



*for fighting men too busy to keep their own!*

## SCIENCE IN INDUSTRY

# N.E.-Built Skycranes Save Downed Aircraft in Viet

By ARTHUR A. RILEY

Confederate Gen Jeb Stuart's cavalry was renowned for its hard-riding, surprising and devastating raids on Union forces. Horse cavalry long since has passed into military history, but a new type of cavalry has come into being. It is the First Air Cavalry (Air Mobile) now fighting a new kind of war in Viet Nam.

Today's "Flying Horsemen" mount, some six or seven feet are carried into battle in above the jungle soil, they-enchoppers, and when they dis-engage in combat like infantry-

men. But the combat helicopters have somewhat the same role as horse cavalry.

They can move in quickly to make a "kill," often with a marked degree of surprise, and particularly in remote and inaccessible spots that are characteristic of the Viet Nam theater of operations.

In the days of unremembered wars when cavalry regiments were employed in harassing raids on the enemy's flanks or bivouac points, the flying horsemen could always return to a base camp, or their efforts could be supported by a supply train.

The "steeds" of today's air cavalry are machines—helicopters—expensive, complicated, highly-instrumented, and often put out of commis-

sion through anti-aircraft ground gunfire, or malfunction.

In similar fashion, air cavalry must have support bases and supply depots. More so, it must have retrieval equipment for saving downed choppers on the untracked jungle terrain.

New England inventive genius and engineering skill plus outstanding advanced technology in the field of helicopter development have made this latter factor possible with immense saving to the nation's military establishment.

In the late Spring of 1962, Sikorsky Aircraft of Stratford, Ct., conducted an exhibition for the press and military at their flight field. It presented a new era in air-

transport as the free world's largest rotary wing craft was put through its paces.

Virtually a trailer truck of the skies, the turbine-powered Sikorsky S-64 Skycrane was hailed as a prime mover like the truck, locomotive and tugboat. At the time it was asserted that the craft possessed the capability to haul an endless variety of cargoes and conveyances.

The following year, the vehicle was introduced to the Army as the CH-54A, passing exhaustive tests and maneuvers prior to being placed in production and dispatched to Viet Nam.

Today, four of these heavy lift 'copters are employed by the U.S. Army in the Viet Nam theater. In the period from Oct. 1 through Dec. 31 last year, these powerful vehicles saved almost twice their own cost by retrieving aircraft downed in combat areas.

In this period, the four Skycranes, with maximum lifting capacity of 10 tons each, recovered a Douglas A1E Skyraider fighter-bomber, a deHavilland CV-2 Caribou transport, and 45 helicopters ranging in size from the 2000-pound Bell OH-13 to the Vertol CH-47 weighing about 18,000 pounds.

Most of the aircraft recovered are repaired and returned to duty. Value of the retrieved craft is placed at \$15 million. All had been forced down by mechanical trouble or enemy action in areas from which there were no other means of recovery except by 'copter airlift.

The Skycranes are operated by the 478th Aviation Company, heavy lift, in support of the First Cavalry Division, Airmobile.

In addition to their retrieval missions, they are called upon for a wide variety of special missions including the airlift of artillery, bulldozers, trucks, jeeps, ammunition and supplies. They also transport Conex containers directly from shipboard to shore. A detachable pod fitted as a general's command post has

been carried, and similar pods have been fitted out as mobile surgical units complete with field operating facilities.

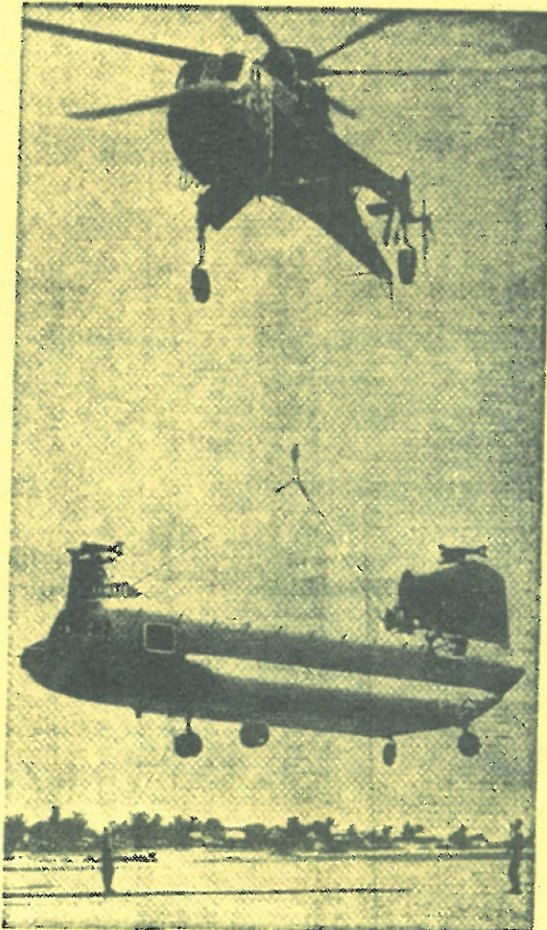
Smaller helicopters such as the Air Force/Sikorsky HH-3E have been successful in the retrieval of lighter rotary wing aircraft such as the Con-

necticut-built Kaman HH-43B.

These twin-turbine helicopters (HH-3E) are normally utilized for rescuing aircrewmembers downed in enemy territory in North Viet Nam. They are fitted with armor plate, armament, rescue hoist, drop-pable fuel tanks for extra

range, and the most modern navigational aids.

This type of craft is painted with a tan and green camouflage to make them indistinguishable from the jungle canopy. They are known by their crews as the "Jolly Green Giants."



War Casualty

Damaged 'copter in sling is lowered to ground by crane hoist.



### Inter-service Cooperation

A U.S. Air Force Sikorsky CH-3C helicopter transports a 105-mm howitzer for the U.S. Marine Corps at Da Nang, Viet Nam.

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# Gen. Seneff's Unit Making History in Viet Nam

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Charles Black, Enquirer military writer, has been recuperating from a pangs attack wound in Saigon, but reported that he has now joined the 1st Cavalry Division. Black is in South Viet Nam to cover activities of the division. The following dispatch was written before his return to the field.)

