1st of the 8th

(Continued From P. 85)

Stratton of the unit’s tremendous fighting ability, the 1st Bn, 8th Cav, was later awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

In October, the battalion accounted for 31 Viet Cong killed during Operation IRVING along the sea coast. THAYER II in the Soui Ca Valley commenced December 16. Two days after Christmas, Companies B and C established contact with an NVA battalion and Delta Company fought another, inflicting heavy casualties.

THAYER II continued into 1967, terminating on February 11. The next day the battalion began Operation PERSHING along with other division maneuver battalions—an operation that lasted through one year.

On February 16 the first platoon of Company C was deployed in a night ambush near Bong Son when it was suddenly hit with an intense and accurate grenade barrage. A number of men were injured. To aid those wounded, Private First Class James H. Monroe, medical aidman, moved from position to position, oblivious to the hail of grenades and shrapnel about him. While treating the wounds of the platoon sergeant and his RTO, Monroe saw a live grenade land directly to his front and behind the two men he was treating. He gave off a shout, pushed the two men aside and dove on the fragmentation grenade just as it detonated, absorbing the blast and shrapnel with his body. He became the battalion’s second recipient of the Medal of Honor—awarded posthumously.

The 1st Bn, 8th Cav, operated in the Bong Son Plain until May when it provided security for LZ Geronimo. The battalion assumed the entire Bong Son Plain AO on June 23 and remained there until August 2 when the command post moved to LZ Sandra to initiate operations in the An Lao Valley. The Jumping Mustangs returned to Bong Son and LZ Santana 17 days later.

The battalion operated in the Cay Diep Mountains through mid-September while headquartered at LZ English. Operations were resumed in the Bong Son area on September 17. A fight was quick in the coming and Bravo Company that day made contact with local VC guerrillas in an all day engagement. The VC lost 31 dead.

Contact was sporadic throughout the month. In October the battalion killed 16 NVA and 20 Viet Cong while detaining two NVA and 14 VC.

The last heavy contact of the year was concentrated in the villages of Tam Quan and Dai Dong December 6-8.

After assaulting into the area, Company B was engaged by enemy fire from camouflaged spider holes, trenches and bunkers. By morning Alpha Company had joined the fight, and a mechanized platoon was brought up as well. Even after artillery and air strike poundings, repeated attempts to take the well-prepared positions met with heavy resistance.

On the morning of December 8 Company C began the final assault through Dai Dong and remained to police the battlefield. The two-day and night fight had pitted fierce fighters from both sides. It was close and quick fighting. When the men of C Company walked through the finally quiet village they counted 204 NVA dead as evidence of the heated fighting.

April 5, 1968, marked the beginning of Operation PEGASUS—the relief of the beleaguered Khe Sanh—as the Jumping Mustangs air assaulted west of the camp and the CIDG Camp at Lang Vei. Every day in their sweep was marked with a find of large enemy supply caches including equipment and ammunition.

The A Shau Valley is a silt in the mountains 45 kilometers west of Hue, close to the Laotian border, remote and usually hidden from air view by the thick canopy of jungle. It was a major NVA base area and a primary way station on the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Operation DELAWARE changed all this. The Jumping Mustangs, fresh from their relief of Khe Sanh earlier in the month, converged on the valley with two other airmobile battalions and set up LZ Stallion to secure the A Luoi airstrip in central A Shau.

Toward dusk on the 25th the hills around Stallion echoed with excited shouts and the rumble of a truck engine. From the north bounced a green vehicle covered with waving Skytroopers. Men of Delta Company had found five Russian made trucks one kilometer north of the landing zone and set up LZ Stallion to secure the A Luoi airstrip in central A Shau.

