When the battle area cleared the next morning, the enemy had once again been defeated. In this case it was the 8th Bn, 66th Regiment which had halted in hasty positions on its way to the artillery positions and was eating lunch when outposts began to smell the approach of a large US unit. In some cases enemy machine guns were fired from exposed positions and many NVA then entered the fight wearing their heavy forage packs. To say the enemy was completely unprepared would not be a understatement. This state of unreadiness meant the enemy lost 403 killed by body count as well as substantial weap­ons, equipment and supplies. The 1st Battalion would be relieved by the 8th Battalion which the 1st Battalion was no longer an effective fighting unit.

THE BLACK KNIGHTS

On 20 Nov the 3d Brigade terminated SILVER BAYONET I and was replaced by the men of SILVER BAYONET II. Included in the 2d Bri­gade task forces were four cavalry battalions—the 1/27, 1/21, 1/27 and elements of four artillery battalions—1/77, 1/21, 2/27, and 2/20. The remainder of the operation was spent attempting to regain contact with large bodies of the enemy. This characterized a constant harassment of small groups attempting to avoid contact. All told, the enemy lost 1,519 killed by body count with another 2,000 estimated killed. There were 57 captured. His material losses were comparable with 897 individual weapons captured and more than 400 others destroyed; 126 crew served weapons captured, as well as a great deal of communication equipment and grenades.

There is no doubt that the ARVN relief force would have been defeated en route to Plei Me, and the camp itself overrun, without the intervention of the 1st Cav. What made the intervention even more unique was the manner in which THE FIRST TEAM conducted the initial support operation and eventually the pursuit. The enemy was no stranger to the helicopter and the advantages it offers its allies. What he failed to grasp was the use of the helicopter in a role other than as mover of supplies, other than as a rear area transport. For the 1st Cav Div (AM) this was a new dimension and as an airborne 21⁄2 ton truck in 1965 with the increased introduction on a large scale of North Vietnamese forces and equip­ment and stepped up operations by regular North Vietnamese divisions. The Main Force units are the VC Shock Troops and are composed of well trained and equipped men who are capable of fighting conventional battles of limited durations, along treacherous mountainous and forested terrain. The District Forces and Village Defense Forces are usually paramilitary forces and are generally made up of local civilians who are part-time soldiers or guerrillas whose military training does not take them far from home. They are often seen as farmers and merchants by day—terrorists—guerrillas at night. Among them they are well­trained and equipped serve as guides, guards, messengers, bearers, and informants for the regular military units.

The enemy, whether he be NVA or local guerrilla, is collectively referred to as “Victor Charlie.” V.C., “Old Charlie” or just “Charlie.” The small guerrilla units of the NVA Viet Cong have been expanded and trained out of their former guerilla state into a formidable force by 1966. Correspondingly, the demands on local civilians have increased to support these larger units. The military and political support organizations have grown so rapidly they now collect four times as much taxes as does the constituted government of South Vietnam. The logistics required to support military and weapons have also greatly increased. As a result “Charlie” is supported in the field by an incredibly logistical organization beginning with the 1st Cavalry Div. arm collector and extending many miles to North Vietnam. Their roads worn smooth by the feet of thousands of porters.

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In another respect these 37 days of combat had probably shown more importance. They had shown beyond a doubt that the air assault concept was valid under actual battlefield conditions. The campaign had been the acid test of combat for the air mobile division and there can be no question that it fully carried its weight. The accolades paid to the division reflect this. THE BLACK KNIGHTS

THE ENEMY

This first major engagement with the enemy caught the Cavalrymen and the 1st Division by surprise in the Central Highlands. The division’s initial contact with the enemy was the result of a captured document revealed the NYA A

The defeat of the Field Front, or 630 NVA Division, in the Pleiku Campaign, blocked his first attempt to move into the Central Highlands in strength. We will see later that the enemy had placed considerable emphasis on gaining a foothold in the western portion of the II CTZ.

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of the people of South Vietnam were paying taxes to the Front by the end of 1966 even while they continued to pay taxes to the legitimate government of South Vietnam.

He fights well, more often for fear of capture than from ideological conviction. His cadre keep him isolated from contacts which would tend to counter their propaganda and indoctrination. Main Force battalions have carried out well-planned attacks as ambushes with NVA counterparts. Utilizing an explicit tactical doctrine summarized in four words, "Four fast, one slow," the VC, carefully plan every move. His credo is "Fast advance, fast assault, fast clearance of the battlefield and fast withdrawal" based on "slow preparation."

As described, his usual tactic is to hit and run. He will extirpate an area when he feels his security is endangered, only to return when his enemy has withdrawn. As will be seen he is a master at this extirpation especially under the cover of darkness. When he is trapped, however, he will fight and fight viciously for his life. He will not initiate engagement though unless forced to or unless he feels he has the upper hand—when tactically superior. His force once he is in well-prepared, camouflaged defensive positions. If he does undertake an offensive attack, it may or may not be preceded by mortar and rocket barrages or "unusual" artillery fire.

As an individual, he is strong but small (usually not over 100 pounds), raised in the jungles and accustomed to the severest rigors of life. He stores food, weapons, ammunition, and medical supplies in caches that are hard to find. He needs little more than two pounds of rice a day to keep him going.

His actions under fire have led some to suspect use of narcotics before battle, as reflected in this report: "... they started charging me with 10 to 15 man waves, on a regular skirmish line, holtering and screaming. I hit some of them two or three times with bullets and they would keep coming at me, stop, turn around, and I could see big blood spatters on their backs as they took two or three steps toward the rear and then fell over. When they were charging me they were yelling, and even after I hit them they were laughing."

This is what the Cavalrymen learned of his scenario. There is no doubt the enemy is a professional soldier, skilled in the art of warfare. Much of what the troopers were told at Fort Benning they now knew was true from personal experience.

DECEMBER

Following the PLEIKU Campaign, division attention was again directed to the east of An Khe, first to provide security for the establishment of the Republic of Korea Capital Division's base camp at Binh Khe and then into an area we have come to know as the "City of Ga Va Capital." G-2 Intelligence indicated that as many as 1500 hard core VC and local guerrilla forces were in the valley. The 3rd Brigade was tasked with finding and destroying them.

Operation CLEAN HOUSE was conducted in three phases from the 17th of December until the end of that month. After moving into assembly areas on the 17th, the 3rd began its search on the 18th along with the 1/8 Cav in an Operation called SCALPING MUSTANG. The 27th began its search the following day. These battalions were supported by elements of the ROK Capital Division which were in blocking positions near the mouth of the valley. Although there were 137 enemy killed during the three phases, the losses were suffered mostly in short fierce engagements with the enemy attempting to break contact whenever possible to extirpate the area.

On December 29 a unique system was used. Inflation of the VC "sous tres" was degenerated to counteract this possibility and to reconnoiter the area quickly. 300 riot control agent (CS) grenades were dropped by Huey helicopters on the suspected area from a locally built grenade dispenser. An area of 300 meters by 350 meters was effectively denied by the agent. No VC were seen moving, and thus with relatively little effort, it was determined there were no enemy occupying the area.

