AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Presidential
Unit
Citation

In the White House Rose Garden, the President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, attaches the Presidential Unit Citation streamer to the 1st Air Cavalry Division colors, held by Division Sergeant Major C. K. Westervelt. Lieutenant General Harry W. O. Kinnard, Army deputy chief of staff and first commander of the 1st Air Cav, looks on. The division won the award, the first in Vietnam, for its outstanding accomplishments in the Pleiku Province campaign. After making the presentation, President Johnson read the citation below:

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, I have today awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) for extraordinary heroism to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and attached units.

The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and attached units distinguished themselves by outstanding performance of duty and extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy in the Republic of Vietnam during the period 23 October 1965 to 26 November 1965. Following the attack on a Special Forces camp at Plei Me, in Pleiku Province, on 19 October 1965 by regular units of the Army of North Vietnam, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was committed to action. The division was initially assigned the mission of protecting the key communications center of Pleiku, in addition to providing fire support both for an Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) armored column dispatched to the relief of the besieged camp, and for the camp itself. Using air assault techniques, the division deployed artillery batteries into firing positions deep within enemy-held territory and provided the vital fire support needed by the ARVN forces to accomplish the relief of the Special Forces camp. By 27 October, the tactical and strategic impact of the presence of a North Vietnamese regular army division in Pleiku Province necessitated a change in missions for the 1st Cavalry Division. The division was given an unlimited offensive role to seek out and destroy the enemy force. With bold thrusts, elements of the division pursued the North Vietnamese regiments across the dense and trackless jungles of the west-central highlands, seeking the enemy out in his previously secure sanctuaries and giving him no quarter.

The superb training, unflinching devotion to duty, and unsurpassed gallantry and intrepidity of the Cavalrymen, individually and collectively, resulted in numerous victories and succeeded in driving the invading North Vietnamese division back from its positions at Plei Me to the foot of the Chu Pong Massif. There, in the valley of the Ia Drang, the enemy was reinforced by a fresh regiment and undertook preparations for more attacks into Pleiku Province. The 1st Cavalry Division deployed its men and weapons by air to launch an attack on this enemy staging area, which was 35 kilometers from the nearest road and 50 kilometers from the nearest logistical base. Fully utilizing airmobility in applying their combat power in a series of offensive blows, the men of the division completely defeated the numerically superior enemy. When the enemy finally withdrew his broken forces from the battlefield, the offensive capability of the North Vietnamese Army in the II Corps Tactical Zone had been blunted. The outstanding performance and extraordinary heroism of the members of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and attached units, under the most hazardous and adverse conditions, reflect great credit upon themselves, the United States Army, and the Armed Forces of the United States.

Signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on 19 August 1967.
The Medal of Honor Recipients

2LT WALTER J. MARM, JR.,
1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, November 14, 1965

*SGT JIMMY G. STEWART,
2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, May 18, 1966

SP4 DAVID C. DOLBY,
1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, May 21, 1966

*PFC LEWIS ALBANESE,
5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, November 14, 1966

SP4 CHARLES C. HAGEMEISTER,
1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, March 20, 1967

*PFC BILLY LANE LAUFFER,
2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, September 21, 1966

SSG DELBERT O. JENNINGS,
1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, December 27, 1966

*PFC JAMES H. MONROE,
1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, February 16, 1967

*SP4 GEORGE A. INGALLS,
2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, April 16, 1967

*SP4 CARMEL B. HARVEY, JR.,
1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, June 21, 1967

*SP5 EDGAR L. McWETHY, JR.,
1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, June 21, 1967

CW2 FREDERICK E. FERGUSON,
227th Aviation Battalion, January 31, 1968

1LT JAMES M. SPRAYBERRY,
5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, April 25, 1968

* Awarded posthumously.
For Valor and Outstanding Service in Vietnam:
These medals were awarded to Skytroopers

