Con "Happy Valley," to the east. By the beginning of October 1965, brigade-size operations were becoming common with all the resources of the 229th in support. The first combined operation began on October 10, Operation SHINY BAYONET, with the battalion in support of the 3rd Brigade. The battalion flew a total of 2,405 sorties, lifted 3,655 troops and 81 tons of cargo.

The Pleiku Campaign began on October 23, 1965, and proved to be a severe test of the battalion's capabilities. The battalion assumed the mission of directly supporting the division's commitment of brigades in the Plei Me tactical zone and remained in direct support until November 26. During that period the 229th airlifted the equivalent of 128 infantry companies. A total of 10,840 sorties were flown and, although 14 aircraft were hit by hostile fire and two shot down none were lost permanently. During the heavy fighting of November 14-18 the battalion's lift
ships provided the bulk of medical evacuation under heavy enemy fire.

In mid-December 1965 the 229th battalion was called upon to air assault division infantry units into the vicinity of Binh Khe, Binh Dinh Province. The assault was typical of battalion operations. On the basis of maps, photos and aerial reconnaissance, the sites for the assault were chosen. For the 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, one of the units the 229th would carry, the objective was a small hill rising 50 feet above the surrounding rice paddies. Two LZs were chosen in the area immediately north of the objective.

The 229th brought the first infantry company in on schedule. When a gunship covering the assault was shot down south of the objective, the lift ships changed LZs and brought the second company in near the gunship to enable the rescue of the crew. Enemy fire was heavy, and almost every helicopter was hit at least once, but none was put out of action. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Kellar, 229th commander, brought his ship down to pick up the injured crew.

The 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion supported the division, and especially the 1st Brigade, in such operations as NATHAN HALE, PAUL REVERE and BYRD. The battalion performed in an outstanding manner, flying thousands of sorties to carry troops and supplies to the battle zones.

Daily combat assaults became numerous, with Company C setting a record of 40 "Charlie Alphas" during one week of Operation BYRD.

In 1967 the battalion supported Operation PERSHING, aimed at clearing the enemy from populous eastern Binh Dinh Province. Ground to air fire was frequent from enemy occupying well-entrenched positions.

In November 1967 one of the battalion's Huey crews came to the rescue of a stranded Chinook. The Chinook was out of fuel on the west end of Dak To airfield during a mass mortar and ground attack.

Another Chinook had gone in ahead to drop a bladder of fuel. "I was carrying the pump," said Warrant Officer Marian F. Clemens, "and as I landed the mortars were being walked toward us. I told the Chinook to get out, and as he left the mortars started walking back the other way." An ammo dump had been hit and there were explosions all around.

"It took us about 25 minutes to pump all the fuel out of the bladder," said Clemens, "but the Chinook got out without a scratch." Mr. Clemens received the Distinguished Flying Cross and his three crew members Bronze Stars with "V" device.

The year 1968 brought two severe tests to the men of the 1st Air Cavalry. In February, the enemy's Tet Offensive began. Then came the operations in the A Shau Valley, a known enemy stronghold.

During these campaigns Sky troopers exacted huge losses on the enemy, and the 229th was no exception. During the
period of February through June, 112 men of Company B alone were recommended for heroism awards.

In early 1968 battalion Hueys flew Marines in their first air assault in "skids" ships. In a hair-raising ride the helicopters of Bravo Company whizzed in at treetop level and zig-zagged in between trees to avoid enemy ground fire. "It was pretty wild," said one Marine sergeant. Others marvelled at the hot food the 229th flew them daily. "I think I'm joining the Army," said one squad leader.

The flying methods of the battalion may have seemed unusual to the Marines, but they didn't prevent the battalion from setting a record of 17,000 accident free hours flown from April 16, 1967, to March 31, 1968, in combat assaults and combat support operations.

Throughout its history the 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion has flown missions other than the normal troop carrying and logistical resupply missions. Among these are sniffer, cordon, night-hawk and "lightning bug."

The lightning bug mission was used to great success in the Cav's area of operations in the highlands and I Corps. It was developed to prevent the enemy from using the many rivers and streams in the area as a means of infiltration. As one aircraft flew at high level, dropping flares over the rivers, a low bird with a .50 caliber machinegun flew at low level, skimming over the water and trees, looking for enemy soldiers exposed in the bright light of the flares.