Pay-ops efforts continued throughout CLEAN HOUSE, and 300,000 leaflets were dropped on the objective area to deter the presence of US troops, appeal for surrender and to get the people not to aid the VC. In order to defeat the value of VC "payment certificates" given to indigenous civilians for work performed, Psy-Ops dropped 30,000 reproductions of the VC 1,000 Dong notes. We attempted to defeat the enemy and undermine his resources in every way possible. Several captured documents addressed to or generally building files on enemy formations in the area.

MATADOR

After CLEAN HOUSE the division returned to more effectively secure its base camp and highway 19 between An Khe and Binh Khe. The operation was conducted in two phases, the first of which was to open this portion of the highway followed by phase II with search and destroy operations along the Cambodian border. MATADOR I took place between 31 December 65 - 13 January 1966 with the commitment of the "All the Way," 1st Brigade. Highway security today is merely a routine mission, but a year ago it was considered a major operation. The enemy had held important terrain between the major cities for many years. It was along "The Street without Joy," as Highway 19 has been called, that the French Group Mobile 100 suffered 2,000 men killed and 3,800 men injured in five years of fighting in the mountain pass separating An Khe and Pleiku. During the eight days between January 4 and 12th the 2/12 Cav escorted 37 convoys into Pleiku with a total of 2913 vehicles. Each trip was made without incident. As the convoys carried much needed supplies into the central highland, they broke the hold the VC had established on the logistical flow through the area. The entire portion of the road was protected by various artillery positions along its length. Phase II began on 13 January and lasted for four days while 2/5 Cav and 1/5 Cav conducted spoiling attacks along the Cambodian border to demonstrate that significant enemy fortifications were not in Pleiku and Kontum Provinces. The 2nd Brigade which had entered the area on 10 December near the Po Klong Gea Special Forces Camp while the units operated from company sized bases along the border. The heavily forested area required the use of fixed wing aircraft to drop the 15 man waves, on a regular skirmish line, to focuss on the first time to introduce engineer troops through the thick canopy. LZ would then be cleared with chainsaws in order to accommodate one or two amphibious armored convoys. The engineer equipment could be lifted in. Although contact was limited to occasional encounters with small groups of local forces, MATADOR I and II served several useful purposes. In the first place it convinced the CDFC forces in the vicinity that there were no large enemy forces along that portion of the border. With their morale bolstered, it encouraged their offensive operations. It also provided mutual experience for US and CDFC forces in working together. Moreover, the division gained further detailed knowledge of the trails in western Pleiku and Kontum Provinces, while it destroyed VC way stations, training areas and generally disrupted the enemy's logistical support facilities.

BONG SON

It was only eight days later, on January 25, that the division launched its longest and largest operation to that date. Operations MASHER/WHITE WING, also known as the BONG SON Campaign, lasted for 41 consecutive days as the division moved into the northeast and eastern portions of Binh Dinh Province. (Map B). Although the division had operated east of An Khe before, this was the first time we had penetrated so far into the eastern sections of the enemy's domain. Reliable intelligence had built up over several months in the eastern Binh Dinh Province. The 1st Battalion, 2nd Cav, slimmed down from 1000 men to 800, had a chance to be in the right place, the right time, to account for the VC when he was there.

The 2nd Battalion, 2nd Cav Division, superior in quality and number of personnel to the VC's 74th Frontier Guard, was the main force involved. The 396units were intelligence and combined arms cav, like that which had infiltrated the area--two NVA and one VC, all part of the Yellow Star Division. These units were primarily concentrated in the central-coastal plain north of Bong Son, situated on the Lai Giang River, and in the mountains to the north, east and southeast of Bong Son. The plains area to the north was known to contain main supply routes as well as providing good recruiting areas. To the northwest is the An Lao Valley, an enemy held stronghold for 15 years, except for a brief period in 1964 when peace was restored between the Viet Minh and the French. To the southwest were the Kim Son and Sooru Valleys which also to rich rice producing areas and under VC domination. The mission assigned the division one again gauntlet: pacification. To the northward: attack and destroy enemy elements in the area of operations, reduce VC influence in the coastal areas, and return the fertile lands and their inhabitants to the GVN.

MASHER/WHITE WING was conducted in five phases in which each one of the division's brigades participated in one or more. We were not alone, however, THE FIRST TEAM linked in conjunction with other Free World Forces. Additional support came from the III Marine Amphibious Force, the 22nd ARVN Division, and the ROK Capital Division, each working toward the ultimate goal—Pacification. Mainly the 22nd Division secured National Route 1 which ran from Bong Son to Qui Nhon, while their airborne brigade attacked east of NR 1. The Capitol ROK Division provided highway 19 security between An Khe and Qui Nhon.

Although phase I began as a 3rd Brigade operation, the situation soon developed that required divisional control. Phase II lasted for only 3 days and was geared at deceiving the enemy as well as increasing the security on N.R. 1. The 1/9 Cav operated with excessive activity along the Chai, Chai Nui, Chai Hai, and the Chop Chai Hill Mass, southeast of Bong Son for deception purposes.

The first contact was established however, on
28 January, the beginning of Phase II, when the 3rd Brigade conducted air assaults and overland attacks north of Bong Son. The ARVN Airborne brigade was to the east and along the coast while elements of the 3rd Brigade attacked to the west of Route 1. Because of these attacks two enemy battalions, the 7th and 9th of the 22 NVA Regiment were found, fixed and destroyed. The division attempted to cut off enemy retreat by landing in blocking positions to the west and north of the areas of contact along expected routes of withdrawal. Fighting was heavy and by 1500 hours on the 28th, 26 aircraft had been hit by ground fire and four CH-47 Chinooks were inoperable. Heavy fighting continued for the next two days until the 30th when the enemy broke contact and withdrew to the adjoining high ground to the north and west. Phase II terminated on the 3rd of February at which time the enemy had already suffered dearly—566 killed by body count and 215 captured.

NEW FIRSTS

It was during Phase II that two unique firsts were established for both Army Aviation and for Army Artillery history. One was the operational displacement of the 155mm towed howitzer by CH-54A "Flying Crane" helicopters of the attached 478th Aviation Company. By means of a special firing fabricated by members of the Division Support Command, we were able to reposition the 155mm howitzer permitting it to occupy firing positions that would otherwise have been inaccessible. Unheard of until recently is the high ground artillery emplacement which has been used with considerable success by the division's artillery. The howitzer, which weighs about 13,000 pounds, gives the division a 3,000 meter range bonus over the 105mm howitzer and greatly increases the amount of steel that can be placed on a target. The second historical "first" was the successful firing of the combination 88-11 missile/275 inch rocket. This flexible and responsive system has added greatly to the ARA helicopter capability.

PHASE III

Phase III found the 2nd Brigade moving into the operational area with three additional infantry battalions—the 1/5 Cav, 2/5 Cav, and 2/12 Cav. The division had escalated to two brigades and six infantry battalions in preparation for its entry into the An Lao Valley. The plan called for the US Marine Corps to block enemy escape routes to the north of the An Lao as part of its Operation DOUBLE EAGLE. The 22 ARVN Division was to block to the south. The brigades of THE FIRST TEAM were to establish blocking positions east of the valley on the dominant terrain, assault three battalions west of the Valley, and then attack east into and through the Valley. D-Day was 4 February; however, bad weather required a two-day delay during which time the enemy was able to escape. This was the only time in six months of fighting that inclement weather had caused a delay in 1st Cavairmobile operations. As a result, the attack into the An Lao was disappointing and met with only slight resistance.