“Toward dusk on the 25th the hills around Stallion echoed with exited shouts and the rumble of a truck engine. From the north bounced a green vehicle covered with waving Skytroopers. Men of Delta Company had found five Russian made trucks one kilometer north of the landing zone and set up LZ Stallion to secure the A Luoi airstrip in central A Shau.”
Tipped off by helicopter sightings, Delta Company unearthed the first of the A Shau's big caches on the 26th. Captured were 315 Soviet K-44 rifles, a 60 mm mortar tube, 36 Soviet mine detectors, 30 flamethrowers, 202 Chicom protective masks, 225 pounds of medical supplies, 600 122 mm rockets, 2,000 23 mm anti-aircraft rounds, 100 pounds of dynamite, six tons of rice, 60 cases of canned meat, 70 37 mm anti-aircraft rounds and three B-40 rockets.

The last big battle in I Corps prior to the move south was near Quang Tri over August 20-22. Alpha Company, on a standard "Swooper" assault mission, had landed on two sides of a village and right into an NVA battalion.

Two platoons on the northern side were forced to seek refuge in an abandoned building. "We were drawing fire from every direction," said Specialist Four Donald Ferguson. "The only thing we could do was head for this building about 100 meters away."

On the opposite side of the village, the company commander, Captain Thomas McAndrews, and the two platoons with him also made heavy contact. "I wanted to sweep toward my other people," he said, "but we drew a heavy wall of fire every time we tried to move out."

During the night—while the two isolated platoons sweated it out—Companies Alpha, Charlie and Delta were brought up. At dawn they struck, sweeping across the area at a run, firing as they rushed in, and relieved the 39 surrounded men. In their charge the massed companies had killed 85 enemy and captured four others.

In late October the battalion moved with the entire division over land, sea and air to III Corps.

It was in III Corps in December that the battalion became the first Cavalrymen to become "watermobile." On December 21 they began conducting NavCav operations with the Navy, a combination of techniques utilizing both sea and air power and a minimum number of troops to cover a maximum number of locations.

The Navy provided as assortment of river craft including assault patrol boats, armored troop carriers and "Monitor" gunboats. Some of the ships sported helicopter pads on their foredecks and all were heavily armed.

As the mini-armada motored up river, the patrol boats would turn into the shoreline at irregular intervals to land troops. NavCav operations were a daily occurrence on the Vam Co Dong and Vam Co Tai Rivers, and their success was weighed in the high tonnage of enemy caches found in these areas.

For the men in the battalion NavCav work was a welcome change of pace—although just as dangerous as their prior experience of walking and cutting through the jungle on foot. "It's really something," said Specialist Four Charles Baggett, machinegunner with Company B, "and it sure beats walking."

On January 20 the 1st Cavalry Division was given the mission of cutting enemy routes in the Kien Tuong Province of IV Corps. Charlie and Echo Companies from the 1st Bn, 8th Cav, were formed into Task Force Duke and swept into the province, marking the first entry of a 1st Cav unit into IV Corps. With that move the Cav had left its mark in all four corps areas in the Republic of Vietnam.

In May and June the battalion was targeted against a specific enemy, the 5th VC Division. In the COMANCHE WARRIOR AO, the Jumping Mustangs cut into the enemy's southerly movement through Long Khanh Province—from War Zone D to heavily populated areas in the Long Binh-Bien Hoa region and along known crossing points on the Dong Nai River.

A few sharp contacts were initiated but the period was characterized by large cache discoveries, forcing enemy units to withdraw to the north due to food shortages. The first big find was on May 28 when Company B air assaulted into a rear service element in a bunker complex, routed them and uncovered the enemy's food and ammunition stores. The next day Charlie Company found a huge supply of sugar, salt, rice and peanuts totaling over 60,000 pounds. Nearby, Company B unearthed and destroyed a large ammunition dump. And on May 31 Bravo Company turned up still more salt and rice. The enemy's supply system was hurting.