By CHARLES BLACK  
Enquirer Military Writer

SAIGON — The Army's original aviation brigade, the First Aviation Brigade commanded by Brig. Gen. George Seneff, is rounding out its headquarters organization in a villa at 253 Cach Mang, Saigon, an unlikely sounding address for history-making unit.

The 1st Cavalry Division's aviation structure, spends an immense amount of his time flying a helicopter from one aviation company to another in Vietnam or out watching military operations.

He has a familiar group of men in his headquarters. Col. John B. Stockton is his deputy commander. Lt. Col. Dale Runnels is supply officer. Maj. Robert Zion is working on operations problems, for example. These and many more of the men at 253 Cach Mang, including Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Kennedy, are veterans of the 11th Air Assault Division and of fighting in the Central Highlands with the 1st Cavalry Division.

**Education Project**  
"One of our programs is going to be a huge education project. I suppose you could call it. We are going to be in a technical advisory capacity for units utilizing air mobility in their operations. It is going to be a very challenging proposition," Seneff said. "In a way, we are all back as we were in 1963, starting out something brand new again."

Helicopter support for Vietnamese units will be heavily increased with the companies of the First Aviation Brigade.

**Patch Designed**  
The unit has a patch already designed, a blue shield with red-handled sword and a cavalry yellow hawk, and it will even have its own navy along the way. The Albemarle, a sea-plane tender converted to a floating maintenance shop for Army aircraft, will be operated for a mobile "fourth echelon maintenance center."

## Charles Black Reports

One of the most interesting parts of the new operation will be that of Maj. James Hertzog, the flight surgeon, who will be in charge of aviation medicine. His work is more than simply treating ailments, he must delve into methods of keeping them from happening. Hertzog has already done

The huge fleet of helicopters which is in Viet Nam or on its way will open up air mobile operations in this war. The First Infantry Division, the 25th Infantry Division, 101st Airborne Division and 173rd Airborne brigades in Viet Nam, plus additional forces everybody here predicts will arrive (if some kind of governmental structure is still available to fight in Viet Nam after the current political contest is concluded) will all have helicopter operations such as these units have never before attempted.

considerable work on the problem of fatigue in combat pilots, and a study of his seems to show that a well - commanded group just doesn't tire at the same rate as a less deftly handled organization.

**High Fatigue Rate**  
His research showed that the average tour of flying now entails about 700 hours, and it also showed that although pilots in some units showed up with a high fatigue rate after strenuous flying, it wasn't apparent in pilots of similar units in similar circumstances.

"The hours and missions are an important factor, of course, but the really important thing is the motivation of the men, the leadership given them, things of this nature. The idea of setting some kind of limit on the total

(hours a man would be allowed to fly here during a tour just doesn't fit in with the real facts out in the field," Hertzog said.

He echoed a very similar remark by Lt. Col. William Maddox, commander of the 13th Aviation Battalion in the Mekong Delta, one of the brigade units which has created a legendary history for itself in this war.

**Highly Decorated**  
Maddox's choppers are called on for maximum effort, seven days a week. His pilots fly 75 to 100 hours per month and maintenance is done by night, yet his fatigue problem is low.

His battalion is also one of the most highly decorated in this war's history, has taken part in almost every conceivable kind of mission, and is operating in an area where there are no regular American combat units.

One of the by-products of the First Aviation Brigade, according to the flight surgeon, will be a psychological one. He said that the pulling together of the aviation units into a brigade structure will give them "identification, an outfit of their own."

One company commander, whose helicopter unit has operated north of Saigon, said the brigade "can be a big boost to us. It means an area-wide program, standardization, a place for aviation to hang its hat in this country."



Gen. Seneff's Unit Making History in Viet Nam War

THE DENVER POST  
Friday, April 8, 1966

# 1st Cavalry Wipes Out Platoon of Viet Cong

SEE STORY PAGE 1

By THOMAS A. REEDY  
SAIGON — (AP) — The U.S. 1st Air Cavalry raised its toll of Communist dead to 438 Friday in Operation Lincoln on the Cambodian frontier after virtually wiping out a reinforced Viet Cong platoon.

The cavalrymen, sweeping around the Chu Phong Mountains 220 miles north of Saigon for two weeks, caught 30 to 40 Reds by surprise Thursday and killed 29 in a brisk fight.

Other American troops accounted for at least 15 Viet Cong killed near Tuy Hoa as the war continued on the ground and in the air despite continued street demonstrations in Saigon and antigovernment unrest in the northern provinces.

Navy fighter-bombers from

the 7th Fleet carriers Enterprise and Hancock caught 34 North Vietnamese cargo junks in open coastal waters Thursday. Flying through partial cloud cover that has plagued raids on the North for days, the pilots sank 12 of the junks and damaged the others, the Air Force spokesman said.

Air Force jets destroyed three buildings and damaged three more in seven missions against supply areas 12 miles north of the 17th Parallel frontier with South Viet Nam, pilots reported. Six miles farther north, they set off secondary explosions that sent up a fireball and smoke 1,500 feet in an attack on a military supply depot at Quang Xa.

The Strategic Air Command's B52s flew in from Guam to saturate a Viet Cong area 65 miles southeast of Da Nang, where

intelligence reports placed a supply camp, weapons factory and troop concentration.

One plane was reported lost in the past 24 hours by U.S. spokesmen. An A1E Skyraider ditched near Da Nang, apparently because of mechanical trouble. The pilot was slightly injured.

The only significant encounter reported by the government was a Viet Cong attack early Friday on a 60-man outpost just south of Saigon in Long An Province. Vietnamese headquarters lost contact with the outpost, and a plane later radioed from overhead that it was aflame.

An infantry battalion of about 350 government troops was sent to help the outpost. But the government spokesman said there was no word on the fate of the defenders.



cent. **THE ENQUIRER** has  
 APR 28 1966

### Scranton Gives State Flag for GI

HARRISBURG, April 27 (AP)—Gov. William W. Scranton presented a Pennsylvania flag Wednesday to the family of an Army lieutenant from Selinsgrove serving in Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry's Airborne Brigade.

Lt. Joseph Snyder, 23, had requested a State flag to fly with flags from other 49 States over his company headquarters.

Scranton, noting that he planned to visit Vietnam next month, said he would try to visit Snyder and convey the greeting from his family.