During the third phase, the division's Psy Ops personnel were busy broadcasting and dropping leaflets to inform the people of the An Lao that the division would not remain there, and if they chose to leave the valley the opportunity was presented. Approximately 4,500 of a total population of 8,000 elected to leave, and of those 4,500, over 3,300 were flown to freedom in division Chinooks.

KIM SON VALLEY

The fourth phase of the operation was initiated to exploit intelligence reports of an enemy buildup in the Kim Son Valley, dubbed the "Eagle's Claws" or "Crow's Foot" because of the seven valleys, establishing ambush positions. The 3rd Brigade air assaulted elements of three battalions onto the high ground and on exfiltration routes of these various valleys, establishing ambush positions. Simultaneously, the remainder of the brigade assaulted into the center of the valley along the valley floor and began sweeping outward toward these ambushes. These "beater" forces flushed the enemy into the kill zones of the ambush positions; the tactics worked as well as it was planned. For more than three days ambushes were sprung which resulted in two heavy contacts. On February 17th, B Company 2/5 Cav air assaulted into an LZ and by 9:15 a.m. had found...
and fixed a VC company armed with heavy weapons and a large number of automatic weapons.

Two additional companies of the battalion were quickly committed to exploit the contact. A third placed under OPCON of LTC Edward C. Mayer, CO, 2/5 Cav assaulted to the southeast of this contact and immediately engaged another heavily armed unit. Intensive TAC AIR and tube and aerial artillery fires were delivered on the area throughout the day. And by 6:00 p.m. "Charlie" had had enough. A sweep through the enemy's defensive position revealed 127 of his bodies. A large number of mortars and recoilless rifles were left behind.

The 2/5 had fought and defeated the anti-aircraft battalion of the Yellow Star Division as well as the signal company of the 2nd VC Main Force Regiment.

**BASE SECURITY**

One can now appreciate that the overall scheme of the way the Air Cavalry operates in Vietnam is not too dissimilar from that of the old cavalry days during the Indian Wars. In the Indian days, the troopers operated from a centrally-located, well-fortified base area, a base area which would be secure. It was here that they would rest and maintain their equipment, plan their operations and return from action. The pattern is remarkably clear today, for in a war like Vietnam's where there are no front lines and resolutely no rear areas, it is also necessary to have a secure area to which the troops can return, hence, an air camp. The modern operational areas are, of course, farther apart and each of greater dimension than those of old due to nothing else than the means of mobility involved. In the case of the FIRST TEAM, the most secure area of all is its large base camp, with a nine and a half mile circumference, which encompasses an area one third as large as Manhattan Island. While subdued and camouflaged patches of black and OD for black and gold, OD name tags, rank insignia were sewn on the field uniforms, continued improvement was visible in base camp. The barrier defense system underwent complete planning, as it was envisioned by next fall to have a string of powerful lights completely ringing the barrier and flooding lights avenues of approach out of the barricades.

On 19 February when elements of the 407th VC Battalion initiated a well planned attack on base camp to include an assault of Hong Cong mountain as the main thrust, an infiltration of the barriers on the opposite side of camp as a diversion, and a mortar attack, the VC company which attacked Hong Cong used one platoon in the actual assault of the communications facility with two Platoons positioned in ambush posture to attack any ground relief forces which might be committed. All reinforcements for the facility, however, were effected by helicopter and the enemy ambush sites were successfully avoided. Although the attack on the communications facility did not succeed in destroying any of the tanks or transmission facilities, friendly losses did include the death of a few men, the destruction of four generators, and the loss of one M-60 machine gun. Elements of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry accomplished very little, for of the few enemy who were able to penetrate the barrier each was immediately killed. The mortar attack delivered 106 60mm mortars which landed in the vicinity of division headquarters, the division supply area, and the 1st Bn, 7th Cavalry with little damage. Artillery and ARA fired more than 1,700 rounds in a counter mortar program but without estimate of damage to the attacking enemy.

**CAMP RADCLIFF**

The next day, Monday, February 21st, was also an important one in base camp history. For that day Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge flew from Saigon to officially dedicate Camp Radcliff. The commemoration of base camp honored Major Donald G. Radcliff, one of the division's first fatal casualties of the Vietnam war. Major Radcliff was a member of the advance liaison party and departed Fort Benning on August second for his orientation flying in this country. On the 15th of August General Kimnard sent a personal message to Lieutenant Colonel John B. Stockton, CO, 1 Squadron, 9th Cavalry in care of the USNS DARBY:

"Regret to inform you Major Donald Radcliff KIA 17 August 1965."
Maj. Radcliffe, executive officer of the 1/9 Cav, lost his life at the controls of a gunship after he volunteered to fly a combat mission in the relief of a US Special Forces Camp. For his heroism that day he was awarded, posthumously, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart. His courage was a fitting example to his country and it was only fitting that his name should be inextricably woven into the history of THE FIRST TEAM in Vietnam.

At the solemn dedication ceremony on February 21st, General Kinnard humbly explained, "In bestowing his name upon this camp we carve into history our recognition and appreciation for his sacrifice."

**JIM BOWIE**

The next significant operation began on March 13th and was of a search and destroy nature executed by the 1st and 3rd Brigades in the Vinh Thanh and An Tuong Districts to the north and east of Camp Radcliffe. It was planned as a follow-up to the BONG SON Campaign. But intelligence reports indicated a VC headquarters and its service facilities were in the Kon Truc area. Units from Bong Son may have entered the area to rest and then moved to other locations adjacent to the TAOR, operations there would also enhance our security.

Day for Operation JIM BOWIE was originally scheduled for March 10th, but low ceilings and heavy rains once again forced a day postponement. The two brigade assault was still made on the 13th at less than desirable conditions with a broken ceiling of 1,200 instead of the preferred 4,000 feet absolute. There was only light resistance with limited and sporadic contact, as captured documents and prisoner interrogation revealed that the enemy unit had made an orderly departure on 8 March. On March 21st, the Ist Brigade was returned to Camp Radcliffe where it proceeded to the Pleiku-Plei Me area again to commence Operation LINCOLN on March 25th. The 3rd Brigade continued Operation G-3 training and operations office explained the alternative to the helicopter:

"In the first place, our movements to combat would be to a great extent roadbound, with all that such moves entail in South Vietnam—clearing the road, which allows the enemy to follow, the period required to move vehicles and troops in the jungle when the unit is unable to pinpoint its ground location, proving to be an effective means of fire support coordination. The box served as a fire support base and limited the area inside the box to the artillery battalion with the mission of primary fire support for the unit. Other fires could only be delivered inside the box at the request of the unit and under control by its direct artillery coordination."

The air assault technique is, of course, much in evidence throughout all the operations. To place our operations in proper perspective, Major John J. Madigan of the division’s G-3 training and operations office explained the alternative to the helicopter:

"This was our first movement, our movements to combat would be to a great extent roadbound, with all that such moves entail in South Vietnam—clearing the road, which allows the enemy to follow, the period required to move vehicles and troops in the jungle when the unit is unable to pinpoint its ground location, proving to be an effective means of fire support coordination. The box served as a fire support base and limited the area inside the box to the artillery battalion with the mission of primary fire support for the unit. Other fires could only be delivered inside the box at the request of the unit and under control by its direct artillery coordination."