The lightning bug missions developed into the Nighthawk mission of III Corps. Heavily armed UH-1H Hueys, with powerful searchlights and special starlight scopes, search for the enemy in the dense jungle of the III Corps area. Supported by an AH-1G Cobra, these missions proved again the advantages of airmobility.

With the "exodus" to III Corps complete in late 1968, the division found new tactics were necessary to engage and destroy the enemy. Whereas the enemy often worked in large groups in the highlands, Cavalrymen soon discovered that the enemy moved and fought in smaller units in the bamboo jungles of III Corps.

In III Corps several battalion helicopters were assigned a new task, psychological operations. The main PSYOPs "weapons" were leaflets and 1,000 watt loudspeakers, audible at 2,500 feet. The leaflets and speakers urged the enemy to switch sides and villagers in VC territory to flee to the government. The PSYOPs choppers were central to the 2nd Brigade's success in attracting several hundred ralliers in Phuoc Long Province.

First Lieutenant Samuel R. Manning, Jr., of 229th's Company A, was flying a command and control helicopter near Song Be when he saw a LOH, riddled by enemy fire, go down in hostile territory. In the face of a hail of fire from enemy guns LT Manning brought his ship down to pick up the LOH's crew and the men from a second downed LOH. A blanket of M-60 fire from doorgunners Private First Class Thomas Perkins and Specialist Four Thomas C. Dixon provided the necessary cover to make the rescues successful. The two doorgunners and the pilot received valor awards for the action.

Throughout 1969 the battalion provided support for the division's 1st Brigade in Tay Ninh Province and shared with the 227th battalion responsibility for supporting the 2nd Brigade in Phuoc Long Province.
The 11th Aviation Group consists of the 227th and 229th Assault Helicopter Battalions, the 228th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion, the 11th General Support Aviation Company, and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 11th Aviation Group.

Constituted on February 1, 1963, as Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 11th Air Assault Aviation Group, the unit was organic to the 11th Air Assault Division. Four days later the unit was activated at Fort Benning.

On July 1, 1965, the unit was reorganized and redesignated Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 11th Aviation Group, and assigned to the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

The 11th Aviation Group was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for the Pleiku Campaign of 1965, and the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period September 1965 to November 1966.

The crest of the 11th Aviation Group pictures a silver hawk, symbolic of courage and aggressiveness. Pictured on the hawk’s wings are two red arrows, denoting the unit’s swift firepower. The hawk is pictured against a blue background, representing the sky and the function of the unit, aviation.

At the bottom of the crest is the unit’s motto, “We Make the Difference.” The unit does indeed make the difference, as it is the source of a great share of the division’s air mobility.

However, the crest worn more often by 11th Aviation Group troopers is one which omits the arrows and motto. This unofficial crest is the one pictured above.

The 1st Air Cavalry Division is Army aviation in action; the helicopter being the lifeblood of the Army’s first airborne division.

There are three aviation battalions organic to the division, and together they comprise the 11th Aviation Group. Also a part of the 11th Aviation Group is the 11th General Support Aviation Company, which supplies support aircraft to the division headquarters, 11th Group headquarters, and to other units without organic aviation.

The air support is normally distributed as follows: The 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion supports the 3rd Brigade, the 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion services the 1st Brigade and the two jointly assist the 2nd Brigade. The 228th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion, which flies the mighty CH-47 Chinooks, has its companies spread throughout the division’s area of operations to support the entire division.

As command and control headquarters, the 11th Group is chiefly responsi-

(Continued on P. 268)
DIVISION SUPPORT COMMAND (DISCOM)

COMMANDERS

COL John J. Hennessey ........................................... July 1965—March 1966
LTC James E. Smith .................................................. March 1966—May 1966
LTC Benjamin S. Silver ............................................ May 1966—July 1966
COL Jonathan R. Burton ........................................... July 1966—December 1966
COL Charles D. Daniel .............................................. December 1966—June 1967
COL Hubert S. Campbell ........................................... June 1967—November 1967
LTC Robert Vaughn .................................................. November 1967—January 1968
COL Conrad L. Stansberry ......................................... January 1968—April 1968
LTC Grady R. Poole ................................................... April 1968—May 1968
COL William Dysinger .............................................. May 1968—May 1969
COL Richard G. Beckner ........................................... May 1969—November 1969
COL Tom M. Nicholson ............................................. November 1969—

The Division Support Command traces its heritage to Headquarters and Headquarters Company Band, Support Command, which was organized on September 1, 1963. Two units of the 1st Cavalry Division were combined to form this unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment and the 1st Cavalry Division Trains and Band.

