Crimson and yellow are the colors of the Ordnance Corps, and they are dominant in the 27th Maintenance Battalion’s crest. The colors yellow and black and the horseshoe and hammers in the center of the crest represent long association with the cavalry and the transition from mounted to mechanized cavalry. The sea shells in the upper right and lower left corners represent the four battalion honors won by the battalion in the Pacific during World War II. At the bottom of the crest are the words, “Ex Animo,” meaning “Willingly.”

Since the original activation of the unit on September 20, 1921, it has undergone a series of reorganizations and redesignations. Throughout this entire period, however, the battalion has remained assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division. Prior to coming to Vietnam with the airmobile division, the battalion saw duty overseas in the Pacific and Korea.

Throughout its history the 27th Maintenance Battalion has received honors and decorations for outstanding service. Four Meritorious Unit Commendations have been won by the unit, two in the Pacific, one in Korea and one in Vietnam (October 22, 1965, to April 6, 1966). The battalion has also received the Philippine and Korean Presidential Unit Citations as well as the Bravery Gold Medal of Greece.

In Vietnam it earned the Presidential Unit Citation for the Pleiku Campaign.

**27th MAINTENANCE BATTALION**

**COMMANDERS**

LTC Granville M. Stagg ................................ July 1965—May 1966
LTC Shreve D. Squires .................................. May 1966—May 1967
MAJ William H. Creed .................................. May 1967—April 1968
LTC Frank Ragano ....................................... April 1968—March 1969
LTC Robert C. Hawlk .................................... March 1969—
A 27th Maintenance Battalion mechanic gets well into the bowels of a five-ton truck (right) as he remedies the gradual damage done by wear and tear in the Vietnamese climate and dust. Another specialist, expert in the maintenance of electronics, repairs a teletype machine (below) to be returned to part of an important link with higher headquarters.

On September 15, 1965, the 27th Maintenance Battalion arrived in the Republic of Vietnam after a 30-day voyage from Savannah, Georgia, aboard the USNS Upshur. Disembarking at Qui Nhon, the battalion was transported to An Khe by helicopter to begin its role in division support.

The months of September and October were spent receiving equipment and establishing semi-permanent bases throughout the division’s area of operations.

With the month of November came the division’s first extensive operations, and the men of the 27th Maintenance provided full support. At the same time they continued to make improvements in their own work areas. At the end of
the year the Skytroopers were thus permanently located.

During 1966, the battalion continued to give direct support to the division. Not only working out of the basecamp at An Khe, the battalion sent detachments and contact teams out with each forward support element on all operations in which the division participated.

For its outstanding work the battalion received the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period October 1965 to April 1966.

Throughout the year the battalion sent detachments to forward areas in support of the division in operations such as NATHAN HALE, PAUL REVERE II and THAYER II.

During 1966 the battalion also completed more than 22,000 maintenance jobs. Some of the most important of these were done on the 105 mm howitzers. The guns' "searing surfaces" were found to be wearing at an above normal rate, and

Three 27th Maintenance men install a new rear axle and differential for a 20-ton truck.

One of the 27th's most important missions is that of keeping more than a thousand division vehicles in working order. Here a mechanic closes a small shrapnel hole in a jeep radiator.
A mechanic from the 27th gives preventive maintenance to one of many diesel generators (above) operating in the Cav to provide electrical power—one of the uses of that electricity is to light spotlights surrounding major and permanent Cav base areas to discourage enemy ground attacks. Two other mechanics lend the all-important repairman's ear to the sound of a running engine (right), as they begin their diagnosis.

The battalion initiated and maintained a policy of training its personnel in certain MOS categories before sending them to the forward detachments during 1967. This was done primarily with those skills associated with unique airmobile division equipment, since many people had no prior experience with these particular items.

The battalion initiated a 20-hour course in maintenance to motor officers and NCOs in all the units of the division. In turn, these students taught their personnel the course, which aided greatly in keeping vehicles rolling throughout the division.

During the last months of the year the battalion suffered a critical shortage of manpower. This was due to a large number of rotations and the fact that replacements were held to authorized limitations. Even with the shortage of personnel, the battalion maintained its high level of performance and continued to support the division in an outstanding manner.

On Christmas Day, 1968, the men of the battalion distributed more than 700 Christmas packages to the children of the Dong Chi Refugee Camp, located east of An Khe.

The ever-increasing efficiency of the battalion was evidenced in the large number of maintenance jobs completed during the year, numbering nearly 68,000.

The big story of 1968 was the move south to III Corps. On October 27 the battalion received word of the move, and by November 15 all units had been moved and were operational in their new areas of operations.