CHICAGO DAILY NEWS, Friday, April 29, 1966



## Radio Message Alerted Col. Cranford To Operation Which Became Classic

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Charles Black, Enquirer military writer, is now in the field with troops of the 1st Cavalry Division in Viet Nam. His dispatches on the war in Southeast Asia will continue daily in the Enquirer.)

BY CHARLES BLACK  
 Enquirer Military Writer

THANH TINH — Lt. Col. Jack Cranford, commander of the 27th Assault Helicopter Battalion, got a radio message at his drop base in a field called "Turkey Farm" near Pleiku which alerted him to an operation which became a military classic as event followed event during the week after March 30.

He flew to this remote spot, a Montaignard village near the Cambodian border north of the Ia Drang River, where Col. John J. Hennessey's 1st Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division had its headquarters during Operation Lincoln.

Lt. Col. Robert Shoemaker, commander of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry; Lt. Col. Rutland

### Charles Black Reports

Beard, commander of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry and Col. Hennessey were there. "A platoon of the 9th had hit Chu Pong Mountain and the 9th was sending in its pilots to try to get them out. It looked as if the 12th would have to get some men in there to get the platoon

and people from downed helicopters out of trouble and I got my lift ships on the way," Cranford said.

#### Perimeter Defense

Alpha Company of the 12th Cavalry was on the perimeter defense at the "Turkey Farm" after being steadily in the field for several days. The company had killed many Communist soldiers in an ambush the night before.

Its rest was short as the paratroopers ran to board the UH-1D helicopters from the 22nd, plus a single big CH-47 Chinook.

"We were set for a takeoff at 1630 hours (4:30 p.m.) and I decided it probably would mean that when the infantry had gone over the ground and pulled back the casualties, there would be a night extraction. There was no artillery support and the action was out of the area where we were operating," Cranford said. He planned accordingly and when the aircraft flew in to the little landing zone, called Landing Zone Eagle, a crew of pathfinders from his battalion landed with the infantry.

The pathfinders, skilled parachutists and rappellers who take charge of directing flights into a field from the ground, are distinguished by their black baseball hats and big rucksacks full of beacons, portable lights, radios, etc.

#### First in Assault

They are also heavily loaded with ammunition and M-16 rifles, because they are usually the first soldiers to land in these assaults, often going in by themselves and directing the infantry transports to landings.

This team was made up of Sgt. Max L. Bennett, Sgt. Billy Moore and Cpl. Lowell Fryed.

The pathfinders quickly set up a lighted "T" in the center of the landing zone as the paratroopers pushed on out into sparse woods toward a field 400 yards away.

There, a burning helicopter and heavy gunfire from Communists dug in along a creek on the clearings opposite side marked the ground where they intended to rescue wounded men from fighting which had taken place between a rifle platoon from Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, and a full battalion of North Vietnamese soldiers.

#### Extraction Fails

The night extraction was attempted but did not succeed, but the pathfinders' lighted beacon in the center of the little field was to become a critical factor

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commanded the paratrooper company heading for the downed helicopters, took his men in platoon columns to the edge of the clearing, then formed them on a platoon front with his riflemen advancing across a broad section.

He walked with the 1st Platoon on the right. The second platoon commanded by Lt. Daniel Kapica was in the center. The third platoon had the right flank.

Heavy fire from the positions in front of the first platoon came almost as the men left the shelter of the trees, with 200 yards of open field before them.

Soldiers in the 1st and 3rd platoons said they noticed only sporadic sniper fire but Platoon Sgt. Wesley Frazier noticed the heavy fire on the First Platoon.

#### "Walked Right In"

"It seemed to be concentrated there. It seemed to come from the front and on their right flank and later, as we got out 100 yards in the field, it seemed as if it was coming onto them from the rear. I saw them stop about then, I guess. We moved on in and then I saw the third platoon start to move over to the first," Frazier said.

"We were just keeping up a good steady pace and moving in. We got right into the positions.

"The holes were very well camouflaged and I saw one about 10 feet from me," he continued. "I saw an automatic rifle raised, then the man. I killed him."

"Staff Sgt. Richard Kinkowich, the first squad leader, and Pfc. Roy Taylor started grenading then and they cleaned out three more holes."

"The riflemen got into the Communist positions then and just killed them out until we had at least ten of those dug-in fire positions knocked out," Frazier said. "We got a little fire from across the creek but we got organized."

#### Call to Fall Back

"After just a little we got a call to fall back out of there that Drake was wounded and that the executive officer had the company."

"As we pulled back, we heard that the executive officer had been killed and that Lt. Kapica was company commander. All of the time we were in their positions, there was heavy firing on the right, aimed at the 1st Platoon where Drake was walking," Frazier said.

The company pulled back to the woodline they had left to make the assault and Kapica reorganized them. Two of the unit's most respected non-commissioned officers went out in an individual effort to get to Drake, who had ordered his men to leave him and "come back for me later."

Both men were killed after an unsuccessful search. Pfc. Lesley Louthen, a grenadier, said he then heard somebody say "... we have to get Capt. Drake."

#### "I Guess I Started"

"I guess I started out there. There didn't seem to be anybody organizing it, just like when the sergeants went," Louthen said.

"Sgt. Sinakovich, Sp4 Thomas A. Chars, Sp4 Kenneth Hill and Sgt. Castron Nevezes all decided to come along and we headed on out.

"We walked up to 15 yards of the positions we had just attacked and they didn't fire, or I don't remember if they did. Then Sgt. Sinakovich, after we had looked along there, said we would have to pull back because our aerial rocket artillery was coming to hit the positions," Louthen said.

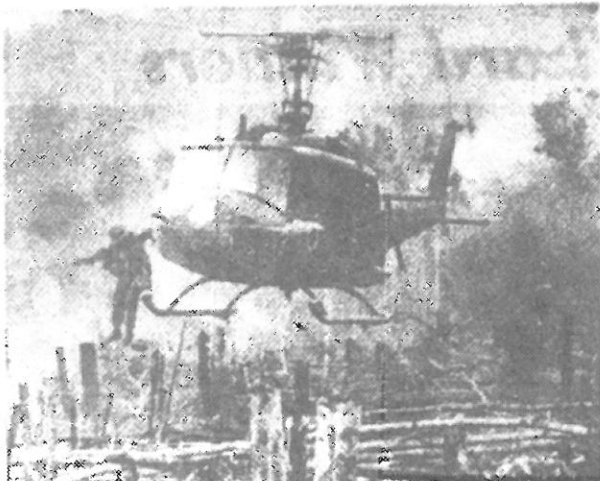
The rockets of the 2nd Battalion 20th Aerial Artillery, commanded by Lt. Col. Mike Mahone, pounded the Communists as the soldiers got back to their company.