**LINCOLN**

On the 25th of March, the 1st Brigade with three battalions had returned to the scene of the PLEIKU Campaign to begin Operation LINCOLN, also a search and destroy operation. LINCOLN was organized to avoid being offensive, belied in progress or pending in the immediate future. Although no specific enemy units were forecasted as a result of prior reconnaissance in force operations, the Division’s G-2 still carried 400-500 suspects on its 1/9 Cav Assault

On the morning of the 25th, the 1/8 Cav air assaulted directly from An Khe to an LZ near Duc Co. This 78 mile air assault was one of the longest continuous operations undertaken by THE FIRST TEAM. The 1/12 Cav, the 2/8 Cav, and the supporting artillery and logistical units proceeded into the operational area by combat convoy made up of over 450 vehicles as well as the C-130 sorties. The division’s aviation group and the helicopters of the 1/9 Cav were flown from LINCOLN from the “Turkey Farm,” near II Corps Headquarters at Pleiku, and so named because of its appearance from the air with the many choppers irregularly spaced on the ground.
artillery support for the blue platoon and A/1-12.

This was another first for the division—the first night combat assault by a rifle company and an artillery battery successfully planned and executed into an LZ not previously reconnoitered. The enemy broke contact prior to sunrise, on the 31st. He left behind 197 bodies and there were over 200 more estimated killed.

Phase III began on April 4th as all units reacted to division OPORD 6611, issued on March 29th, by assaulting into the Chu Pong itself. The 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division attacked from the north, the 1st Brigade from the south and the 3d Brigade from the east. For the next four days, until the termination of LINCOLN, the entire Chu Pong was traversed with light to heavy contact or have systems were covered—LZ-X's X-Ray and Albay, sites of heavy contact during the November 1965 PLEIKU Campaign, showed no signs of occupation or use by the enemy since the division's departure. Further proof that the enemy had not thoroughly combed the area is the fact that when an Air Force plane which had been shot down during the PLEIKU campaign was located by the Division's 3d Brigade, the six .50 caliber machine guns and over 1800 ammunition rounds had not been removed.

In total the enemy lost 480 killed, with roughly 200 of this number credited to the division's artillery. The light-weight M-102 105mm howitzer was first used by the 1/21st Artillery and proved to be a valuable asset for the Armored Division with its lightweight and 6400 mil traverse. Also, the Division's 8th Engineer Battalion built a 3500 foot C-130 airstrip in 96 hours and covered it with the new T-17 membrane in another 18 hours. A total of 2200 man hours and 787 equipment hours was invested in the activity, two airstrips were built using the sectionized bulldozer, which was delivered piecemeal by helicopter, assembled on the ground at the site location, and put to use.

NATION BUILDING

Although the division was heavily burdened with searching for and destroying the enemy from the South China Sea to the Cambodian border, it was waging an equally important war—the war of helping the Vietnamese people to help themselves. It has been called "nation building" and is a campaign "to win the hearts and minds of the people" over to their legally constituted government.

The Division's G-5 Office, headed by LTC Harry J. Phelps, has overall supervisory responsibility for the Civic Action affairs, the large portion of the implementation of the projects are left to the various Civic Action Officers appointed to these subordinate units. These efforts have magnified since the initial attempts during Operation Friendship in the last days of October.

This is the battle without bullets. It is the battle to convince the enemy to change his mind, his views, his ignorance, and potential. Each of the various Civic Action Teams uses its own method—although the goal is always the same. Medical assistance is rendered to hundreds of persons a day—sometimes thousands. Clothing, food and soap are distributed. When time permits, division members show local civilians how to dig and use wells, how to build schools and hospitals, and generally improve their economic and social development. There are many things to be done.

In the hamlet of An Son, Major Willmot Hall, the 1st Brigade Civic Affairs Officer rose to his platform and spoke of the need to begin to speak, carefully and slowly and in short sentences so there would be no errors in the interpretation to those present.

"We come from the United States of America. We are soldiers, but we want to do other things than just shoot the Viet Cong. We want to help your people and all the people of Vietnam. We want to help you to help yourselves so that everyone will enjoy a better life. But first, we must know what you need."

The hamlet chief, the spokesman present, produced a list of needs so basic that it staggered the officer for a moment because of its simplicity.

"We need a place for women to have babies," the Chief said.

Major Hall replied seriously. "A doctor will visit your hamlet once a week to treat the sick and examine the women who are heavy with child."

An engineer officer who sanctioned the hospital building will draw up a plan for your own medical center. But can you give us a person from the hamlet whom we can teach how to nurse those of your people who are ill?"

The Chief nodded.

Rather than dispense the largesse for which the U.S. Army is known the world over, Major Hall held his hand for silence and attention. "We will help you; we will help you," he continued. "Our soldiers will not always be available to help with the work in the hamlets and villages. They will show you how to build with the material we will provide. But you must do much of the work yourself."

The Chief nodded. However, he had additional requests such as the needs for wells and pumps, culverts so that their dirt roads would not be washed out with each monsoon rain, small bridges so that they could cross raging waters during the rainy seasons, and finally, they wanted the knowledge to bring an end to disease which for scores of years had been running rampant.

Meanwhile, the division independently took up the civic action cause of their own volition. Captain Warren E. Mullan, a platoon leader in the 2/20 ARA Battalion was asked by a Vietnamese school teacher if he would take time to teach a few words of English to a class of youngsters.

The father of four children could not refuse. The first visit was followed by additional and longer visits until Captain Mullen began spending several hours a week in An Khe—a school teacher. His explanation: "I just love kids."

MOBSY

Operations MOBSY I, 11-17 April, and MOBSY II, 21 April-03 May, were search and destroy and reconnaissance in force operations north and northeast of Pleiku. The division conducted simultaneously with LEWIS AND CLARK from the 4 to the 16th of May, was divided into two phases each of which claimed major enemy contact.

During the month of May the central highlands near Pleiku extending to the coastal areas around Bong Son undergoes a seasonal weather transition. The northeast monsoon weakens and the northwest monsoon winds strengthen, resulting in a decrease in precipitation, accompanied by rising temperatures. During both phases of DAVY CROCKETT the temperatures ranged from 94 to 110 degrees heat with little rainfall and high humidity. Each man was told to carry salt tablets keeping heat exhaustion cases to a minimum. In general, the weather was very favorable for air assault techniques.