Throughout 1969, as in previous years, the battalion supported the division in an exemplary fashion. It proved its ability to perform any mission, no matter how difficult. The battalion’s motto “Anywhere—Anytime,” truly described the unit’s mobility and ability.
The 15th Medical Battalion, as it is now known, was organized in 1926 at Fort Bliss, Texas, and designated the 1st Medical Squadron. The unit travelled with the 1st Cavalry Division throughout World War II campaigns in the South Pacific. The unit entered Tokyo with the Cav in 1945, and was stationed at Camp Drake, where in 1949, it was redesignated the 15th Medical Battalion.

In June, 1965, at Fort Benning, Georgia, the 11th Medical Battalion, 11th Air Assault Division, was deactivated and the 15th Medical Battalion became the first airmobile medical battalion in the Army.

In World War II the unit participated in campaigns in New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelage (with Arrowhead), Leyte (with Arrowhead), and Luzon. Seven campaign stars were earned in Korea.

The 15th Medical Battalion was decorated in World War II with Meritorious Unit Citation, streamer embroidered PACIFIC THEATER (three awards) and the Presidential Unit Citation, streamer embroidered LOS NEGROS ISLAND.

Additionally, three platoons were cited for actions at Leyte, Luzon and Manila for actions July 1950 to January 1951. Both the Ambulance and Clearing Companies earned Meritorious Unit Commendations in Korea.

In Vietnam the Valorous Unit Award was presented to Company B for heroism on June 6, 1967, during Operation PERSHING. The battalion received a streamer embroidered PLEIKU PROVINCE for its part in the historic Pleiku Campaign.

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<td>LTC Jueri J. Svaginstev</td>
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<td>LTC Guthrie Turner</td>
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<td>LTC Joseph W. McNaney</td>
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Providing medical support to an airborne division requires a special type of medical unit. In the 1st Air Cavalry Division, this unit is the 15th Medical Battalion.

The men of the medical battalion take great pride in the accomplishments of their unit. This pride was summed up by a former aviation platoon leader: “The wounded man on the ground deserves the best. He has done his job and then it becomes our job. He deserves to be taken care of.”

Just how effective is an airborne medical battalion? During Cardinal Spellman’s Christmas visit to Vietnam in 1967, he met and talked with a 1st Air Cavalryman in the field. The next day the Cardinal departed Vietnam for Okinawa. As he began his visit to the Army hospital there, he was surprised and amazed to meet and talk with the same young Skytrooper he had talked with the previous day. The soldier had been wounded that afternoon and evacuated in less than 24 hours to a modern hospital thousands of miles from the battle zone.

A 15th Med medic prepares to lower the jungle penetrator (left), a device designed to slip down through towering and thick jungle trees and growth to rescue wounded from locations which do not permit landing. The Medevac pilot must hover his helicopter (below) with little or no movement until all wounded (below left) are winched aboard.

In 1965, the 15th Medical Battalion was deployed to the Republic of Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry Division. The battalion headquarters was quickly set up at An Khe, as the companies were assigned to forward areas. As Cavalrymen quickly underwent their baptism of fire, the advantages of aero-medical evacuation became more and more evident. In fact among the first Skytroopers killed in action was a Medevac pilot.

Throughout the division’s operations in the mountainous jungles of the central Vietnamese highlands, the personal devotion to duty and bravery of the men of the battalion became written in the history of warfare as examples for all who follow.

From the Medevac helicopter pilot, who goes into a landing zone under heavy enemy fire, to the most basic medical unit, the combat medic, 15th unit came under heavy enemy fire. While treating several men, PFC Monroe saw a grenade land near his position and immediately jumped on it, absorbing the explosion with his body. He was awarded the Medal of Honor, posthumously, in 1968.

Just one month later, Specialist Four Charles C. Hagemeister, serving as a medic with Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, distinguished himself in action and received the Medal of Honor. SP4 Hagemeister repeatedly gave treatment and words of encouragement to the wounded members of his platoon during heavy fighting in Binh Dinh Province. Killing four enemy soldiers and silencing a machinegun during the battle, he raced through a fusillade of enemy fire to secure help from a nearby platoon. His actions, at the risk of his own life, saved the lives of many of his
A combat medic (above), one of the most revered men in the history and tradition of the infantry, moves out after off-loading from a combat assault. He is loaded down with his field gear and has an extra medical kit bag hanging from his left shoulder. This particular medic is not carrying a weapon, an option afforded only to field medics and chaplains. In almost every field company the medics are also known by their hallmark—unfailing courage in the face of fire. When a buddy is wounded every man will pitch in to help, because he knows that others would do the same for him. A radio telephone operator (RTO) and three other men (right) race across a paddy in February 1968, to get a wounded man to an incoming Medevac chopper (right bottom). The wounded man was under expert medical care at a forward field hospital 11 minutes after he tripped a Viet Cong booby trap in the field.