Kapica then called the same group and they all went out again.

#### Carried Back

"We scattered out and then Sgt. Nevezes found Capt. Drake and carried him halfway back. We got the captain back to the perimeter."

"We couldn't find anyone else taking care of getting them back, and Lt. Kapica took us back to Landing Zone Eagle where we set up a perimeter. We expected to have a night attack if we didn't get pulled out," Louthen said.



A U.S. 1st Cavalry (Air Mobile) Division soldier leaps from a helicopter that was prevented from landing by shattered

trees on ground in Viet Nam. Trees were felled by artillery fire and air strikes during search for Viet Cong. (AP)



AWAIT EVACUATION — Wounded members of the United States 1st Air Cavalry Division watch a helicopter land that will carry them to the field hospital from the

battle zone south of Bong Son in South Viet Nam. The wounded men were hit by mortar fragments. (AP Wire-photo)

# U.S. General Believes That Guards and Barbed Wire Along Laos and Cambodia Could Stop Infiltration

Cites Experience in Protecting Base at An Khe

By RICHARD DUDMAN

A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch

AN KHE, South Viet Nam.

May 5

MAJ. GEN. HARRY W. O. KINNARD, who is scheduled to assume temporary command of American Field Force I in South Viet Nam, believes that infiltration via the Ho Chi Minh trail could be stopped by barbed wire and guards along the border with Laos and Cambodia.

Gen. Kinnard has been commander of the First Cavalry Division (Air Mobile). He is to be succeeded in this command tomorrow by Maj. Gen. John Norton, the military command at Saigon announced Tuesday.

The setting up of a field force — a supradivisional headquarters — in each of the three corps areas of South Viet Nam is part of the rapidly evolving U.S. military command structure. The field forces are not called corps because the South Viet Nam name has pre-empted that name for geographical areas rather than for troop units.

Kinnard told the Post-Dispatch that he thought a 100-yard cleared strip could be fenced and controlled by "a pretty modest force."

WORK GANGS using brush hooks and saws could clear the 900-mile strip through the mountainous jungle in two to three years, he said. He suggested that Cambodia and Laos might be willing to help, as well as neutrals such as Sweden and Switzerland. He pointed out that the job could be done much faster by using big machines.

Kinnard drew on his experience at this new base in South Viet Nam's central highlands, 250 miles northeast of Saigon. His men cleared a 100-yard swath around the 16-mile perimeter, erected a double fence of barbed wire and planted mines in between. It is one of the few bases never penetrated by Viet Cong guerrillas.

Another feature of this high-security base is that no Viet Nam



Maj. Gen. Harry W. O. Kinnard

Barbed wire and guards along the border

ese nationals are allowed inside the inner perimeter. At most other bases, Viet Nam soldiers stand guard duty, and there are Viet Nam cooks, waiters, laundrymen, maids and bartenders. Here, the men of the First Cavalry do those jobs themselves except when they can go off base into a nearby Viet Nam boom town to have their boots polished, their uniforms laundered, or their trucks washed at one of the car-washing establishments that have sprung up.

SOME OTHER American officers are skeptical that security methods successful thus far at An Khe could be applied to the problem of infiltration of men and supplies across the border.

"Guerrillas could penetrate any barrier and vanish into the jungle on this side," says a major. "We would have detected them, but what good would that do? We already know that they are infiltrating."

Other estimates of the number of men it would take to secure the border have run as high as 200,000.

Kinnard is proud of the First Cavalry's record thus far. His eight battalions average 68 per cent of their time away from the base, chasing the nine enemy regiments—13,000 to 15,000 men—believed to be operating in the huge Second Corps area comprising most of the Central Highlands.

Division records claim 8243 enemy dead since the force

Other Officers Skeptical of Plan—Big Force Needed

landed last August, including 3734 by body count and 4509 others by estimate records also show 3130 enemy wounded, 1023 captured, 1613 weapons captured and 1,157,300 tons of rice seized.

MOST OF THIS score has been achieved in a series of battles in which the division has found enemy forces and held contact for several weeks at a time, fighting every day.

The key is increased mobility. The division's huge fleet of helicopters largely substitute for ground vehicles, which can themselves be carried by helicopter.

"We're not roadbound," Kinnard said. "We are not subject to ambush. We overfly the ambush. We escape the tyranny of terrain. We think in terms of minutes rather than miles."

Gen. Kinnard has a reputation as a phrase maker. He helped make Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe famous at the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. When the Germans demanded his surrender, McAuliffe first replied "nuts" and then composed a longer, more formal answer. Kinnard, then a 29-year-old colonel, suggested he stick with the first answer.

THE DIVISION WAS the first to bring in helicopters large enough to carry artillery.

"The infantry can pull back and have the artillery fire for him," Kinnard said. "The Viet Cong doesn't have this capability. He shoots with a rifle and we reply with a volley of 105s. It's a very good contest as far as we are concerned."

Intelligence on the move comes sometimes from informants picked up in the course of a chase. A helicopter drops to the ground, picks up a farmer, who may be a part-time guerrilla, carries him back to an intelligence station for interrogation and afterward deposits him back where he was.

"Reconnaissance by fire" is another method of finding the enemy. Scout planes patrol con-

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## General

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stantly. In uninhabited areas, they sometimes just spray the trees with gunfire, hoping to draw enemy fire.

The division has built many airfields, entirely from the air, where road access has been difficult.

THE DIVISION can clear a landing zone in the heavy jungle in two days. First the Air Force blows a hole in the tree canopy with a bomb. Then helicopters lower men with chain saws on ropes or ladders. They broaden the hole until a bulldozer can be lifted in.