The division band is one of the oldest of Cavalry units, dating back to March 3, 1855, when it was constituted as the 2nd Cavalry Regiment Band. Slightly more than a year later, the band was organized at Camp Verde, Texas.

In August 1861, the musicians were disbanded and reorganized as the 5th Cavalry Regiment Band. It supported the regiment throughout the Civil War, then was disbanded in 1866.

In 1869 the band was reorganized again as part of the 5th Cavalry. It remained with the unit until 1945, when it was placed under command of the 1st Cavalry Division, then stationed at Camp Drake, Japan.

Throughout its long history the band has received various honors and campaign awards. Among these are 11 Indian War campaigns, 17 Civil War campaigns, the Mexican Expedition, four World War II campaigns (Luzon, Leyte, Bismarck Archipelago and New Guinea), and seven Korean War campaigns.

It received a Distinguished Unit Citation at Los Negros Island, a Meritorious Unit Commendation in Korea and the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation for the period October 17, 1944, to July 4, 1945.

In Vietnam, DISCOM and its support units were decorated with the Presidential Unit Citation for the Pleiku Campaign and the Meritorious Unit Citation for the period June 1, 1967, to May 31, 1968.
The Division Support Command (DISCOM) has one of the broadest and most important jobs in the division. The mission of the support command is to supply the man in the field with the food, clothing, ammunition and transportation that he needs to do the job.

DISCOM units include the 15th Medical Battalion; the 15th Transportation Corps Battalion, responsible for aircraft maintenance; the 15th Supply and Service Battalion, which provides 1st Air Cavalrymen with everything from toothpicks to gasoline; the 27th Maintenance Battalion, which pulls maintenance for the division's vehicles and weapons; and Headquarters, Headquarters Company and Band.

DISCOM sent its three forward service support elements (FSSE) throughout the Cav's area of operations in support of Operations CRAZY HORSE, PAUL REVERE and THAYER in 1966.

The third forward service support element set a record for continuous support in a single location, as it remained at Phan Thiet in support of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, throughout 1967. Eighty tons of supplies were delivered daily to the task force, located 200 air miles from the division base at An Khe.

Due to the large commitment of the division's numerous battalions in the central highlands, DISCOM began operations with four forward service supply elements in July. By November, a fifth FSSE had been added. The year 1967 ended with the FSSE's

The 1st Air Cavalry Division band gives one of its frequent firebase concerts designed to give some variety and entertainment to the otherwise repetitive days on jungle outposts. The musicians are also soldiers. One afternoon in November 1969, the band members had to drop their instruments and take up their M-16s when they were fired upon during a concert in a small Vietnamese village.

The 1st Air Cavalry Division band gives one of its frequent firebase concerts designed to give some variety and entertainment to the otherwise repetitive days on jungle outposts. The musicians are also soldiers. One afternoon in November 1969, the band members had to drop their instruments and take up their M-16s when they were fired upon during a concert in a small Vietnamese village.

A 15th Medical Battalion Medevac medic raises a bottle of life-saving plasma to an overhead hook after administering first aid to a wounded trooper. The Medevac chopper is speeding across the jungle to a hospital—a familiar scene in history's fastest and most daring medical evacuation system.

supporting Operation WALLOWA at LZ Baldy, Operation PERSHING at LZs English and Uplift and Operation BYRD at Phan Thiet.

In January 1968, a new dimension in support was initiated by DISCOM. In mid-month all subordinate units began air, land and sealift movements to the Hue-Phu Bai area in northern I Corps in preparation for immediate military operations in support of the 3rd Marine Amphibious Force.

For their accomplishments, DISCOM and its assigned units were awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation for their performance from June 1, 1967, to May 31, 1968.