Editor's Note: The number below each medal represents the number of 1st Cavalry Skytroopers to earn that medal for valor in Vietnam. With the exception of the Medal of Honor, awards and decoration figures below are for 1966-1969 inclusively. Figures for 1965 were not available.
The Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry Citation

The Cross of Gallantry with Palm has been awarded by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam for outstanding service during the period 9 August 1965 through 19 April 1969 to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) arrived in Vietnam on 7 August, 1965, and participated in successive military operations in Pleiku, Phan Thiet, Binh Dinh, Quang Nam, A Shau, Khe Sanh and Thua Thien, frustrating the Communists many times. In particular, during the period it was stationed in the III Corps Tactical Zone from 26 October 1968 to the present time, the 1st United States Cavalry Division has been under the command of Major General George I. Forsythe and has been on constant alert and participated in clashes over the entire battlefield. Disregarding unfavorable terrain, as well as modern and intense anti-aircraft fire from well-fortified enemy trenches, the men of this unit have gallantly engaged in bloody battles in Phuoc Long, Binh Long, Tay Ninh, Hau Nghia and Bien Hoa Provinces, blocking infiltration by the North Vietnamese regular forces through the Cambodian-Vietnamese border in a timely and effective manner. Furthermore, this unit also intervened and repulsed enemy attacks against friendly forces, smashed many large-scale troop movements designed to shell and attack the capital city of Saigon during the Viet Cong Winter-Spring Campaign of 1968–1969, and neutralized the enemy military potential in secret zones, inflicting continuous personnel casualties and weapons losses upon the enemy. With the above-mentioned outstanding achievements, the 1st Cavalry Division has effectively assisted the Republic of Vietnam in the fight against the Communists to preserve peace and freedom.

Lieutenant General Do Cao Tri, ARVN III Corps commanding general, affixes the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry streamer to the 1st Air Cavalry Division colors during ceremonies at Camp Gorgad, Phuoc Vinh, South Vietnam, on April 19, 1969. Major General George I. Forsythe, then Cav commanding general, stands at salute just behind LTG Tri and the colors.
Mother Dorcy and the Patch

In September 1921 the War Department authorized the establishment of the 1st Cavalry Division. A directive was published requesting submission of a design for the “shoulder sleeve” of the new unit’s uniform.

The message required that the new insignia satisfy three principles: that it bind men together in a common devotion; be an easily recognizable sign by which men could reassemble after battle; and be a word picture which would inspire the men of the division. Additionally, postwar conditions limited the use of colors to two for economy production.

The design selected for the FIRST TEAM patch was submitted by Colonel and Mrs. Ben Dorcy. The colonel was then the commander of the 7th Cavalry Regiment at Fort Bliss, Texas, with the newly activated division.

Mrs. Dorcy relates that the combination of the golden sunset at Fort Bliss and the traditional cavalry colors of blue and gold were a great influence in the selection of the background color of the insignia. The bright yellow inner liner of one of the colonel’s old dress capes became the cloth on which the first design was drawn.

The choice of the horse’s head for the design was made by the Dorcys after they observed a mounted trooper ride by their home on a beautiful blue-black thoroughbred.

The shape of the patch represents the shield carried by knights in battle. The bar, or slash, across the yellow shield also finds its origin in heraldry and is always shown on a coat of arms diagonally from left to right. It represents a scaling ladder used by the knights of old to breach castle walls. The ladder and horse occupy equal places of honor since both were necessary to meet with the enemy.

As time went by the blue of the patch was changed to black, otherwise the patch has not changed from its original design and shape.

The shoulder patch of the 1st Cavalry Division is the largest of all U.S. Army division insignias. Mrs. Dorcy explained: “The patch had to be large enough to be seen through the dust and sand at Fort Bliss, and we made it that way because it’s worn by big men who do big things.”

The patch, like the division, had a proud and noble heritage. Mother Dorcy has maintained her love for the FIRST TEAM as evidenced by her dedicated correspondence with the officers and men in the unit today.
Fat her (LTC) McGrath and Chap lain (LTC) Webb (above) stand behind the altar of the 1st Cav's Division Chapel at An Khe. Members of Company B, 8th Engineer Battalion, sit in silence (lower left) while a chap lain conducts a memorial service for a fallen comrade.