Prior to the 3rd Brigade's entry into phase I around Bong Son and the confluence of the An Lao and Kim Son Rivers, reliable intelligence located two battalions of the 22 NVA Regiment, the objective of the 3rd Brigade's mission. On the 4th of May the 1/7 and the 2/7 assaulted into the An Lao area where the enemy was in blocking positions when Troop 1/7 Cav, and ARVN APC Troops launched a overlooked attack to the north to drive the enemy across the trap. The attack northward was characterized by light sporadic contact in the afternoon of the 5th when the 1/9 Cav received heavy automatic weapons fire. (Map 9). In reaction,
The 2/7 and 1/7 moved to the area of contact to encircle what was estimated as an enemy battalion. Tube and aerial artillery maintained continuous fires, expending 906 rounds of all caliber within forty minutes, to fix the enemy while the maneuver elements encircled. Although high losses were known to have been inflicted on the enemy, the major part of the battalion was able to elude the encirclement through a gap left open in the south. The well-coordinated attack the next morning fell short of expectations as the enemy was no longer there. Shortly thereafter, at 9:55 AM an element of the 1/9 Cav went to secure a helicopter downed by enemy ground fire near the hamlet Thanh Son (2) which was south of the previous evening’s encirclement. The 1/9 Cav received heavy fire from the hamlet and concluded that it was there to which the enemy battalion retreated and had held up.

The 1/7 Cav was ordered to attack south from its present position. D Troop 1/9 with the attached ARVN APC Troop attacked to the east. 2/7, in classic example of air mobility, was assembled, given its mission, and air assaulted into new positions south of the hamlet all within the space of less than an hour. Forty minutes after the battalion had been found, the enemy discovered the aggressive 1st Cavalry soldiers had once again surrounded him. The threat of the closing noose forced the enemy to dig in and that was the last mistake he was permitted to make.

...Ordnance from twelve sorties of F-4C fighter-bombers pounded the area combined with relentless artillery fire. At one point an enemy company, caught between two 3d Brigade companies which were separated by only 300 yards, was bombed with 750 lb. bombs, in what Colonel Harold G. Moore, then 3d Brigade CO, described as "the most accurate display of tactical air precision bombing I have ever seen." The enemy positions had not been breached by nightfall but the division maintained the encirclement, and contact continued throughout the night as small groups attempted to exfiltrate. The enemy lost over 140 killed on the 5 and 6, and a captured prisoner subsequently revealed that the entire 9th Battalion, of the 22 ND A Regiment had been engaged and destroyed as a fighting unit.

The second phase of DAVY CROCKETT took place in the Crow’s Foot between 11-16 May. The only significant contact was made on the 11th when aircraft of the 1/3 spotted what was thought to be an enemy battalion moving south-southwest in the valley. Once again air strikes and artillery were called in to hold the enemy while elements of the 1/9, 1/7, and 1/5 maneuvered into blocking positions on routes of withdrawal. Later the estimate was dropped from one battalion to 40 NV A troops operating with 25 local guerrillas. Nevertheless this contact netted thirty-eight enemy dead from the sixty-five man force.

The second phase of DAVY CROCKETT saw extensive use of the Hunter-Killer airmobile technique as developed by Colonel Moore. This technique is just one of the many ways the air assault capability can be used effectively and ingeniously.

To avoid tiring inordinate numbers of infantry in looking for "Charlie," the concept calls for a small lightly equipped force to scout an operational area with the mission of searching and hunting down the enemy. Once located, and this is often the most difficult part of this war, a larger combat-prepared "killer" team, on stand-by alert at a nearby LZ, can be rushed into the area to close with and destroy the force. When the terrain and weather permit, the hunter-killer concept employs the inherent advantages of the Air Cavalry; it relieves the infantry from the constant demanding jungle patrolling, and reduces unnecessary flying hours on our aircraft.

"AIR ASSAULT"

This is only one particular airmobile technique, but throughout there has been the repeated term "air assault," around which the continued success of THE FIRST TEAM revolves. But what exactly is an air assault and what are the components of such a maneuver? Once again, Major Madigan of G-3 Training and Operations explains it this way:

"First, of course, comes intelligence information pinpointing an enemy unit. Map study of the area will isolate a few likely LZ’s; or perhaps we have been in the area previously and already know where we want to land. In any case a careful reconnaissance is made without attracting attention to the spot selected for the assault; the commander may have two or three long looks at the LZ. Plans are made for the assault as responsibility for initial security of the LZ is assigned, and equipment is issued and checked. Liaison is established with the helicopter company commander, who has probably been through a number of these assaults in support of one or another of our battalions. Fire support is laid on and perhaps TAC AIR will have a few planes in the area. Certainly AKA will be with the aerial column, to provide final preparatory fires on the LZ and then to remain in orbit on call with half their armament. As the troopers load the choppers, a complex system of communication is activated, linking artillery observers with their units, Commanders, pilots and other...
INTERIM REPORT OF OPERATIONS

1ST CAVALRY DIVISION

Contributors to the operation, to insure a rapid flow of information. As the troop carrying helicopters near the LZ, artillery fires, which have been hammering at the clearing and the trees surrounding it are lifted. ARA swooped in to deliver rocket fire on the enemy on any likely positions and is followed by escorting armed Hueys which spray the area with machine gun fire. The ground ships go in on the deck to enter the enemy into firing at them and revealing his position. The troop ships arrive, sometimes landing, more often hovering a foot or two in the air and sometimes as high as ten feet, as the infantry hit the ground and head full speed for the edge of the LZ. The forward artillery observer, by now is on the ground with his Company Commander, is in contact with his battalion either through the artillery liaison officer or an orbiting chopper, or directly to the battalion from his own radio. He is prepared to bring fire right up to the perimeter. ARA remains on station as succeeding waves of helicopters hit the LZ. Once the LZ has been secured, artillery must be moved in and the Sky Troopers are prepared to continue their mission on foot. By now they may be 12 or 15 miles from the battalion to which they left not over 30 minutes earlier. They may have crossed a mountain and a couple of rivers enroute and sometimes as high as ten feet, as the infantry going to be, for never before has one man been given a departing Commanding Officer to the Continental Army Command, as executed by this division, have proven to be more than the enemy can counter."

GENERAL KINNARD LEAVES

It was on the 5th of May, just after the initiation of LEWIS AND CLARK and DAVY CROCKETT, that the Airmobile Division experienced its first change of command. General Kinnard, who pioneered the air assault concept with the desired success, was given a departing Commanding General. And a most important ceremony it was going to be, for never before has one man been able to fashion an operational reality from a vision and a dream and then continue to command a force that grows even in the most adverse conditions. The birth and development of the airborne divisions in World War II did one individual accomplish a similar task. The men who envisioned the dreams of airborne troops were not the division commanders in combat.

With all the pomp and circumstance afforded a man of General Kinnard's caliber, the division went out to deliver a proper send off to the soft-spoken CG. The sunny weather helped capture the panorama of color of the massed battle units, the flag and guidon line and the traditions. Fire missions reflected an encyclopedia of American History.

In true air assault fashion, the ceremony began with a man of General Kinnard's caliber, the division went out to deliver a proper send off to the soft-spoken CG. The sunny weather helped capture the panorama of color of the massed battle units, the flag and guidon line and the traditions. Fire missions reflected an encyclopedia of American History.

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to keep the dust down in the drier seasons. A swimming area with floats and wonderful place to relax was completed in a portion of the Song Ba River which flowed through Camp Radcliff. Yes, life had become more comfortable than during those days of late September.