Sectional scrapers and power shovels can be carried in, as-

sembled on the ground and used to carve out an airstrip that can take a huge cargo plane, the C-130, without any road access.

With all this going for him, Gen. Kinnard is thinking in years, not months, for completion of the military task in the Second Corps area.

He sees steady progress. The base at An Khe blocked an imminent enemy drive last year to cut the country in half. The enemy had freedom of movement and held the initiative. Now he is being chased.

"WE SEE MORE PEOPLE on the road," said Kinnard. "They wave at you now when you fly over. You can sense the increased security."

You provide an in-between security just by going in, even if you don't stay there. Next time you go back, you find the people much more friendly. People are fed up with the Viet Cong and want more than this in-between security. They beg to be taken out. In one village, they even burned their own houses and we carried them out in our helicopters."

But the estimate of enemy strength has held steady. Replacements from North Viet Nam and from recruits inside South Viet Nam are pouring in, but they are not continuing strong.

In most cases there is no pacification following a battle, the area reverts to Viet Cong control. South Viet Nam and South Korean troops are said to be effective where they do move in afterward to hold an area. But there are not enough of them to go around. Moreover, the enemy is changing his strategy.

"He doesn't choose to fight with us," Kinnard said. "He is hiding from us. The only time we can get a fight is when we find him."

KINNARD SAID he would welcome an attack that some military officers expect against Pleiku in the next month or two.

"They would make the attack, but we could handle it," he said. "The plan is to come to fighting in a conventional way, the enemy is not used to our method."

Finally, the First Cavalry's method uses American manpower. American troops guard the perimeter and, with Korean help, even the vital road link with Qui Nhon on the coast. This implies lack of trust in South Viet Nam troops, but Kinnard says that their numbers are limited and can best be used where the South Viet Nam population is concentrated.

The division's operation amounts to an American effort to fight the war for the South Viet Nam. To apply the same method in the rest of the country, or fully even in the Second Corps, would require many more American troops.

As Kinnard likes to put it, "We are blank checks; a strategic reserve for many different operations. But if all those blank checks were cashed at the same time, it would be rather embarrassing."

IN THE EVOLVING command structure the Air Force command has been renamed, with the Seventh Air Force supplanting the Second Air Division. All of the Navy elements have been drawn together in a new group called U.S. Naval Forces Viet Nam.

The commanders of each of the supradivisional headquarters have been designated as the senior advisers to the Viet Nam units in their areas, thus giving some semblance of unity to the Viet Nam and U.S. infantry efforts.

In the First Corps area, centered on Da Nang, the top headquarters is called the Third Marine Amphibious Force. It is commanded by Marine Lt. Gen. Lewis W. Walt.

Still farther south, in the area immediately north of Saigon, Field Force II was set up in mid-March at Buon Hoa. It is headed by Maj. Gen. Jonathan O. Seaman. Its staff was drawn from units already serving in Viet Nam.



HIT BY VIET CONG SNIPERS as it made a low rocket-firing pass ahead of U.S. paratroopers, an armed helicopter crashed and burned in a rice paddy about 25 miles northwest of Saigon. The crew escaped with minor injuries but the aircraft was destroyed. The rocket tubes are visible on the side of the fuselage.—(Wirephoto by radio from Saigon).

Miami Herald 4 MAY 1966

### To Get New Chief

SARON APD Maj. Gen. John Norton will assume command of the U.S. 1st Air Cavalry Division Friday, the American Military Command announced Tuesday.



## 1st Cavalry Division Takes Over Plantation With Little Trouble

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Charles Black, Enquirer military writer, is back in Viet Nam flymissions with the 1st Cavalry Division. Today's installment concludes a two-part series on the awesome might which the division can muster in just a few minutes.)

By CHARLES BLACK  
Enquirer Military Writer

The artillery kept pounding, sending strings of explosions down each side of the landing zone and dropping rows of flashing bursts into likely spots along brush draws or hill-sides.

Exactly eight seconds after what seemed to be the final artillery burst a network of smoke trails suddenly appeared, tracing thin plumes into the dusk and smoke raised by the inferno which had already bubbled down there.

It was hard to spot the helicopters from the 2nd Battalion, 20th Aerial Artillery, but the rockets, machineguns and 40 millimeter grenades they

launched into any tiny spots overlooked by the bombs or artillery shells were spectacular.

### Big Flight

A big flight of Hueys came darting in behind the aerial artillery ships, flying low and fading into the trees.

As the formation came near the smoke gunships on either side of the troop lift ships sprinted ahead and their rock-

### Charles Black Reports

ets and guns pounded into the very edge of the landing zone, rockets from the 228th's gunships seeming to make a continuous ripple of explosions as they came in behind the aerial artillery.

Lt. Col. Robert Kellar dropped his control ship down then, tagging into the lift ship formation, and even as the gunships swept off to the left and right and circled like queuing hawks, the rattle of machine guns from door gun-

ners in the HUD liftships look up the noise of all this.

### Gunners Keep Up Fire

The door gunners kept tracers pouring out of their machine guns into the brush and trees along the landing zone until the very second when the heavily loaded and sweating infantry in the first company to land dove out the sides of the Hueys and took up the fire themselves, slamming bursts of bullets from M-16 rifles and M-60 machine guns into the ripped and riddled areas they were moving toward.

The control ship moved up above this even as 16 more Hueys came in and the infantry fanned out to build up the number of sky troopers already moving out into the brush.

### 13 Minutes to Set Up

Flight followed flight until 64 ships had landed and sent their cargo of fighting men into the area, with companies, platoons and squads fanning out into

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arefully planned sweeps of the vacant plantation.

Exactly 13 minutes after the last lift chopper, the big CH47 Chinooks, which had come in with artillery and shells dangling beneath them in slings and nets, roared off.

The 228th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Max Clark had landed an entire artillery battalion and the guns were in position in just that length of time — 13 minutes.

Helicopters bearing supplies, equipment and more men kept winging into the area.

It took less than an hour and the long-accent tea plantation was turned into a U. S. Army post with a battalion of infantry out securing the area, a perimeter defense, battalion headquarters, 105 howitzers firing into likely target areas, and GIs in full possession.