The personal bravery of these two men was in the highest traditions of the medical corps, men who are ready and willing to go when the hurt cry out for help.

These incidents of personal bravery are not exceptions. The night of June 6, 1967, the battalion's Company B distinguished itself when its base came under a heavy mortar attack. Enemy mortars landed in the ammunition storage area, which contained 1,250 tons of explosives. The medical personnel repeatedly evacuated patients and personnel from the area, resulting in no loss of life. The company was awarded the Valorous Unit Citation for its actions.

A major part of the 15th Medical Battalion's efforts has been spent working in civic action programs. Thus, the MEDCAP (Medical Civic Action Program) was initiated. Medical personnel visit villages and hamlets, treating the local nationals for everything from a toothache to starvation.

The medical personnel created a hospital in An Khe for the treatment of the 70,000 people of the An Tuy District in Binh Dinh Province. Thousands of patients were treated at the hospital, and hundreds of babies were delivered. The medical personnel soon received the trust and gratitude of the Vietnamese people. Their job has been described as "one
part medicine, two parts compassion.”

The move south to III Corps in 1968 brought about many changes in methods of operation for many Skytroopers, but not for the medical battalion personnel. Their job remained the same; help those in need. Help they did.

The Headquarters Service Company, located in Phuoc Vinh, conducts daily sick call, runs a dental clinic and administers to local nationals.

The battalion’s companies are located at the division’s three brigade headquarters, as well, where they can administer aid to the men stationed in those forward areas.

Yet the men of the battalion are dedicated to their foremost task. When the word goes out for help, Medevac ship crews scramble, for theirs is also a mission of mercy and compassion. The injured in the field receives medical attention within a matter of minutes.

Since its arrival in the Republic of Vietnam in 1965, the 15th Medical Battalion has rendered top-notch medical support to the FIRST TEAM: New chapters have been written in the unit’s history: Happy Valley, Ia Drang Valley, Bong Son, Plei Mei and War Zone C. Wherever the tide of battle takes the 1st Air Cavalry Division, the 15th Med will be there... conserving the fighting strength.

Behind the pilots and crews of Medevac, the combat medics in the field and the doctors at forward field hospitals, there stands a thorough and efficient medical organization in the 15th Medical Battalion. The battalion offers a full range of medical care, even beyond that needed for combat wounds. A medical specialist inspects a lens (top right) to be ground for use in spectacles for 1st Cav troopers. Specialist Four Jerry W. Heger fills a patient’s prescription (left) at the 15th Med pharmacy at Phuoc Vinh, and Dr. Daniel Kozlowski gives dental work to a Skytrooper (right) in a bunkered dental clinic, located on a firebase.
There is a mystique about Medevac. So much has been written of the courage, the dedication and esprit de corps of the men in Medevac that today they live with legend.

“It’s why I joined the Army,” said Medvac pilot Warrant Officer Richard Leonard. “There’s something about saving a life—and the way Medevac does it, defying the odds—that makes it appealing.”

“I’ve never seen a mission aborted,” said Specialist Four Dick Gamester, who monitors Medevac Control at Phuoc Vinh. “I’ve seen missions delayed by weather and suppressive fire, but never called off. There are nights when the only birds in the sky are Medevac.”

The esprit de corps touches everyone. You can’t get into the program unless you volunteer, and even then the competition is tough.

Specialist Four Mike Vineyard, a helicopter mechanic at 15th Med, worked in a maintenance shop before he got a shot at a crew chief position in Medevac. “I frequently flew doorgunner when we’d go after a downed bird,” he said.

“You just do it,” he said. “When a bird goes down, everyone heads for the pad. It’s like a brotherhood.”

That startling routine response to a call that seems beyond that of duty is part of the mystique of Medevac. Yet there is another side.

“It gets to be a little hairy at times,” said Medevac pilot Captain Ernest Bayford. “But I wouldn’t say there’s excessive strain on anyone.”

He’s right, of course. Medevac teams lead a very comfortable life when the going is slow. Half their time is free. Even at the brigade field hospitals, where the teams are on call 24 hours a day, they have no duties until suddenly, though routinely, they are called to scramble.

“Downed aircraft, let’s go!” CPT Bayford shouted from the doorway of the crew quarters. It was 2:21 p.m. and the scramble was on. The crew reached the chopper at full stride; in minutes it was airborne, hitting 100 knots at treetop level. The bird climbed to 2,000 feet; then nine minutes after the call and 10 miles northeast of Quan Loi, the descent
began.