The remainder of 1968 saw DISCOM continue its service and supply missions in an outstanding manner. The biggest task was yet to come.

The move south to III Corps brought new problems to the support command, whose task was two-fold. It would not only have to move its own equipment and personnel, but would also need to ensure other elements of the division would still receive their supplies during the move.

As the move was completed, DISCOM set up its rear area and headquarters in Bien Hoa. Forward service support elements were also sent to Tay Ninh, Quan Loi and Phouc Vinh.
The 15th Transportation Corps Battalion (Aircraft Maintenance and Supply) insignia is a shield, picturing a winged dragon on a blue background. Inscribed along the bottom on a scroll is the battalion's motto: "Over The Best."

The 15th Transportation Corps Battalion was constituted on October 15, 1957, as the 15th Aviation Company, 1st Cavalry Division, and was activated in Korea. In September 1963, the unit was reorganized and redesignated Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th Aviation Battalion; and its organic elements were constituted and activated concurrently. The battalion was redesignated and converted to the 15th Transportation Corps Battalion as part of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) on July 1, 1965.

The battalion deployed to the Republic of Vietnam with the division in September 1965. It received the Presidential Unit Citation for the Pleiku Campaign, October 23 to November 25, 1965.

The 15th TRANSPORTATION CORPS BATTALION

COMMANDERS

LTC Charles McQueary .................................. July 1965—July 1966
LTC Keith J. Bauer ........................................... July 1966—July 1967
LTC Vaughn C. Emerson ..................................... July 1967—May 1968
LTC Albert W. Schlim ........................................ May 1968—November 1968
LTC William E. Cornwell .................................... November 1968—May 1969
LTC Harold E. Cook .......................................... May 1969—December 1969
LTC Bently J. Herbert ........................................ December 1969—

Balancing on a Huey rotor blade, a 15th Transportation Corps mechanic makes necessary adjustments. The Hueys and other helicopters are good aircraft, but they need constant and diligent maintenance.
Ask any aeronautical engineer what keeps a helicopter airborne and more than likely you will receive a 30-minute lecture on the principles and dynamics of aerial flight. Ask a 1st Air Cavalry aviator the same question and chances are his answer would be the 15th Transportation Corps Battalion.

Whether a bullet hole needs patching or the 1,180 pound engine of a Chinook needs replacing, the task falls to the men of the 15th TC (Aircraft Maintenance and Supply).

Each month, 90 to 120 tons of repair parts are bolted, welded and fitted by the maintenance men to service Cav birds. The well-oiled, computerized parts order system shoots the full spectrum of parts to the men at places like Bearcat, Phuoc Vinh, Tay Ninh or Quan Loi.

The battalion's shops are equipped to handle any electrical, hydraulics or avionics problem. The damaged helicopter may need the skills of the men almost dwarfed by the large tail rotor assembly of a CH-47 Chinook, a mechanic performs the required 100 flying hours inspection and maintenance. Every 1,800 hours of flight, the giant Chinooks are completely torn down and rebuilt, making sure that every part functions perfectly.

Mechanics of 15th TC overhaul an OH-13 helicopter (above) at the An Khe airstrip in August 1968. Another engine specialist works on the maze of hydraulic tubing and wiring (right) inside a Cobra gunship.
A 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery, “Blue Max” Cobra gets torn down for a complete overhaul under the hot Vietnamese sun. But because of need for operational Cobras, Chinooks, Hueys and LOHs, the men of the 15th TC find themselves doing as much work at night as during the day.

in the sheet metal, engine, or prop and rotor shops. The jobs call for specialization; whether the need exists for a specially machined part or an intricate adjustment of the armament on a deadly Huey-Cobra, there is a shop to fit the mission.

Interim inspections are held for every 25 hours of flying time, and comprehensive inspections are carried out after 100 hours. The Cav’s helicopters perhaps take more punishment than those of any other division, and therefore are overhauled more often. The mighty Chinooks, the primary movers of the division, are completely overhauled after 1,800 flying hours.

After the aircraft is rolled out of the repair shops it is given a thorough test flight before being released for service. Since their arrival in the Republic of Vietnam in 1965, the men of the battalion have seen to it that 1st Cav ships stay in the air.