The only opposition the Viet Cong had mounted was some sniper fire from the vicinity of some huts hidden along a river south of the new base of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry. A platoon of U. S. riflemen had already gone down there and a helicopter had followed them to pick up several crest-fallen captives who had not run for the hills quite fast enough.

There hadn't been any troops in there since the French left here in 1954. The 1st Cavalry Division landed from the sky line a big thunderbolt in an area the Viet Cong considered their own by right of conquest and where they had been so sure of a serene area that they had long ago quit bothering with any elaborate defense setup.

This was the same area where the 2nd Korean Battalion of the tragically famous Group Mobile 100 had been surrounded, annihilated and left to its fate in 1954 when the Viet Minh had defeated French hopes in the Central Highlands.

The positions of the French soldiers who were overrun by the Viet Minh and left to their fate because relief from Pleiku was impossible were still visible, worn and grass-grown trenches, holes, etc.

The GIs who had suddenly taken possession mostly ignored the historical jetsam as they walked by the old positions on business of their own. The country is littered with old holes, new holes, old scars and new scars.

The course of fighting in 1966 in the area of the 1st Cavalry Division bears no resemblance to the way things happened in 1954, and the tough sky troopers have long lists of their own memories of battle now.

They sometimes look curiously at one of these old scenes of tragedy, of course, and wonder about exactly what happened.

"We've always whipped them. They haven't managed to win a thing from the Air Cav. No matter how sure a bet they seemed to have right at the start it always blew a wound up with them taking a hell of a beating. It must be tough on them to see us move into places like this where they can look at an old victory and not be able to do a thing except run and hope they can stay alive." Kellar said as he flew from the biggest landing of them all to land another chore his helicopters were performing elsewhere.

# 1st Cavalry Catches Fleeing Red Battalion

## Survivors Have Backs To Coast

SAIGON (UPI)—U.S. 1st Air Cavalry troopers today caught up with the remnants of a fleeing Viet Cong battalion and trapped them between American guns and the South China Sea.

They killed 39 more of the enemy trying desperately to escape, boosting the toll of the two-day battle to 141.

A U.S. military spokesman said the 1st Cav troopers, pursuing the guerrillas through jungle so heavy it blocked out the sunlight, had blocked all avenues of escape except the sea. He said "significant contact" had been made.

"There's a lot of Viet Cong trying to get out of there and some of them haven't been successful," the spokesman said.

The Viet Cong were fleeing the jungle battlefield near Bong Son, about 290 miles north along the coast from Saigon, where the last Cav troopers pounced on them Thursday and killed 101 in a fierce eight-hour fight described as one of the bitterest so far this spring.

At about midnight the Viet Cong broke contact and slipped away with the 1st Cav's 3rd Brigade in hot pursuit.

### Hemmed In

The Viet Cong first fled north, but an 1st Cav force blocked their way. A third force, backed by U.S. warplanes which would have a clear shot at them if they tried to cross Highway 1, waited to the west. So the Communists fled east toward the sea. The

spokesman said the troopers were tightening the noose.

In the air war, U.S. officials reported Communist gunners shot down three American warplanes taking advantage of a break in the monsoon rains to raid into the Communist heartland of North Viet Nam Thursday. One of the pilots was rescued but heavy enemy fire drove away pilots trying to snatch the other two to safety. They were listed as missing and feared captured.

The U.S. warplanes flew 48 missions leaving mile-high smoke billowing over their (See 1ST CAVALRY, Page 2A)

(Continued from Page 1A) targets. Guam-based B52s hit guerrilla positions in War Zone C for the eighth time today. This is the former Viet Cong haven on the Cambodian border where the U.S. 1st Infantry Division is conducting a sweep.

### Text Book Assault

The 1st Air Cavalry Division, pioneers in the use of helicopter assaults, operated in textbook fashion in the jungle battle near Bong Son about 290 miles northeast of Saigon. It was one

of the biggest battles this spring.

The troopers were sweeping the central coastal region in Operation Davy Crockett Thursday when intelligence reported the location of the Communist force.

The Air Cav's Third Brigade swooped down in force on the high ground in mid-afternoon and poured withering fire into the trapped Communists in a valley below. The guerrillas fired back with mortars, machine guns and recoilless rifles but took a terrific beating until nightfall when they slipped away into the jungle.



WELCOME SLAP—A sergeant from the 25th Infantry Division gets a welcoming slap from Gen. William Westmoreland, commander of the U.S. forces in Viet Nam, as an element of the "Tropic Lightning" Division arrives at Vung Tau. The general still wears a cast on his left arm injured while playing tennis. (UPI Radiotelephoto)

# Yank Cavalry Mauls Cong With Bombs

## American Losses Reported 'Light': Supplies Captured

SAIGON (Saturday) (UPI) — The Communist Viet Cong death toll soared to at least 382 early Saturday on a rice paddy battlefield where a strike force of U.S. 1st Cavalry troops backed the Communists against the South China Sea. The Americans mauled the enemy with bombs, bullets and artillery when they tried to get through U.S. lines to mountain hideouts.

The Americans captured 40 Communists while wiping out at least a battalion as the Communists desperately tried to get past the American guns and out of the pocket they found themselves in just north of Bong Son, about 200 miles up the coast from Saigon.

Another 433 suspects in Operation Davy Crockett were reported detained for questioning. American losses were described as "light."

"It's like a Tennessee turkey shoot," one cavalry officer said. Cavalry troops laid ambushes along nearly every trail and shot the Viet Cong down as they approached in small groups of twos and threes.

**HELICOPTER-BORNE** units of the U.S. Army's air mobile division swooped into the area under a fog cover that helped hide their positions from the Communists.

The Americans set up blocking positions near Bong Son and 5 to 10 miles north. A third force dug in along a ridge of hills to the east, leaving the Communists with the sea to their backs on the west.



### Airlift to Safety

American soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division climb a ladder to an evacuation helicopter which will return them from patrol along the mountain ridges of Plei Ku to their base camp in South Viet Nam. The Chinook helicopter dropped a rope ladder when it was unable to land.



U.S. SOLDIERS SEEK OUT VIET CONG GUERRILLAS  
One carries a native Montagnard tribesman's bow and arrow and chews on twig in mouth during jungle search.