They circled once at 300 feet as a Cobra gunship pulled in behind. The downed aircraft was somewhere in the thick green foliage below. A light observation helicopter (LOH), flying as low as it could, finally spotted the wreckage and marked it with purple smoke.

Aircraft commander Bayford banked the ship to the left and hovered over the now visible downed helicopter, its slender tail protruding through the bamboo.

It was 2:33 when Specialist Five William Meeks attached the yellow, torpedo-like jungle penetrator to the cable hoist and lowered it to the bamboo below.

On the ground a man grasped at it and, shielding his face from the entangling bush, rode the cable skyward. He looked straight up at the chopper with a strained smile, drawing closer, closer until he could touch the skid, grab the medic's hand and pull himself aboard.

"We've got to get the pilot out! We've got to, got to!" he said again and again, breathing hard as he lay against the cabin wall.

The whine of the hoist started up again, bringing the rescued doorgunner to the side of the ship and inside. He clutched at the medic-crew chief. It was 2:35.

"He's trapped. I couldn't budge him. He waved me away," the man blurted out. "We've got to get him out, we've got to," said the doorgunner.

"They will. They will," answered the medic.

The ship gained altitude slowly, banked to the left and circled again at 300 feet. It was up to the Blues now—the crack infantry element of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, already airlifted into the area and maneuvering toward the downed aircraft and its pinned pilot.

The Medevac chopper circled above. SP5 Meeks turned at once to his patients, wrapping and taping the crushed toes of the doorgunner.

(Continued on P. 287)
SEPARATE
BATTALIONS AND
COMPANIES
15th ADMINISTRATION
COMPANY

The unit was constituted September 6, 1921, and organized at Fort Bliss, Texas, as the 1st Cavalry Division Quartermaster Train later that month. After a series of reorganizations and redesignations, and an inactivation in 1947, the unit became the 15th Administration Company October 15, 1957.

The company has campaign participation credit for World War II (New Guinea, Bismarck Archipelago, Leyte and Luzon), and Korea.

The unit had been honored with three Meritorious Unit Citations; two streamers embroidered KOREA; the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation; the Republic of Korea PUC; and the Bravery Gold Medal of Greece.

In Vietnam, the company was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for the Pleiku Campaign.

In late October 1965, Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm Baer, the adjutant general of the 1st Air Cav, stepped out of his tent and surveyed a chunk of real estate on the southwest corner of the "golf course," the 1st Cav base at An Khe. What he saw was a gaggle of tents and hoochies that represented the whole of the administrative backbone of the division—the 15th Administration Company.

It was the last time the company ever served together in one geographical location.

A strict definition of the TO & E places all the elements of a division's administrative services unit in one location and under the operational control of the adjutant general. And so it was when the division closed on the An Khe base in mid-September, the elements of the 15th Admin Company parked their bags and pitched their tents in one location.

But the TOE never envisioned an airborne division launching strike forces some 150 miles distant from its main base.

So when the Pleiku Campaign got well under way in late October, elements of the company were displaced westward to co-locate with the forward command post of the division. The first elements to move were from the information office and the casualty reporting section of the AG shop.

Back at Camp Radcliff the offices of the inspector general, staff judge advocate, division chaplain and finance continued to operate as a whole.

Finance and AG, in particular, were
putting down roots—big machine records kind of roots—which precluded their moving anywhere.

As the division's forward or "jump" command post increased in size, so did a proportionate slice of the admin company that followed. AG classified and reproduction moved a sizable shop forward to Bong Son to support Operation Masher/White Wing. The information office again displaced a larger force to support the brigades and thus was born the concept of putting information teams with each committed brigade.

The division chaplains moved forward, too, as did finance contact teams.

In late 1966 and during 1967, the division, for all intents and purposes, had abandoned Camp Radcliff as an operational base. Elements of the 15th Administration Company reorganized under AG to become a personnel services battalion. An Khe still was the focal point of all admin services. Pay and personnel records were maintained there, and Camp Radcliff became the Skytrooper's first and last stop in the Cav.

When the division made its great leap northward from the Bong Son Plain to I Corps and Camp Evans, the forward command post that had grown into becoming, in reality, the division main

(Continued on P. 287)

The division training center at Bien Hoa is managed by the 15th Admin Company. This involves the processing and training of hundreds of replacement soldiers every week. One of the training periods new Cavalrymen receive at the FIRST TERM Academy (FTA) is that of rappelling from helicopters. The training center employs a 45-foot tower where men get their first taste of the art of rappelling (above). During his 12-month tour with the 1st Cav, the average soldier will probably rappel into combat from helicopters at least once.

1st Cav artist, Specialist Five Ron Doss, portrayed another 15th Admin clerk at his inglorious, but most essential job, in the paper war.