The most significant contact of the period came on June 2 when Company A was engaged and pinned down just north of the Dong Nai as it moved into a bunker complex. For reinforcements, Company B was airlifted over the river by platoons. After ARA and air strikes softened the complex, the two companies moved out again to approach the complex under heavy sniper fire. They engaged the enemy at the bunkerline and fought through the night. At dawn they swept the enemy position to find 54 NVA dead and their comrades gone. As a matter of interest, Company A was commanded in that action by Captain Walt-

A patrol makes contact and for the first few vital seconds, its fire first and seek cover later.
er J. Marm, winner of the Medal of Honor for his heroism in the Ia Drang Valley one day in 1965.

While working in the COMANCHE WARRIOR AO, the battalion command post was located at LZ Rock, possibly the only LZ that was named for an individual soldier while he was still a member of the unit, and certainly the only LZ that really did not take the name of the man it honored.

Sergeant First Class Joseph Musial was the reconnaissance platoon leader of Echo Company, a second-tour veteran and highly decorated. His second Silver Star was earned on LZ White where he personally assaulted three enemy sappers attacking the firebase after dodging grenades and incoming mortars to care for wounded comrades. He had been known as “Sergeant Rock” to the men of the 1st Bn, 8th Cav, for so long most of them didn’t even know his real name. When the firebase was opened the battalion commander needed to come up with a name and he opted for LZ Rock. “I guess I called this place Rock because that sergeant is the hardest charging soldier I have ever seen,” he said.

On September 6, as Company C searched an area of numerous ground-to-air firings southeast of LZ Wescott, the men spotted and pursued about 30 NVA regulars and engaged them with small arms and machineguns as artillery and ARA gunships provided blocking fire. The enemy was armed with two .50 caliber and one .30 caliber machineguns and an 82 mm mortar. They retreated at nightfall, but the Cavalrymen caught up with them at dawn and resumed fighting for almost two hours. When the shooting stopped the enemy had left 12 of their dead and both .50 caliber weapons behind on the battlefield.

In mid-September the battalion operated around the Bu Dop CIDG Camp and the Bo Duc district headquarters—a change of location that also marked by one of the largest reciprocal repositioning of troops ever attempted in III Corps. The move was completed in less than 48 hours and involved more than 1,200 men and their equipment.

Directing a major effort to interdict the Serges Jungle Highway, a reconnaissance mission headed by Delta Company some eight miles from the Cambodian border and northeast of LZ Deb uncovered three quarters of a ton of salt and eight and a half tons of rice. The find was turned over to GVN authorities for redistribution to needy civilians in Bu Dop and Loc Ninh.

FSB Ellen, located six miles west of Song Be, was reopened on October 9 by the battalion, which departed its former location at FSB Jerri. One month later Ellen was attacked.

The sapper attack at FSB Ellen was stopped just short of the third strand of wire as helicopter gunships, direct fire artillery and Air Force jets straffed the perimeter. The date was November 4, and the attack was opened at 1:30 a.m. “We were watching the light show at FSB Buttons (under attack) and wondering when we were going to get hit,” said Captain Rocco Allessandro, Echo Company commander. “Two minutes later we got our answer.”

“The fire was so heavy,” said Staff Sergeant Casey Connelly, “that we had to fire our mortars while lying on the ground.” The Cavalrymen killed 35 enemy in the battle, beating back the ground attack in the first hour. No Americans were killed.

Two weeks later enemy sappers attempted a light ground probe on the firebase at 10:15 p.m., preceded by RPG and mortar fire. Three NVA were killed and no friendly casualties were sustained. When dawn broke, a fully

Master of all he surveys, Private First Class Tom Decelles can cover one side of LZ Laramie with his M-60 machinegun.
assembled and armed flamethrower was found just outside the last strand of concertina wire. Apparently things had gotten too hot for the NVA sapper squad member who had humped the weapon through two strands of wire.

In the last month of 1969, elements of the battalion were involved in four significant actions. The first, on December 2, involved Company B in ground reconnaissance six miles east of FSB Jerri. In that fight the company killed 12 enemy soldiers.