CHAPLAINS' ACTIVITIES

He can't match the Division Artillery or ARA for firepower, but the support the chaplain provides to the 1st Air Cavalryman is sometimes the most vital offered in the war zone.

The chaplain is in Vietnam to give the soldier strength in his faith and spiritual guidance, to provide counsel and aid him in worship. To accomplish his mission the Army chaplain often goes to extraordinary lengths, reaching the combat soldier in the most remote areas, providing a hand for those who need one.

There are 24 chaplains in the 1st Air Cavalry Division and the American fighting man has always had access to these men who know and understand a soldier's spiritual needs.

The following vignettes are meant to illustrate the FIRST TEAM chaplains' work in Vietnam.

—Not many priests “back in the world” serve a parish covering some 3,500 square miles, but Chaplain (CPT) James J. Brennen does. Like other Skytrooper chaplains Father Brennen serves men located some distance apart with the 1st and 5th Battalions, 7th Cavalry, and he travels a great deal. He's a modern version of the legendary “circuit rider” of days gone by; he uses a helicopter in place of the horse and buggy.

“The guys out there come to know themselves,” Father Brennen said. “When they start analyzing what they have they come to appreciate things more and they share with one another what little they have because they rely on each other so much.”

—When Company A, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, made the division’s first combat assault into III Corps, Chaplain (CPT) G. L. Gogl was with them. “The company had no services recently,” he said. “It was the only way I could get to them.”

—Sergeant Anthony Minotti, a squad leader with Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, carried with him a Bible printed by the American Bible Society in 1844 that had been in his family for more than 100 years. It was first carried to the Civil War and spent two years and six months in a Confederate prison. The same Bible was carried by men of faith during World Wars I and II, the Korean War and a tour of the Philippines. The inscription inside reads, “Carry it with you and I'm sure its wisdom will guide and keep you as it did me.”

—“The church is more accessible in
Vietnam than it is in the States, particularly in the Cav, where we can travel anywhere to teach our people,” said Chaplain (CPT) Henry C. Hilliard. The Division Artillery chaplain had more than 500 field worship services under his belt, merits several Air Medals, wears two Bronze Star Medals for valor under fire, and a Soldier’s Medal for pulling an injured pilot from a burning helicopter. And he has the Purple Heart.

—On FSB Mary the chapel is named for the patron saint of the artillery, Saint Barbara. Once it consisted of a single cross carved from a brass 105 mm cannister. It had grown to include a row of pews, a picket fence and an altar for the cross. Made from “walnut stained” ammo boxes (the “walnut stain” is tar paper coated in gasoline) it is the pride of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery, a mutual effort of men of all faiths to have a place to worship.

—Being an Army chaplain in Vietnam involves a lot more than conducting Sunday worship services and holding spiritual counseling sessions. It is a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week job that caters to not only the spiritual needs of men, but to their intellectual and physical needs as well.

“There men deserve the best we can give them,” said Chaplain (CPT) John E. Snider of the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry. To Chaplain Snider this includes chapel dayrooms, dry socks, Kool-Aid, pens and paper and nightly movies. One night he stood guard on the perimeter so that the man whose post he took could run the movie projector at the battalion chapel that night.

—Villagers in the southern coastal farming hamlet of Nhut Dong were forced to flee their homes and rice crops when the Viet Cong “liberated” the area. Their Catholic church, a twin-spiraled Gothic structure, was ransacked.

Months later as the villagers returned to the area to harvest their rice under the protection of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, Chaplain (CPT) James Ware was approached by an elder. “The people miss the bells,” the old man said.

“They were beautiful,” Chaplain Ware said. “One was French, one was cast in Hue and the third was a Buddhist bell of traditional pattern.”