**ROTATION**

It was also during the next three months of June, July, and August that the "old" FIRST TEAM would be rotating back to the States—the new replacements would soon arrive for their year with the Cay. Most of the "short timers" were on a countdown to their year with the Cay. Most of the "short timers" another day from their FIGMO Calendar (FORGET it, I Got My Orders!). This calendar was a massive cardboard cut-out of a voluptuous "round eye" whose anatomy is ingeniously subdivided into 365 days. This points to the fact that there are three things every GI knows in Vietnam: his rotation date, the number of days left before that date, and that another week has passed when he takes the weekly Chloroquine-Primaquine malaria prophylaxis tablet. The usual question during the waning months of one's tour was often repeated, "Has your turtle arrived yet?" One heard from one's replacements had happened, the comment follows, "Oh, I see you've got your turtle! Now you can crack arms!" A "turtle" is no more than one's replacement, as seen from the rotating man's eyes—it seems like it will take forever before he will arrive!

**DECKHOUSE—NATHAN HALE**

On the 18th of June a company of CIDG forces was overrun by an estimated battalion of NVA in an area southeast of camp Radcliff at the Dong Tre Special Forces Camp, in Phu Yen Provinces. As the 1st Cavalry was moving west during HENRY CLAY intelligence sources indicated a significant enemy build up in this area during the period 30-28 July. Reports reflected the possibility of a repeat of the circumstances during the early stages of the PLEIKU CAMPAIGN; that is, a diversionary attack on a fortified area, with the enemy in position to ambush relief force moving on a highway or at likely LZ's. In particular, 1st Corps Intelligence estimated that the 32nd, 33rd, and 66th NVA Regiments were still in the area and planned to attack CIDG camps at Dac Co, Plei Me, and also the city of Plei Speciali, all considered grand scale operations. The Communists hoped that these attacks would draw major U.S. forces away from Ton Hoa and the eastern coast, thereby enabling the Viet Cong to secure the rice harvest in that area at that time of year.

By August 2, sufficient forces had been committed for PAUL REVERE II so that General Norton was given control of the AO. The operation followed the now-familiar pattern of extensive search and maneuver interspersed with brief periods of intense contact. As already seen the operation was launched on July 20th, 1965, by the PLEIKU CAMPAIGN in Oct-Nov 1965, MATADOR 11-17 January, and in LINCOLN 25 March-8 April. We had a good idea of what to expect. In 1965 we had learned a great deal about the weather, however, that was unexpected and unusually severe. General Norton described it as some of the worst weather he had ever seen faced by any of our armed forces. Over a 64% of the days were very difficult flying conditions to accomplish their mission. PAUL REVERE II witnessed the heaviest commitment of the 8th Engineer Battalion in any single operation to that date. All of the battalion's personnel were trained in the field and many of them were faced with the challenge of being trained in this month-long operation to offset the effects of the prevailing rains of southwest monsoon. They did a superior job in keeping the roads in the fighting zones open as well as maintaining the necessary airfields in operational condition. These two tasks alone required twenty-four hour attention. Artillery, as usual, played a major part in the operation, as over 100,000 rounds of various calibers were fired in support of the infantry. One innovation was the Air Force aerial re-supply of 6,100 artillery rounds for the 105mm and 155mm howitzers and the 175mm gun. Particular credit must be given to the ability of the airmen to find and extract the rounds despite the inherent lack of vehicles in the airmobile division, a wide dispersion in any airdrop would mean retrieving the cargo load and its packing
INTERIM REPORT OF OPERATIONS

1st CAVALRY DIVISION

MAP 10

CENTRAL-COASTAL AND NORTHEASTERN BINH DINH PROVINCE

Ensemble Disposition with Initiation of Thayer I

MAP: VIETNAM
1:250,000
ND 49-5

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Interim Report of Operations

General Norton spoke of his pride in THE FIRST TEAM and the need to carry on in this traditional manner; LT General Larsen, CG IFFORCEV, emphasized the importance of the first Cavalry in the II Corps area and how in less than a year its many operations had completely taken the initiative away from the enemy. The ceremony terminated solemnly with a roll call of those cavalrymen who were killed in PAUL REVERE II which was followed by a minute of silent prayer.

At 9:50 that evening the enemy launched another mortar attack against Camp Radcliff, only this time there was no ground attack. The casualties were light to both personnel and to the helicopters which were parked on the Golf Course.

THAYER

Ten days later, the 13th of September, the day of the Division's actual organizational day, THAYER I commenced in what banner headlines in the Division's weekly, The Cavalier, proclaimed as the largest air assault undertaken to date. THAYER I initiated the first phase of the Binh Dinh Province Pacification Campaign, a grand strategy to clean up, once and for all, all regular VC and NVA units in the area as well as uprooting the long established VC infrastructure. Although this Campaign was still continuing after the first of the year, 1967, there were three separate, but closely allied division operations prior to 31 Dec 1966—THAYER I, IRVING, and THAYER II. In conjunction with the Command's larger goal of substantially the same territory, northeastern and central-coastal Binh Dinh Province, and had the same mission—complete pacification of the Province. This campaign marked this division's first opportunity to move into an area in force and remain there until the job was done.

To accomplish this mission, it was not enough merely to find the enemy. (Map 10). The division had to seek out and find the base areas of the 2nd VC and 18th NVA Regiments. By locating these vital stockpiles of food, arms and ammunition, equipment, and medical supplies he had worked so hard to build up, we would definitely complicate his capability to continue as an effective fighting force.

THAYER I began with five infantry battalions air assaulting into a circular configuration around the Crow's Foot area, landing on 14 high ground LZs, after which they searched the ridge lines down toward the Kim Son Valley floor. (Map 11). Meanwhile, two ARVN airborne battalions deployed into the THAYER I AO and positioned themselves in the north of the valley to prevent enemy exfiltration as the noose grew tighter.

Ground contact was sporadic, but there was no question about locating rear supply areas, for on September 16th elements of the 1st Brigade
located an anti-personnel mine and grenade fac­
tory. 300 mines and 1377 grenades were in
various stages of completion. That same day,
and accommodations for 50 patients. A weapons
in the highway 506
trix. 3000 mines and 1377 grenades were
in that area.
forced these enemy
cant contact
AN LAO Valley. Sporadic contact was made on
29 September, as one of three separate, but
2-24 October, was one of three separate, but
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US on the west over suitable terrain and in an area that was familiar to them. The Capitol ROK Division was to push northward through the PHU CAT Mountains, clearing mountain sanctuaries and coastal hideouts in its advance.

On the South China Sea, the ARVN junk fleet and the US Navy in swift boats conducted patrols. Naval support was important, for without the ability to seal escape routes to the sea, the enemy could have avoided capture.

Operation IRVING opened with elements of the division air assaulting across PL WHIP into assigned areas beginning at 7:00 AM on the 2nd. On October 3rd, the 1st Brigade, 9th Cavalry was assigned its usual reconnaissance mission, dispatching one White Team (Scout ships) and one Red Team (Gunships) in the vicinity of HOA HI. While surveying the area, the White Team spotted seven NVA soldiers in the hamlet, received fire from them, and requested the gunships’ support. The aircraft then called for A Troop’s infantry unit to develop the situation. This Blue Team, on standby alert at HAMMOND, was promptly notified and was on the ground at HOA HI within 15 minutes of the initial sighting. Although the enemy force was originally estimated as a platoon, the Blue Team became heavily engaged with an obviously larger force.