Because of the large number of helicopters organic to the airmobile division, the 15th TC Battalion from 1965 to 1969 was one of the largest battalions in the Army, having more than 1,300 people assigned. With so many men available the battalion was able to provide maintenance detachments throughout the area in which the division

A 15th TC radio specialist cures the ills that constantly plague radios that must submit to rough handling inside helicopters. The persistent vibration in helicopters adds to combat damage in radios, keeping these specialists working long hours.
A temperamental Cobra gets its fuel cell checked in one of a score of regular maintenance checks. Because a helicopter, unlike fixed-wing aircraft, has both its thrust source and lift surface combined in one element, the rotor and engine, "preventive maintenance" is doubly important. Failures must be caught and corrected before they occur. If a fixed-wing pilot loses power at 4,000 feet, he's in trouble, but he has time to pick a landing place and glide in. When a helicopter pilot loses power at 4,000 feet, he's in serious trouble. Auto-rotation is a tricky maneuver, at best.

operated; Cav helicopters were never far from a maintenance team.

When the division made the move south to III Corps in late 1968, the battalion proved its excellence. The men worked overtime, preparing virtually all of the division's helicopters for the immense work load they would be carrying.

The move was made, and the effort of the men of the battalion paid off. As they arrived in the Air Cavalry Division's new AO, they quickly set up their operation, and the outstanding service they provided was not delayed a moment longer than necessary.

Then in mid-1969, the battalion underwent a massive change, one which altered its operation greatly.

The unit's strength was greatly reduced, from four to two companies, dropping personnel levels to about 600. In turn, separate maintenance detachments were assigned to each company-sized aviation unit in the division.

This was done to provide even better service to the aviation units. In the past, the four companies of the battalion had not been co-located with the aviation units, and time and distance factors sometimes precluded instant service.

Although their job has changed since their arrival in Vietnam, the men of the 15th Transportation Corps Battalion are constantly providing the best in service and support for the division. They're keeping the airmobile division "in the air."
The black diagonal bar of the 15th Supply and Service Battalion crest is suggestive of the 1st Cavalry Division shoulder insignia, indicative of the long association of the two units.

The red upper portion of the crest is the color of the Transportation Corps. The buff color below the red is indicative of the Quartermaster Corps.

The six points of the medallion are representative of the six citations won by the unit during World War II and the Korean War.

15th SUPPLY AND SERVICES BATTALION

LTC Frederick Osterhout .................. July 1965—July 1966
LTC Harry L. Corkill, Jr. .................. July 1966—June 1967
LTC Robert D. Vaughn .................... June 1967—November 1967
LTC Clarence Metz ....................... November 1967—June 1968
LTC Grady R. Poole ...................... June 1968—September 1968
LTC Leroy Jorgenson ..................... September 1968—May 1969
LTC Perry W. Broaddus ................... May 1969—September 1969
LTC Lloyd H. Manjeot .................... September 1969—

There is little glory in the war of supply, but it remains the heart of victory. Without the many tons of bread and bullets needed, the best crack division in the Army would falter on its course. For the 15th Supply and Services Battalion "supply" means providing everything the 21,000 1st Cav soldiers eat, wear or shoot. And added to this is the fact that they must supply to an area some 4,000 square miles large, approximately the size of the State of Connecticut. Here tons of supplies (right) await transportation from Bien Hoa to the forward areas.

The 15th Supply and Service Battalion was originally organized as the 675th Motor Transport Company in February 1919, at Camp Henry Knox, Kentucky.

Prior to the Vietnam conflict the unit was decorated with two Meritorious Unit Citations (MUC), streamer embroidered PACIFIC THEATER; the MUC, streamer embroidered KOREA; the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (October 17, 1944, to July 4, 1945); the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, streamer embroidered TAEGU-WAEGWAN; and the Chryssoun Aristion Andrias (Bravery Gold Medal of Greece).

In Vietnam the battalion, along with other units of the division, received the Presidential Unit Citation for the Pleiku Campaign.