A special helicopter was dispatched and the bells were airlifted to Huong Dien where the villagers had been relocated.
No matter where he may be, the Sky trooper (above) has services made available to him. The sacraments and religious messages are brought anywhere, anytime by the chaplains, some 24 in all. The bell (below) was hung in the Division Chapel at An Khe and was given by citizens of Phoenix, Arizona. The bell, along with the chapel, were dedicated on Easter Sunday 1967.

Before he left, Chaplain Ware, a Protestant, conducted a service for the harvesters in their old church. The Vietnamese, all Catholic, said this didn’t make any difference. “All right service, same same Jesus,” approved one man.

—On World Communion Sunday all Christian faiths are united in their common observance of a rededication and spiritual renewal.

Chaplain (CPT) W. Richard Waddle of the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, traveled daily to individual companies but this was a day he hoped to reach them all. He held seven services that day in a span of 14 hours. One company was in contact and he was unable to land. “The day went pretty well,” he said. “Maybe I can get to that other company tomorrow.”

—“For God and Country,” by Chaplain (CPT) Claude Newby, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, chaplain:

“As a chaplain on my second tour with the 1st Cav, I am often asked if I volunteered to return to Vietnam and if I asked to return to the Cav. To my affirmative answers to both questions, there is often a strange period of silence. Sometimes the questioner will walk away silently shaking his head. I can almost hear him mumbling, ‘Why, you’d never know it just by looking at him. He almost looks normal.’

“Traditionally, men entering the military service receive this advice, ‘Never volunteer for anything,’ from relatives, fellow recruits and old veterans. The sanity of one who too easily volunteers is immediately suspect. In fact, being a volunteer can actually be embarrassing.

“Few volunteers will simply answer, ‘Yes, I volunteered,’ and leave it at that. Most, with some slight or strong embarrassment, will attempt to explain why they felt justified in volunteering as a defense to their mental reputation. However, in the heat of actual combat, the volunteer comes into his own.

“I recall a day when I lay exposed only about 70 feet from an enemy bunker. The terrain was open. Enemy fire was coming from the bunker and from many points along our front and flanks. As I lay there, trying to crawl under my belt buckle, I witnessed a fellow soldier take a serious hit just about 25 feet from me.

“It only took me a moment to convince myself that I had to go forward and help the wounded man. Just as I started to move, a medic slithered past me and told me to stay put. He then crawled forward and gave the wounded soldier aid. Because that medic had volunteered for a very dangerous task, I was able to sigh with relief.

“How thankful I felt for that volunteer being there. In combat the volunteer comes into his own.

“Our Savior, Jesus Christ, was a volunteer. He volunteered for the most dangerous mission the world had ever seen. He volunteered to take upon himself the greatest suffering the world has ever known or shall know.

“He volunteered to suffer such horrible suffering of spirit that it would suffice to meet the requirements of justice for all who would accept the payment by accepting the Christ, and taking His way of life.

“Because the Savior accomplished His voluntary ‘suicide’ mission, both physical and spiritual death is overcome—all mankind can sigh with relief because a volunteer paid the price for the ‘big DEROS’ to our Father in Heaven.

“Let us thank God for Jesus Christ, the volunteer; and for the many other volunteers who have followed His example in their lives to care for us.”
Veteran performers George Gobel, Bob Hope and George Jessel visited “Cav Country” in 1969, bringing a little bit of home to members of the division.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Dancer Suzanne Charney made a tremendous hit with Skytroopers as she toured Vietnam with Mr. Hope’s show in 1969.

The call came over the radio, “You’re getting a Uniform Sierra Oscar tomorrow.” At 1 p.m. the next day a Chinook landed and immediately drew a large crowd of bare-chested men volunteering to help unload its precious cargo.

Unlike the usual supply missions that the Chinook flew into the remote little village cut from the jungle when one or two men helped the crew chief carry off the cargo, two dozen men stood in the hot blast of the engines and swirling wind behind the hook to help the cargo safely off. The musicians, huge amplifiers and instruments in large cases, trunks of clothes, then the girls, clad in brightly colored miniskirts, emerged from the waiting hook.