CHICAGO DAILY NEWS, Friday, May 13, 1966



A street sign from one of Chicago's busiest intersections is erected in An Khe in the Vietnamese Central Highlands by American soldiers. The sign was sent by Mayor Richard Daley. Putting it up next to their

own unit sign are, from left Specialist 4 Jimmy Clay, Sgt. Gerald Bracken, Sgt. Raul Garza, all of Chicago, and Specialist 4 Elmer Larson of suburban Des Plaines. (AP)

Washington Star 15 MAY 1966

## Peasants Say Viet Cong Slew Kidnaped Soldier

SAIGON, (Sunday) (AP)—Ore. He was seized Tuesday near Ban Me Thuot in the central highlands.

Reports received here today said an American serviceman kidnaped near Bong Son had been shot and killed by his guerrilla captors. A second U.S. serviceman reported to have been kidnaped was listed as missing.

He was riding a jeep about 18 miles from Ban Me Thuot when he was stopped by a guerrilla squad and led away, the spokesman said. The jeep later was found.

A U.S. Military spokesman identified the first as Pvt. Theodore R. Vance of Eureka, Calif., and said the military had listed him as missing in action.

The spokesman had no comment on reports that Vance had been slain.

Col. Hal G. Moore, commander of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, sent an entire battalion into the area yesterday, but found no trace of Vance.

According to peasants in the Bong Son area, Vance was taken from a vehicle he was riding, led away and then shot. Sources investigating the incident said the peasants' reports were considered reliable.

Vance, a member of C Company, 1st battalion, 17th Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division, was captured Thursday near Bong Son.

He was taken prisoner as he rode a rented vehicle along Highway 1 in an insecure area.

The military here emphasized that it had no substantiation to the report that Vance had been killed.

The second U.S. soldier kidnaped by guerrillas, was identified as Airman 2nd class Bennie Lee Dexter of Bond.

# Ia Drang Battle Indicates Enemy Can't Win

By RICHARD FRYKLUND  
Star Staff Writer

Since last July, Pentagon officials have been looking for a battle which proves to the enemy in Viet Nam that he cannot win.

Now, on the basis of captured enemy documents, it appears that the fight at Ia Drang valley six months ago may have been that battle.

The enemy used his best troops in overwhelming numbers in an effort to destroy a major allied force. The operation was thoroughly planned and well executed.

And it failed.

Ia Drang proved that the enemy cannot now stage another Dien Bien Phu and win. From the actions of the enemy since Ia Drang, he may understand this, too.

The battle started in mid-October of last year and continued for about six weeks. Reading the Saigon communiques and the news stories of the time, one would conclude that Ia Drang was a big battle, that the allies were pushed around — and little else that was valid.

But a study today of the enemy objectives and actions and the allied response shows that Ia Drang was a key engagement.

The story starts with enemy planning documents.

On Oct. 12, the headquarters of the 32nd North Vietnamese army regiment at Plei Luo Chin, near the Cambodian border in central South Viet Nam, completed plans to ambush South Vietnamese army units near the outpost of Plei Me.

The two villages are important. Plei Luo Chin is one mile from the unmarked Cambodian border, astride a jungle trail leading across the border and on the Ia Drang (pronounced Yah Drang) River — which is itself a trail in and out of Cambodia. Plei Luo Chin controls the movement of men and equipment across the border.

Before the battle, the South Vietnamese side knew only that the general area was a long-time Viet Cong base. Government forces had never been able to penetrate within 15 miles of the headquarters village.

Plei Me, about 22 miles due east, is the site of an American Army Special Forces camp which tries to keep track of movements along the trails in that area.

The existence of the camp and another nearby at the village of Duc Co makes it difficult for the enemy to move from Cambodia to the highlands

battlegrounds in the Pleiku area, about 35 miles northwest of the 32nd Regiment's headquarters.

The broad enemy plan was to introduce three North Vietnamese regiments (adding up to a full division and its support, about 10,000 men) to the classical Viet Cong tactic of attack and ambush and try out the Americans.

The ambush itself was the assignment of the 32nd Regiment.

To lure in some allied soldiers for the kill, another regiment, the 33rd, was ordered to surround and attack the Plei Me Special Forces camp.

The third regiment, the 66th, was to hang back waiting to see if the allies could be brought into a major battle on ground favorable to the Communists.

The planning was thoroughly professional by American Army standards. For instance, one captured document told the 32nd Regiment to be prepared to ambush an allied relief force consisting of "one government army battle group and one armored battle group with one of two U.S. battalions in reserve."

They were exactly right about the government forces and almost right about the Americans.

The fighting started on Oct. 20.

## Standoff

The enemy tactics in surrounding Plei Me were successful. The relief column did come down the road, as predicted, and was ambushed.

The South Vietnamese commander was a good, experienced man, however, and he had a counter-ambush plan. When he ran into the first shots, he moved his troops far off the road and called for air and land reinforcements.

That action became a three-day standoff.

On Oct. 24 the government troops, plus elements of the American First Cavalry Division, the "airmobile division," reached Plei Me and the siege ended.

So far, it looked like any one of hundreds of similar engagements. Our side thought it was a Viet Cong attack—there was no intelligence clue that these were North Vietnamese regular army units supported by Viet Cong soldiers.

As usual, the Viet Cong did most of the dirty work while the North Vietnamese regiments saved themselves for the big battle.

The enemy pulled out of the Plei Me area toward the southeast, hoping the allied forces would follow. Enemy planners had two things in mind:

If nothing better, it would lure the allies into the jungle and give the Viet Cong rear guard a chance to cut them up.

But second, it would distract the allies while preparations were completed for the real battle on enemy grounds—the Ia Drang river valley.

## Hospital Set Up

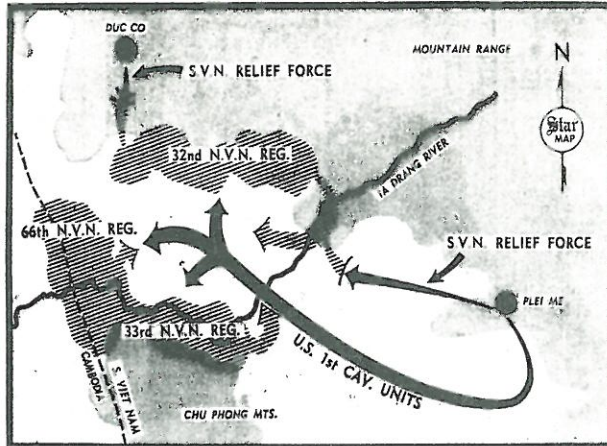
Expecting American helicopter assaults, the enemy division put tall poles in every jungle clearing except the few that would provide good ambushes. Troops dug in and weapons and supplies were brought from inside Cambodia.