Advised of the situation, Colonel Archie R. Hyle, CO 1st Brigade, decided to commit the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry. While airborned to another location, LTC James T. Root, CO 1/12 Cav, received the change of mission, requiring him to divert his companies from the planned assault into coordinated overland movement and air assaults to destroy the enemy in and around the coastal flat.

On the 4th of October the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry air assaulted into the HUNG LAC Peninsula to clear that area of enemy. B Company landed north to sweep south and C Company landed south to sweep north. C Company landed south to sweep north with B Company. Enemy were forced out of caves and underground hideouts. The Division Cavalry Squadron continued its air and ground reconnaissance throughout the operational area. The naval blockade was effective in sealing escape routes and in preventing enemy departure in sampans.

On D-Day plus three (5 October) the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry air assaulted back into the SOUl CA Valley to explore another B-52 strike and to prevent enemy surprise from the west, or rear. The enemy was found and engaged.

While other Cavalry units continued search and destroy missions in assigned areas, the ARVN 22nd Division completed its attack to the northeast of the assigned AO concentrating two battalions in both the northeast and the southwest. The Capitol ROK Infantry Division swept through the PHU CAT Mountains and sealed off the northern sector of support in support of the ARVN operation. It flushed the enemy from natural caves as well as from rice paddies on the coastal plains.

We search in three areas: The SOUl CA, the HUNG LAC Peninsula, and the NUI MIEU Mountains. From the beginning the Free World Forces concentrated on searching for, finding, and rooting out the VC. To accomplish this, all able-bodied males between the ages of 14-60 were taken into custody for processing. Some 500 were wounded and just over 20% of these suspects were identified as hard core VC. The search continued to find the enemy in small, fragmented groups.

On October 9th, the 2nd Battallon, 20th Artillery (Aerial Rocket Artillery) fired 22 SS-11 missiles at bunkers on the HUNG LAC Peninsula. The missiles proved extremely effective in destroying the bunkers and led to the capture of 53 VC without a fight. Also on that day, the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry was released from Division control to become OPCON to 3rd Brigade and thereby assumed the searching mission of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry in the SOUL CA Valley.

On 10 October, the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry reported that a fourteen year old Vietnamese boy had walked into its positions at LZ PLAYBOY in the NUI MIEU Mountains. The boy claimed to have been a prisoner of the VC until 5:00 that morning. The boy believed he was the only survivor that morning. The VC threw hand grenades and fired into a pit in which he and eighteen other prisoners were held. After the enemy’s departure, he had managed to escape.

Believing his story, the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry proceeded to systematically search the area in which the boy thought the POW camp was located. Four more survivors were encountered during the search and each verified the young boy’s story.

With the help of these survivors, the main camp was located on October 11th to the northwest of LZ PLAYBOY. An old man with badly burned feet said he had been left behind behind by the VC because he could not walk. At 2:30 that afternoon, a short distance away from the main camp, the bodies of 12 Vietnamese were found. Their hands were tied behind their backs before they were killed.

These atrocities were specifically condemned in the following letter to US Forces by Vo Phouc, one of these captives. (The translation is as close to the original as possible.)

Dear Gentlemen:

I am, Vo Phouc from Hung Lam Hamlet, by Thanh Village, Phu My District, Binh Dinh Province. I am representing 157 people of good will and National cadres who were captured by the Viet Cong and kept in the rock cave at Chanh Mountain. On October 1st, my age was 16 years old. I was held 2 to 3 years; I was held for 20 months. On 9 October 1966, we were freed by the US Army to return to the National Government. Thanks to you who freed us and restored us to life, gratitude like the sky and ocean we feel for you, we will never forget that great feat which can never be repaid by us.

Now we return to our families and the National cadres. We are very happy and I send my regards to you gentlemen and please send our regards to the American government and people who are trying to help us, trying to kill the savage communist terrorists.

One more time, we sincerely thank you, American Army, people and government who are helping the Vietnamese people eject the savage Communist despotism and are building a strong Vietnamese nation.

Respectfully yours,

Vo Phouc /s/
VO PHOUC /t/

14 Oct 1966

Contact began to diminish on the coast as the units completed searching to the sea and doubled back to catch the enemy as he came out of hiding. Meanwhile, a new picture began to develop in which aircrews of both ground and air units were located in the SOUL CA Valley. On 12 October intelligence reports indicated that at least two battalions of the 2nd VC Regiment were reinforced to the KIM SON Valley and that the regimental headquarters had moved there with one of the battalions from the CAY GIEP Mountains. Plans were made to exploit the intelligence and secure the sector for a search and destroy mission and large scale patrol in the KIM SON and SOUL CA Valleys.

Then on October 13, forces were repositioned as once again we entered the KIM SON Valley with two battalions. The 2/8 Cav remained along the sea coast. Operations continued in and around the SOUL CA where the 1/5 Cav had undoubtedly
located the VC Hoi Son secret base areas. For seven consecutive days A and B Companies of the 1/5 Cav uncovered large enemy weapons, food, and medical caches. Found on the 15th were four cameras, one of which was owned by the Lookout Reporter Editor. Sam Castano, that tank from him when he was killed during CRAYON HORSY. On the 15th, a major cache of ammunition, supplies, and material was located by A/1-5 Cav which included the first time since the division began operations ventured into the VC Hoi Son secret base areas. For seventy-three major finds in the SOQUI CA and its surrounding high ground revealed 133 weapons, both Indochina and crew served, 330,500 rounds of small and heavy caliber ammunition, 4 complete mortars and 43x57 RR rounds. The hospital complex uncovered on the 13th held in part, 1,400 people including over 100 Vietnamese women and children. Other supplies included 5,000 reams of typing paper, 60 bolts of cloth, and numerous telephones and radars.

In the THAYER II AO the division forces suffered 2,063 killed, 1,930 captured, and there were 141 returnees to the GVN. In particular, Operation ROVER pitted enemy units up to battalion size. The 1st platoon engaged in a separate action 300 meters away and found itself surrounded on all sides. The men of the 3rd platoon fought for their lives but there was just no chance as the enemy filled the air with a heavy volume of machine gun fire and hand grenades. Artillery was called in on top of the hill with apparent no contact punctuated by sharp engagements for his heroism in blocking positions to prevent exfiltration. Contact broke that night, but a sweep through the next morning revealed sixty-seven enemy dead and four wounded. Unknowingly the enemy position was decided that the enemy was in good condition, well-planned, mutually-supporting bunkers positions.

Light sporadic contact with small groups continued for the remainder of the operation. The 1/5 Cav departed the AO on 6 December and the 2/5 Cav was withdrawn on the 22nd. PAUL REVERE IV terminated on the 18th when the 2nd Brigade Headquarters, the supporting elements and the 2/12 Cav closed into Base Camp and prepared for commitment into the THAYER II AO.

**THAYER II**

During the period of PAUL REVERE IV, the FIRST TEAM mounted a series of large scale missions in front and widely separated areas of the II CTZ. (Map 12). A brigade and three battalions were in PAUL REVERE IV, two brigades and four battalions were on THAYER II in Binh Dinh, a battalion was at Camp Radclif, and a battalion task force at Phan Thiet on Operation BYRD. One can only wonder at the massive logistical support that was required for the daily necessitates of food, ammunition, equipment, and petroleum to keep the "birds" flying. Effectively operating in these diverse areas once again points up the versatility of the Air Cavalry and the capability to react to the enemy whenever and wherever he may appear.