On December 9 a two-pronged battle left 11 enemy dead at the hands of Delta Company men who had infiltrated into an NVA basecamp shortly after 9 a.m. One platoon lay in ambush on a trail to the rear of the camp while the forward ambush sprung its trap on a small group of the enemy and the rest of the company opened fire in the bunker complex. Five enemy were killed in the double ambush and six others died in the bunker fighting. The camp was located 12 miles south of Bu Dop.

As the year 1969 drew to a close, it found the 1st Bn, 8th Cav, in sporadic contact with the enemy. On December 14 Alpha Company clashed with 16 NVA soldiers near FSB Ellen, killing five in the mid-day battle. Seven days later the same company killed five additional enemy soldiers in an ambush waiting for the enemy battalions to move—and awaited the new year.

2nd of the 8th

(Continued From P. 89)

recovered their wounded. Following intense artillery and close air support fires, Delta Company swept the village with the tanks. More than 90 of the enemy were dead.

On September 17, in Phu Yen Province, the 2nd Bn, 8th Cav, task force went under the operational control of the 173rd Airborne Brigade for Operation BOLLING, conducting search and clear missions in the western portion of the Tuy Hoa-Phu Hiep coastal plain, which terminated on October 14. The battalion had sustained no casualties and killed 21 of the enemy. Twelve had been detained and 3,000 pounds of rice and 208 fortifications had been destroyed. The battalion closed on LZ Uplift the 25th day of the month.

The battalion initially released two companies to the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, for the defense of Dak To (Operation MACARTHUR) on November 15. Company C made contact with an NVA battalion in well-fortified positions on a ridgeline nine kilometers east of the Dak To basecamp the next day.

After three days of fighting, the company occupied the first of a series of jungle-covered hills that commanded a sweeping view of the installation, directly above Highway 14, the land supply route to the camp.

At the beginning of 1968, the battalion was still engaged in Operation PERSHING with the 1st Brigade. Line companies were securing LZ Laramie, as well as pulling base defense at LZ English and LZ Geronimo. All companies were engaged in search and clear or cordon and search missions in the Bong Son Plain area.

At the beginning of March the battalion command post moved from LZ English to Quang Tri, joining Operation
JEB STUART. For one day, the 27th, Bravo Company was under the operational control of the 3rd Marine Regiment, air assaulting into LZ Stud.

On the 15th of March the battalion trains area received 15 incoming mortar rounds, killing two. Lieutenant Colonel Howard Petty, the commanding officer, was one of the men killed.

The battalion began Operation DELAWARE throughout the southern A Shau Valley on April 24, airlifting into LZ Cecille. The operation terminated May 16, and the battalion moved back to LZ Sharon, beginning Operation JEB STUART III. A new company, Echo, was formed the next day, having the mission of providing a mortar section for fire support and a reconnaissance element.

In a 10-day period, in late September and early October, the battalion uncovered, bagged and transported more than 57 tons of enemy rice to Trieu Phong District headquarters, where it was distributed to needy civilians. Charlie Company found more than 43 tons. For about a week the unit had been turning up caches on a daily basis, accumulating 30,200 pounds of the grain.

During the next two days, the company found 55,040 more pounds of rice. In one instance Private First Class Frank E. Sinkovich, an RTO, began digging a position for the night after the company had made a long, tiring march across the sandy coastal plains six kilometers northeast of Quang Tri.

“I dug down about a foot and a half and I saw some plastic,” he explained. “It was a rice cache.” The unit remained in the area to check for other hidden stores.

“When we left our night location we were supposed to go two kilometers to the northwest and then work back toward the CP,” said Second Lieutenant Fred Shaffert, “but before we got 20 meters away we found five separate caches. It was like that all day, we just kept finding rice everywhere.”