Combat is the heart of war. The engagement with, and destruction of an enemy force is the end toward which all soldiers strive. But few people outside of the military know the workings of war, what goes into fighting a battle or just day-to-day survival. What people see and hear of war is mainly combat; but combat may be likened to an iceberg cap, a top that only faintly bespeaks the mass of effort beneath it.

Among many others, a large portion of that sub-surface mass is the supply and service corps, the people who keep those on the front lines in supply with what they need to meet and defeat the enemy.

In the airmobile division, these are the
A Redhat, one of the 15th S&S men who rig and hook sling loads for Chinook and Flying Crane transportation, steps away from a load of empty water blivets before they swing free of the ground.

people of the 15th Supply and Service Battalion. They provide nearly everything soldiers eat, wear, build or shoot. This is their job they have done in an outstanding manner since arriving in the Republic of Vietnam with the 1st Air Cavalry Division in 1965.

The primary functions of the battalion are two-fold, the first being services. The unit aids the FIRST TEAM by furnishing or coordinating such services as laundry facilities, ice cream plants and the explosive ordnance disposal team.

The second function is supply, which involves supporting the division with all classes of material.

The battalion uses ground and air

While the greater bulk of supply materiel is moved by air, the 15th S&S system is significantly augmented by truck convoys, which in the latter part of 1969 became common, as northern III Corps roads became more secure against the enemy's ambushes. These convoys help ease the strain on air transports.
With goggles on to protect his eyes from flying dirt and pebbles, a soldier waits for just the right moment to thrust the heavy “doughnut” onto the nearing hook of a huge CH-54 Flying Crane (above) that will lift the D-6 tractor off to a new firebase for construction work. For the most part, 15th S&S work is hard labor, labor done by hundreds of hands like those pulling lift chains (above right) through a slip ring to prepare a sling load for helicopter flight.

The work is heavy work. Artillery shells, for example, can weigh between 36 and 140 pounds. When not being moved singly, heavy equipment moves in to shift the shells’ location. Here some 700 pounds of 105 mm artillery shells are positioned for sling out rigging.

Transportation to move supplies from depots in Saigon or Long Binh to Bien Hoa or the forward areas. Convoys depart Bien Hoa for Tay Ninh, Song Be and Quan Loi, the heavily laden trucks supported by armored vehicles and helicopter gunships.

Rations are handled by “Class I” supply. These include “A” rations, or fresh food, which is mostly brought from the United States, but also includes such items as bananas cut from the Vietnamese jungle and tomatoes from Japan; “B” rations or canned food; “C” rations or canned meals; and “LRRPs,” the dehydrated meals so often sought after by infantrymen.

Boots, clothing, field gear, plastic
spoons, sandbags and a multitude of other gear are handled by “Class II” and “IV”. Since the move south in the final months of 1968, more than four million sandbags have been flown to Cav firebases, along with millions of board-feet of two by fours.

One large storage yard at the battalion’s headquarters in Bien Hoa contains a FIRST TEAM invention, the firebase kit. The kit contains everything needed to construct a firebase: concertina wire, timbers, support steel, culverts for hooches and thousands of sandbags, all packaged and ready for shipment at a moment’s notice.

An example of the large job done by the men of the 15th S & S Battalion was the Cav’s operation in the A Shau Valley. During this period, 15,000 gallons of fuel per day were slung into a refuel point set in the valley.

Ammunition for the division is handled “Class V” supply. Class V provides technical assistance to the division, insuring that, among other things, every unit has the proper amount of ammunition, a long and never-ending job.

The third branch of the battalion is aerial equipment supply, whose respon-

In late 1969 the 15th S&S riggers took part in a facet of Vietnamization, the Dong Tien or “Forward Together” program, when they taught ARVN troops, notably of the 1st ARVN Airborne Division, how to rig and sling out artillery pieces when using the CH-54 Flying Crane. While the ARVN student (top) holds the “doughnut,” a 1st Cav Redhat at left keeps his hand forward to catch and ward off the approaching hook, a swinging hazzard in the gale-force rotor wash of the giant helicopter.

A Redhat (above), who has just slammed the “doughnut” home onto the CH-47’s hook, turns upward to give the traditional “thumbs up” signal to the ship’s crew chief. At right another of the increasingly frequent supply convoys between Phuoc Vinh and Song Be winds its way north in December 1969.