In a few minutes all but the most essential activity had ceased at the re-

Cav Sergeant Bill Ellis toured firebases, entertaining Skytroopers with his songs about the life of an infantryman. Those who heard them, “Grunt,” “Firefight” and the others, know they were songs about their everyday life . . . not a pleasant life, but one not soon to be forgotten.

Theresa Graves, one of the cast in television’s “Laugh-In,” toured Vietnam with Bob Hope’s Christmas Show, entertaining Skytroopers at Lai Khe, Cu Chi and Long Binh.
The Jefferson Helicopter, (below), composed of men from various units of the division, spent 60 days TDY to Special Services and toured Cav firebases and basecamps. Bob Hope and Connie Stevens (right) teamed up to entertain Skytroopers in 1969. Cavalrymen were flown to three available sites to see the performers.

Cavalrymen (below left) watch Bob Hope's Christmas Show (below right) at Long Binh. The Golddiggers, a group of 13 beautiful, round-eyed reminders of home, brought the house down with each number.

remote outpost and the booming sounds of rock music echoed through the jungle, replacing the usual thunder of howitzers. A USO (United Services Organization) show had come to the lonely Skytroopers—arranged by the Cav's Special Services.

In the Cav, even the Special Services are airmobile. Hundreds of USO shows from Ron "Tarzan" Ely's one man tour to large shows like the Christy Minstrels have toured the Cav since 1965, all by air.

One of the Special Services' main jobs is to prepare a touring show to be transported to 1st Cav firebases.

When the show is too massive to be taken to the troops, the troops are taken to the show. Special Services arranged for a flotilla of fixed wing and helicopter craft to transport 2,000 Skytroopers to each of three Bob Hope Christmas Show locations in 1969.

Besides arranging for transportation and schedules for travelling shows, Special Services often produce their own. Talented Cavalrymen are chosen at auditions to go on temporary duty as entertainers, touring the 1st Cav firebases and often also touring all of Vietnam.

One of these talented Skytroopers, Sergeant Bill Ellis, became the unofficial Cav troubador in 1969 by singing the songs of the grunts in the field. An ex-infantryman, SGT Ellis composed songs, including "First Team" and "Firefight."

Special Services also entertain the men with Service Clubs sprinkled throughout the area of operations. The girls who run the Service Clubs entertain soldiers with a wide variety of games, activities and hobbies—from playing ping pong to reading, drinking coffee or just sitting back in a comfortable chair and relaxing for a few precious moments.
Miss World, Eva Reuber-Staier, a dazzling beauty from Austria, and Bob Hope team up (below) to entertain at Long Binh.

A member of the now-popular Golddiggers group, made more popular by their appearances on the Dean Martin television show, performs for the men.

The third anniversary of the Phuoc Vinh Service Club was highlighted by a cake baking contest between the mess halls at Camp Goyvd. After a lengthy deliberation by the judges, the cake (below) of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Division Artillery, won first place.

Eva Reuber-Staier, Bob Hope and Connie Stevens perform a skit about a GI and a WAC lieutenant stranded on a South Pacific island.

The entire Hope Christmas Show cast, Connie Stevens, Suzanne Charney, Bob Hope, Eva Reuber-Staier, Theresa Graves and the Golddiggers, close the show at Long Binh with the singing of "Silent Night."

Santa Claus made an unexpected visit to "Cav Country" in 1969. Arriving in true airmobile fashion, he rappelled into the Phuoc Vinh helipad at one point, carrying his bag of goodies.

Personnel recuperating at the 93rd Evacuation Hospital in Long Binh managed to get out to see the Christmas Show.
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Even in combat the visitors came to see and marvel. Without question, the Cav has been the most thoroughly visited unit in Vietnam. On these pages are just a few of the distinguished visitors who came calling—from the Ia Drang to I Corps to War Zone C, in basecamps, on remote mountaintops and muddy LZs. They came, they saw, and they invariably left, if not convinced, impressed.