While visiting the rice hunters, Major General Truong, the 1st ARVN Division commander, remarked that Company C had found enough rice that day to feed an NVA division for an entire month. The battalion began packing on October 27, strapping conex containers tightly to wooden pallets, forklifting them onto trucks and driving them to Hue for transport on Navy LSTs. On the 28th, the Skytroopers were camped on the Quang Tri airstrip, waiting for the C-130 flights south, to begin Operation LIBERTY CANYON. The Cav was moving to III Corps.

They reached Quan Loi on the 29th, sorted out their combat gear and inspected their weapons. On the 31st, they air assaulted into LZ Joe with artillery preparation, air cover and waves of supply choppers bringing up the rear.

It was Halloween, but for the enemy there were to be no treats. Aerial rocket artillery (ARA) ships blasted the woods and the battalion rapidly began turning a former NVA base area into Cav Country. The occupation of Joe was the first combat assault for the Skytroopers in III Corps. Many more were to follow.

On New Year’s Day, 1969, the battalion was still on LZ Rita near the Cambodian border in the vicinity of the “Fishhook” in War Zone C. Since November 7, 1968, the battalion had conducted offensive operations as a part of TOAN THANG II, which was to continue until February.

The first significant engagement of the year involved Alpha Company, 10 kilometers from the landing zone on January 24. The unit clashed with a reinforced NVA company. The enemy left 27 bodies behind. All elements of the battalion were making frequent contacts and turning up lucrative caches.

The battalion command post and all maneuver elements moved to LZ St. Barbara on February 1. Significant contacts were made immediately and huge rice caches were discovered during the month. On the 10th Company D uncovered 61,400 pounds of rice and 4,100 pounds of salt. Bravo Company, six kilometers from St. Barbara on February 12, discovered 165 bags of rice—some 33,000 pounds. Two days later Delta Company uncovered 22 100-pound bags of rice in a bunker.

The battalion was also finding enemy hiding places and equipment. One 350-bunker complex, 20 miles northwest of Tay Ninh, revealed some prize trophies, including a pair of 12.7 mm anti-aircraft guns. The weapons were so new that the enemy hadn’t had time to remove the cosmoline protective coating from them. Included in the complex was a hospital still under construction. The medical center boasted five operating rooms and six wards capable of accommodating 15
to 18 persons each.

The trend continued through March and April. An indication of the battalion’s success were the parting words of outgoing commander Lieutenant Colonel Frank L. Henry. “While I have been commander,” he said, “you have killed more than a battalion of North Vietnamese Army soldiers and captured enough rice to feed two divisions for 40 days.”

On April 9 another huge rice cache was discovered, this time by Company C. Fifty-two 200-pound bags of rice were found on a wooden pallet.

In mid-April LZ Carolyn was established northwest of Barbara, deep in the jungles of War Zone C at Prek Klok, a former CIDG camp. High on the priority list for repairs was the 2,500 foot runway. Soon the 5,500-pound capacity C-7A Caribous made their first nine sorties to the landing zone, marking the first time in more than a year that fixed wing aircraft had landed there.

Maneuver elements of the battalion began making contacts daily after Carolyn was established and patrols were initiated.

At LZ Carolyn the perimeter guards peered silently into the darkness, expecting something to happen. Shortly after midnight May 6, a trip flare went off outside the wire and a B-40 rocket slammed inside the perimeter. The LZ was under attack.

The explosion was followed by many more B-40 and 107 mm rockets and heavy automatic weapons fire. A regimental-size ground attack from the southwest and north followed.

“At first there was nothing within my sights,” said Specialist Four Gordon R. Loder, a riflemman with Charlie Company, “but the next thing I knew, there were large groups of them coming directly toward us. I put my M-16 on rack and just started firing into the masses.”

Although the enemy eventually succeeded in penetrating the perimeter and occupying six bunkers, the fierce counterattack launched by the Skytroopers convinced the NVA that their attempt at seizing LZ Carolyn was lost.