The enemy even set up a field hospital, completely equipped and ready for the wounded.

Our troops extended their search in all directions, however, and eventually ran into evidence that the enemy was preparing for a battle (allied troops found the hospital) as well as a target for an air cavalry attack (a captured map showing a supply base on the Cambodian border).

So the First Cavalry swung westward into the Ia Drang Valley.

From Nov. 2 to Nov. 11 there was sharp fighting between two



The historic battle of Ia Drang Valley was a well-laid trap for the allied forces. But when the trap was sprung, the enemy still could not win.

enemy regiments, the 32nd and 33rd, and part of one brigade of the First Cavalry division, about 1,800 men.

The First Cavalry soldiers kept pushing toward the Cambodian border despite their casualties, still not knowing what they were in for.

## Main Battle

By Nov. 16 it obviously was an important battle — but the communiques to the press in Saigon failed to show that. They talked about the presence of an "estimated North Vietnamese regiment" and action between platoons (25 to 45 men) and companies (50 to 100).

This actually was the beginning of the main battle, and the American soldiers were moving into a well-laid trap. The extent could have been known on Nov. 1 when the Americans moved close enough to Cambodia to engage the 66th Regiment, but no one realized it at the time.

There were still about 1,800 Americans against about 10,000 North Vietnamese.

Our side called for help, and relief columns were sent from Duc Co and Plei Me. The American units in the battle began to look for more favorable terrain.

(Associated Press dispatches interpreted that move as a "pull out.")

Meanwhile, the enemy peeled off one element of the 32nd

Regiment to intercept the relief from Duc Co and another to block the relief coming in from Plei Me. Both enemy actions were successful. The relief never arrived.

## Classical Maneuver

Then the enemy proceeded to execute a classical military maneuver known as "double envelopment."

The 66th Regiment stayed along the Cambodian border, acting as an anvil. Two looping blows struck out behind the Americans, one from the 32nd Regiment north of the Americans, the other from the 33rd Regiment south of them.

During the several days it took to execute the maneuver, the Saigon communiques reported "sporadic fire," and encounters with an army "battalion" (500 men).

(The AP talked of "depleted" American forces, units "virtually wiped out" and "severe" losses.)

Meanwhile, on Nov. 20, Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Viet Nam, called the battle an "unprecedented victory."

He was wrong at that stage. He had counted enemy casualties and American losses with fair accuracy, but he did not know about the neat double

envelopment that was still going on around his troops.

By Nov. 26 the enemy had virtually completed his encirclement of the Americans but was not scoring the way his plans called for.

## Tide Shifts

The First Cavalry was rotating units in and out of the Ia Drang valley by helicopter and was killing and capturing at a favorable ratio. Mobility and firepower was equalizing the fight. Air power was shifting the scales to the allied side.

The North Vietnamese division had to call for help, too.

North Viet Nam lacks the mobility of our forces, but the enemy army could order its units all over South Viet Nam to attack locally in an effort to keep the First Cavalry from getting significant reinforcements.

The enemy calculation was a good one. One of the attacks, at the Michelin rubber plantation, resulted in an enemy victory, and others made it impossible for the allies to send help to the Ia Drang valley.

The reporters, meanwhile, turned their attention from Ia Drang to the other engagements.

So did the Saigon communiques.

As a result, the story dropped off the American front pages when the outcome was still in doubt. One cannot tell yet from news stories or official announcements who won.

## Documents Tell Story

If the First Cavalry had not captured great numbers of enemy documents, Ia Drang probably would go down in history as a standoff or an American defeat.

The Americans did lose 200 dead and 500 wounded; but the enemy lost 1,285 dead by our body count, 3,000 "casualties" (both dead and wounded) by North Vietnamese admission and up to 5,000 by some American estimates.

The three North Vietnamese regiments had to be taken out of combat and reorganized. What the battle proved, in retrospect, is, first, that American technology, skillfully applied, can overcome a first-class enemy, even in a jungle war.

Second, it proved that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese armies combined do not have the equipment and men needed to win a military victory or even win a big battle. Their only hope is for political success.

After the battle, the enemy commander, North Vietnamese Gen. Bay Quan, told reporters in Cambodia that, "I took 3,000 casualties, but I learned how to fight the Americans."

## Lesson for Enemy

What he learned may be: Don't stand up and fight them.

For in the half year since Ia Drang, the enemy has not chosen to stand and fight one large battle.

He has let the allied forces sweep through his previously secure areas and overrun his rear guard and his bases. He may be looking more to riots and disruption than to battle for his future successes.

Ia Drang actually dragged on for an inconclusive several weeks after the double envelopment was completed on Nov. 26. The enemy found he could not make progress even against the trapped Americans, however, so his regiments began to back into the jungle.

The First Cavalry could not keep steady contact and it was needed elsewhere, so it flew off to other battles.

The enemy was left with the battlefield but not, in military parlance, in control of the battlefield.

As soon as Westmoreland could spare the troops, other Americans were sent back into the area to search and destroy. The enemy 32nd Regiment is still there, but it cannot now keep a secure, well-supplied base on the Vietnamese side of the border.

The regiment must keep on the move, or stay in Cambodia.

## Good Jungle Fighters

So North Viet Nam did lose a base as a result of its well-planned, well-executed battle.

The United States lost some men, but penetrated an enemy base, learned some details of the use of the Cambodian sanctuary by the enemy, confirmed the value of air mobility in battle and perhaps proved even to the enemy's satisfaction that he cannot win.

The American public can learn from the battle, too.

It can be confident that American soldiers can fight as well as any in the Asian jungle.

It can also keep in mind that this war, unlike others, has no front that one side obviously is holding while the other pushes. The immediate battle reports simply do not tell a clear story.

It has taken a lengthy analysis of enemy documents and allied actions to show that Ia Drang was the most important battle so far in Viet Nam.