Meanwhile at high noon on November 11th, the Division Artillery acknowledged the firing of its one-millionth round in the Republic of Vietnam. By doing so the valley was then designated a "free fire" zone which authorized massive artillery and TAC Air ordnance bombardment at will without regard for the tender green of Fall. On October 31st, pamphlets and loudspeakers were used to inform the indigenous populace that they had five days to evacuate and specified the routes to follow to avoid being collected. Over 1,100 of the local peasants took heed and were resettled in secure areas. The highway 506 Valley, just east of the KIM SON Valley, was the location for heavy contact on December 17th. Hitti's company was once again nearby and prepared for commitment into the THAYER II AO.

In the THAYER II AO, the division forces ranged from a brigade with two maneuver battalions to three brigades with eight maneuver battalions. PAUL REVERE IV terminated. Emphasis continued on searching the KIM SON and SOQUI CA Valleys, looking for the enemy which had fragmented after IRVING and attempted to avoid all contact unless he thought he had a decided advantage. The operation was charged with the "soft" roll of light and smoke and encountered contact punctuated by sharp engagements with enemy units up to battalion size.

On November 1st, elements of the 1/9 Cav and 1/12 Cav established contact with the 33rd Battalion of the 2nd VC Regiment in the area between National Route 1 and the DAM TRA O Lake, south of the GAY GEEP Mountains. The light lasted almost for his heroism in leading his company that day by repeatedly jeopardizing his own life, Captain John L. Hitti, CO 1/9/5 was nominated for the Distinguished Service Cross. There were forty-three enemy dead when contact broke at 6:00 PM that evening.

On 1 December the infantry platoon from C Troop 1/9 Cav entered the hamlet of PHU HU1 (2) in search of the KIM SON Valley floor. Two squads became pinned down by a large volume of machine gun and small arms fire. Captain Hirsh's company was once again nearby and prepared for commitment into the THAYER II AO.
the enemy eluded during the night to the east and southeast. However, a final sweep of the battle area on December 19th revealed a body count of ninety-five enemy dead. Once again the Cav had brought the fight to the enemy and forced him to show his hand.

**LZ BIRD**

The two day Christmas truce ended violently when early in the morning of December 27, nineteen hours after the truce termination, the three battalions of the 22nd NVA Regiment attacked C/1/12 and two artillery batteries at LZ Bird in the KIM SON Valley. The battalions had moved southward from their usual bases in the AN LAO Valley taking advantage of the two days of truce to get into position for the mortar and infantry attack. As his mortar fires landed among the howitzers of B/2/19 Arty (105mm) and C/6/16 Arty (155mm) the infantry assailed the defensive perimeter and were able, because of sheer numbers alone, to reach several of the firing positions in each one of the artillery batteries. Both the cavalry and the two artillery batteries fought desperately to hold the positions they still controlled. There was violent close-in firing and hand-to-hand combat. This determined stand, combined with the direct fire of the division’s first two “bee hive” 105mm rounds from B/2/19 Artillery and extremely accurate ARA fire drove the enemy from the position. The next morning 44 enemy were counted among the “gun” pits. Pursuit during the ensuing days brought the enemy total losses for its attack on Bird to over 200 killed.

A few days later the division captured Senior Captain PhuQC of the 22nd NVA Regiment. With him was the map depicting the enemy’s version of the positions on LZ Bird, from which the attack had been planned. Senior Captain PhuQC was the operations officer of the Regiment and had planned and executed the attack. Interrogations have revealed vital information on enemy tactics and techniques.

1966 closed during the second two day truce period around the U.S. New Year. On December 31st, THAYER II was in its sixty-eighth day, the longest operation undertaken by the division in Vietnam. On that day, the 3rd NVA Division had lost a total of 980 killed in THAYER II, representing each of its three regiments. 1967 would see the continuation of THAYER II as it exceeded 100 days and accounted for a division record for killed in one operation—1,757 dead by body count. It was a very promising note on which to end the first eighteen months since the birth of the Air Cavalry on July 1, 1965. There was nothing slow in its upbrining as it was forced into immediate full growth and maturity from the very beginning.

**RECOGNITION**

This unusual success certainly did not go unheralded, or without recognition. The achievements of the division and pictures of Sky Troopers repeatedly adorned daily newspapers and weekly magazines throughout the United States. Columbia, South Carolina took it unto itself to adopt the 1st Air Cavalry as its own and offered assistance in building materials and “hard-to-get” items for civic action projects. The city was most willing to help this division which gave so much of itself for the cause of freedom. The General Assembly of the State of Georgia resolved in February, 1966 to erect a suitable monument in Columbus, Georgia, in honor of all CAV Commanders, living and dead, as an expression of gratitude by the people of Georgia for its supreme sacrifice in Vietnam. In October, 1966 the 1st Cavalry Division (Armored) was selected from a field of nominees as the “Outstanding Aviation Unit” for the period April, 1965 to March 1966 by the Army Aviation Association of America. THE FIRST TEAM was cited for its innovation in the use of Army aircraft above and beyond the usual mission.

Since arrival in Vietnam in September of 1965, the 1st Air Cavalry has conducted 12 operations involving single or multi-company task forces; 32 operations at battalion or brigade task force strength, and three operations it called campaigns because of the duration and the forces committed. These are the PLEIKU CAMPAIGN in October-November 1965, the BONG SON CAMPAIGN, January-March 1966; and the Binh Dinh PACIFICATION CAMPAIGN.

These operations have been costly to the NVA and VC enemy—over 7,400 killed by body count with an additional 5,960 estimated killed, for a total of over 13,360—3,206 captured, 2,476 individual weapons and 349 crew operated weapons captured or destroyed, 1,255 tons of rice, and 512 tons of salt captured or destroyed. When at all possible the division operated with ARVN and CIDG units to assist them in winning their war for self-determination. Command emphasis continually stressed the importance of the Civic Action projects and the Revolutionary Development programs.

**YEAR OF THE HORSE**

1965 certainly was the year of the Horse as the only way one could interpret the success of the 1st Cavalry. Each member of THE FIRST TEAM...
was inspired to an awareness of the importance of our mission to the people of Vietnam and of our unique capability to accomplish that mission. This mission is the continuous orientation on the enemy, and the knowledge that we possess that means to exploit decisively any contact by the Sky Troopers or supporting forces. It is the execution of the vertical envelopment and the pursuit, when our organic helicopters enable the commander to carry the fight to the enemy and deny him the sanctuary he needs when he breaks contact. There is a flexibility, an ability to react to rapidly changing situations. The division embodies an ever prevailing esprit de corps. Corporal, Captain, Colonel, or Commanding General—each is constantly learning from the other, as we demonstrate the Airmobile Division is uniquely equipped to defeat the enemy at any point on the counterinsurgency scale, from the local VC defense platoon to the well-armed NVA Regiment. The 1st Cavalry Division—THE FIRST TEAM—is proud of past achievements. Continuous refinement of airmobile tactics and techniques will produce still more decisive victories in the days ahead.