The decimated enemy force began to withdraw at 4 a.m. and contact was broken by 6 o’clock. At first light, three companies were air assaulted to block and interdict avenues of escape to the north and west. Delta Company saw 30 individuals carrying their wounded away and killed 18. Alpha got five and Company D killed six more later that day.

What was once an NVA regiment was out of business. The enemy left 198 of their soldiers dead on the battlefield and 30 were detained.

The unit deployed north, close to the Cambodian border, to interdict the "Mustang Trail" on July 9. The battalion began the construction and security of LZ Becky.

Sporadic action was seen throughout the month. On August 7, Charlie Company uncovered a rice cache totaling 5,800 pounds.

August 11 marked the beginning of a demanding 48 hours for the battalion. At 3 a.m., LZ Becky received incoming 60 mm and 82 mm mortars, rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) and then a ground attack launched by a company-size NVA sapper unit. The battle was short. Fifty-five minutes later 17 sappers were dead outside the wire. Later that day, Bravo Company discovered two NVA artillerymen setting up 107 mm rockets near Becky, killed them, and captured a 60 mm mortar tube. It was an indication of what was to happen the next morning.

An eight week "lull" was shattered throughout the FIRST TEAM’s AO on August 12. LZ Becky was the scene of what was perhaps the fiercest fighting.

Enemy activity was observed on radar at 1:45 a.m.—what appeared to be a truck discharging personnel near the LZ. It was engaged by tube artillery and a secondary explosion resulted.

The enemy attacked at 4:10 a.m., following a mixed mortar and rocket barrage that destroyed an artillery ammunition storage area, causing the only friendly casualties of the battle.

The attack was termed by a gunship pilot as “the most intense stand-off attack on a firebase I’ve seen since the Cav moved to War Zone C.”

Some 400 enemy mortar and rocket rounds repeatedly riveted holes in the surface of the LZ, as the enemy battalion launched a ground attack from the
north.

In the next 40 minutes the landing zone was silhouetted with the flashing glow of a massed firefight. The enemy reached the wire, but never breached the perimeter. When they withdrew, 101 of their number had died in the attempt and one other was captured.

The battalion left Becky later that day. The 1st Brigade commander, Colonel Joseph P. Kingston, decided that major enemy forces had withdrawn to regroup and prepare for future attempts to the southeast. To preclude this, and to maintain close observation of the enemy and find prepositioned fortifications and stores, the battalion was shifted to LZ Ike.

The enemy was, indeed, moving into that area. The battalion was in for more heavy fighting in the month to follow.

On August 25 Delta Company, near Ike, engaged an NVA element in bunkers and received heavy automatic weapons and B-40 fire in return. Searching the contact area the next day, Cavalrymen found the bodies of 33 NVA soldiers. Five days later Company B, which had ambushed two NVA on the 30th, engaged several in two separate contacts, killing 28.

On September 1 Company C, discovering a strand of enemy communications wire, followed it and ambushed two NVA signalmen setting up a field phone. Tapping the wire, it hooked into an enemy battalion net and directed artillery on an unsuspecting NVA command post.

Bravo Company continued to make contact. On September 2 it took one individual prisoner, pulling him out of a spider hole. Later it was again engaged by the enemy. Air and artillery support killed nine, Company B accounted for three.

LZ Ike was hit September 5, with A and E Companies securing the berm. More than 160 shells pummeled the LZ, followed by a reinforced NVA company. Fifty-one caliber machineguns filled the air with enemy lead, making air support a hazardous proposition at best. The attack was repulsed by 3 a.m., but incoming rounds continued to hit the LZ until 10 o’clock. A search of the area revealed 46 dead enemy soldiers and one wounded man who was detained.

LZ Ike was again the target of the enemy in mid-September. Stoney Mountain Skytroopers from Charlie and Echo Companies beat back a determined assault on the LZ in the early morning hours September 14, killing 34 and detaining another.