Charley Black, war correspondent and columnist for the Columbus, Georgia, Ledger-Enquirer, who has covered the Cav from its early days at Fort Benning, definitely ranks in the “distinguished visitor” category.

Major General Harry W. O. Kinnard, 1st Air Cav commanding general (far right), points out enemy weapons captured during fighting in the Ia Drang Valley. His visitors are (from left to right) General Earl Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, John McNaughton, Department of Defense official, and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. The date: November 27, 1965.


Brigadier General (Retired) S. L. A. Marshall, the noted military historian and columnist, has made several visits to Cav Country since 1965, writing extensively on Skystroopers and the airmobile division in battle.

General Dwight E. Beach, commander of U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, visited the division’s area of operations in Binh Dinh Province in 1967.

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Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor visited Cav firebases for two days during August 1969. Mr. Resor talked with Skytroopers at LZs Grant, Kelly and Wescott.

Colonel Alfred E. Stevens (Retired), registrar of the Ist Cavalry Division Association, inspects a LOH during his tour of “Cav Country.”

Ron Ely, star of television’s “Tarzan” series, made a USO tour of Cav firebases in December 1969. The former football star tried his hand at rappelling and found it “sort of like swinging from tree to tree.”

General Creighton W. Abrams, COMUSMACV and COMUS ARV, visited Cav Country early in 1969 to attach the Presidential Unit Citation streamer to the guidon of Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry. First Sergeant Salvatore Vizelli assists the general.

General Ralph E. Haines, commander of U.S. Army, Pacific, talks with Specialist Four Samuel R. Faulk, a mortarman with Company E, 1st of the 12th, while the battalion was establishing LZ Cindy. Escorting General Haines are Major General George I. Forsythe (second from left), 1st Cav commanding general, and Colonel Karl Morton, 3rd Brigade commander.

Terence Cardinal Cooke, Bishop of New York City and Military Ordinariate, visited the division’s Camp Gorvad base December 24, 1969. As Military Ordinariate, Cardinal Cooke is the bishop for all Roman Catholics serving in the Armed Forces.

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U.S. House Representative George Cleveland receives a block of instruction in the use of the M-79 grenade launcher from a company commander of the 1st of the 8th Cav. Lieutenant Colonel James A. Graham, Jr., battalion commander, critiques.

Comedienne Martha Raye, starring in the USO production of “Hello Dolly,” stops during her visit of Cav firebases to get acquainted with “Dum Dum,” mascot of Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery, at LZ Geronimo.
General A. J. Goodpastor (above), deputy commander, MACV, attaches the Presidential Unit Citation streamer to the guidon of Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, in 1968.

Lieutenant General William B. Rosson, deputy commander of MACV, visited the Cav (below) for the assumption of command ceremony of Major General E. B. Roberts. On LTG Rosson’s right is Brigadier General William E. Shedd, assistant division commander.

Bobbi, the AFVN weather girl, visits the 1st Cav weather detachment at the division’s Camp Gorvad base.

Congressional Representative Graham Purcell of Texas speaks with Cav personnel (above) during a visit in April 1969.

Republic of Vietnam President Nguyen Van Thieu (above) chats with Skymtroopers during a tour of Cav firebases in 1969.

Miss Marilyn Genz, “The Cav’s Sweetheart,” reads the latest issue of her favorite magazine, the FIRST TEAM, at the division’s headquarters compound at Camp Gorvad.

Major General Harry W. O. Kinnard (second from left), division commanding general, discusses airmobility with Brigadier General Smith, USMC (second from right), Colonel William R. Lynch (center), 2nd Brigade commander, and with two Navy captains on a mountaintop near An Khe during Operation WHITE WING in February 1966.

Lieutenant General Do Cao Tri, ARVN III Corps commanding general, and Major General E. B. Roberts, division commander, make an inspection (below) of a combined Cav-ARVN firebase north of Tay Ninh.