The battle erupted shortly before midnight when 100 mortar rounds hit the firebase. An estimated company-size unit then hit the wire while the defenders used point blank artillery fire and Cobra gunships to crush the offensive.

Ike was probed again two days later, but an alert trooper picked up movement through a starlight scope just after midnight. Seven NVA were found lying outside the wire the next morning.

The 2nd Bn, 8th Cav, left War Zone C September 23, moving to Camp Gorvad to secure the division basecamp at Phuoc Vinh. On the 25th the battalion became operationally controlled by Division Artillery and conducted operations in AO Chief, patrolling and mortar belt surrounding Camp Gorvad and securing Song Be Bridge. In mid-December it moved to FSB Mary in the 2nd Brigade’s AO.

Heavily laden Skytroopers from the 1st Brigade leap from slicks to climax a Cav Charlie Alpha. The action occurred during Operation JEB STUART.
Editor's Note: History of the History

Phuoc Vinh, Vietnam
February 12, 1970

This volume is the result of a happy juxtaposition of circumstances, decisions and events. The publication of any unit history depends on financing, and in early 1969 the financing picture was pretty bleak. Non-appropriated funds were being curtailed sharply, and club funds, which had been used in the past by other units for yearbooks, no longer were available in this division. The only means of financing available was through the division association, and its funds were meager.

Concurrent with wrestling over decisions on the scope of a history, MG Roberts decided to boost the financing of the division association’s education foundation through a powerful drive within the active division. The key decision in this case was to raise money through a business organization, called “FIRST TEAM Scholarships,” rather than through solicitations in the paylines.

This business organization, dedicated to raising money for scholarships through sound business and promotion practices, was in an ideal position to act as publisher of this volume.

But a business organization needs capital to operate, and it was not until November 1, 1969, that we were sure that a history of the Ist Air Cav was going to move from the dream to the reality category.

Some advance work had, of course, been done, but it was a mere scratch on the surface. First Lieutenant Donald B. Ashton was given the mission of researching and writing the unit histories. We found that while the division’s story was well and fairly told in records available, there were gaping holes in the subordinate unit histories.

Moreover, unit histories, while factual and detailed, also were dry and dull. To personalize these histories, we turned to stories published in the CAVALAIR, the division’s weekly newspaper; the quarterly magazine of the division; news clippings accumulated in our files; and personal interviews with second-tour FIRST TEAMers.

By late November, sufficient material was available to begin writing in earnest, and three writers were assigned to begin weaving the threads of the division’s story into a cohesive fabric. Eventually, nearly every writer in the information office got into the act. Specialist Five Joe Kamalick, a wordsmith on TDY with Pacific Stars & Stripes, was plucked back to the fold to shape and polish the written drafts. And then, completing that, he stayed on to play a major role in the picture selections and final layout.

Captain James Ryan, an artist in his own right, supervised the art staff and also played a key role in picture selection and layout.

All photographs appearing in this book are Department of the Army photos, taken either by Department of the Army Special Photographic Teams or by the photographers organic to the FIRST TEAM. We have listed what we recognize as only a partial list of photographic credits. It simply was impossible, from the resources available to us, to determine the name of every individual whose pictorial contributions appear in this volume, and for this we apologize.

Acknowledgment is given to the dozens of talented writers who labored in the FIRST TEAM vineyards during the past five years. Their imaginative offerings, preserved in division publications, enabled us to breathe some life into the dusty after-action reports.

And, finally, my personal thanks to the book staff that worked so hard. Long work hours are expected in a combat zone and, in the Cav, the 16-hour work day is an article of faith. But even so, in the 90 days that went into the research, writing, editing and makeup of this book, there were still a lot of letters home that didn’t get written, movies that didn’t get watched and clubs that didn’t get patronized.

J. D. Coleman
Major, Infantry
Information Officer
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