

FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION



UNITS



UNIT CRESTS



1st Brigade



2d Brigade



3d Brigade



Division Artillery



Support Command



Headquarters and Headquarters Company



1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry



1st Aviation Battalion



121st Signal Battalion



1st Medical Battalion



1st Supply & Transportation Battalion



1st Engineer Battalion



701st Maintenance Battalion



1st Battalion, 5th Artillery



8th Battalion, 6th Artillery



1st Battalion, 7th Artillery



2d Battalion, 33d Artillery



1st & 2d Battalions, 2d Infantry



1st & 2d Battalions, 16th Infantry



1st & 2d Battalions, 18th Infantry



1st Battalion, 26th Infantry



1st & 2d Battalions, 28th Infantry



HEADQUARTERS & HEADQUARTERS COMPANY





COL William B. Caldwell III
1st Brigade Commander



1ST BRIGADE ACE OF SPADE

The Division's 1st Brigade stationed at the Division's "outpost" at Phuoc Vinh, marked almost two years in Vietnam with success after success.

On September 21, 1965, the 1st Brigade sailed from San Francisco on board the USNS Mann and on October 10, 1965 troops of the Brigade landed in the Republic of Vietnam.

These units were: Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade; 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry; and 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry. Also with the 1st Brigade elements were the 121st Signal Battalion; Headquarters Company, 1st Infantry Division; B Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry; D Company, 701st Maintenance Battalion; D Company, 1st Medical Battalion; and an element of the 1st Supply and Transportation Battalion. Six days later, the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry arrived in Vietnam.

The 26th Infantry *Blue Spaders* began their first major combat mission only nine days after arriving. Their mission was road security between Saigon and Phuoc Vinh.

During the remaining months of 1965, the 1st Brigade units constructed and reinforced their base camp, conducted saturation patrols, secured highways, and went out on search and destroy missions.

On February 24, 1966, the 1st Brigade recorded its first major engagement as it closed with and slashed the Viet Cong 500 Dong Nai Battalion and one battalion each of the 271st and 273d Viet Cong Regiments. It was at Tan Binh during Operation ROLLING STONE.

The Brigade command post was positioned just north of the hostile village alongside Route 2A. Within the Brigade perimeter were elements of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry; 1st Battalion, 5th Artillery; B Troop, 1st

Squadron, 4th Cavalry; and B Company, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry. The attack began in the early morning hours of February 24 and raged until 0645 hours as the men of the 1st Brigade cut down enemy forces attacking from three directions in groups of 30 and 40. These attacks were repulsed by intense small arms, mortar and artillery fire (often, the artillery leveled its tubes and blasted directly into the enemy ranks.) The enemy left 142 dead comrades and 15 wounded on the battlefield.

Next came Operation BIRMINGHAM during which 1st Brigade units joined other 1st Infantry Division elements as they cut deep into War Zone C.

During this operation the 1st Brigade's 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry recorded a major encounter.

On April 30 the 1st of the 2d was advancing north along the Rach Cai Bac river. As they marched, they destroyed numerous enemy supply caches. At noon on the 30th, following a morning of slowly building resistance, the Battalion made contact with an enemy battalion lying in ambush northeast of the village of Lo Go.

The VC were in an "L" shaped ambush and as they fired across the Ben Go river the 1st of the 2d cut them down. The battle resulted in 54 VC killed.

On June 9, the 1st Brigade was committed to Operation EL PASO II to exploit a recent successful battle of the 3d Brigade.

Shortly before noon on July 9, on the road between Minh Thanh and An Loc, B Company, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry along with B and C Troops of the 4th Cavalry locked with the Viet Cong 272d Regiment in a bloody battle that cost the enemy 239 soldiers.

The 1st Brigade again saw a major action during Operation AMARILLO, a resupply security operation.

On August 25, an element of C Company, 1st Battalion of the 2d Infantry came onto the main base camp of the infamous Phu Loi Battalion. A fierce battle ensued.

Units of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry; 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry; 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry; 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry; and the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry rushed into the battle that raged into the following day. The enemy lost 171 men. It was the 26th Infantry that was credited with "breaking the enemies back" in the battle of August 25-26. It became known as the BATTLE OF BONG TRANG.

On October 28, 1966, during Operation SHENANDOAH 1st Brigade units along with supporting elements closed in on a suspected enemy concentration southeast of Minh Thanh. Large volumes of air and artillery firepower were rained on the enemy as he desperately sought to escape the trap. The Viet Cong bounced from one US unit to another. On October 29, the 26th Infantry searched the battlefield and uncovered a large base camp in which were 74 enemy dead.

In November, the 1st Brigade was committed to Operation ATTLEBORO. The brigade had earlier released its 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, which on November 8 made contact with and killed 484 Viet Cong. Joining the operation on November 10 the 1st Brigade conducted extensive search and destroy missions and was responsible for the capture of 1,320 tons of rice.

The 1st Brigade initiated the new year by participating in Operations CEDAR FALLS, TUCSON, and JUNCTION CITY. The most

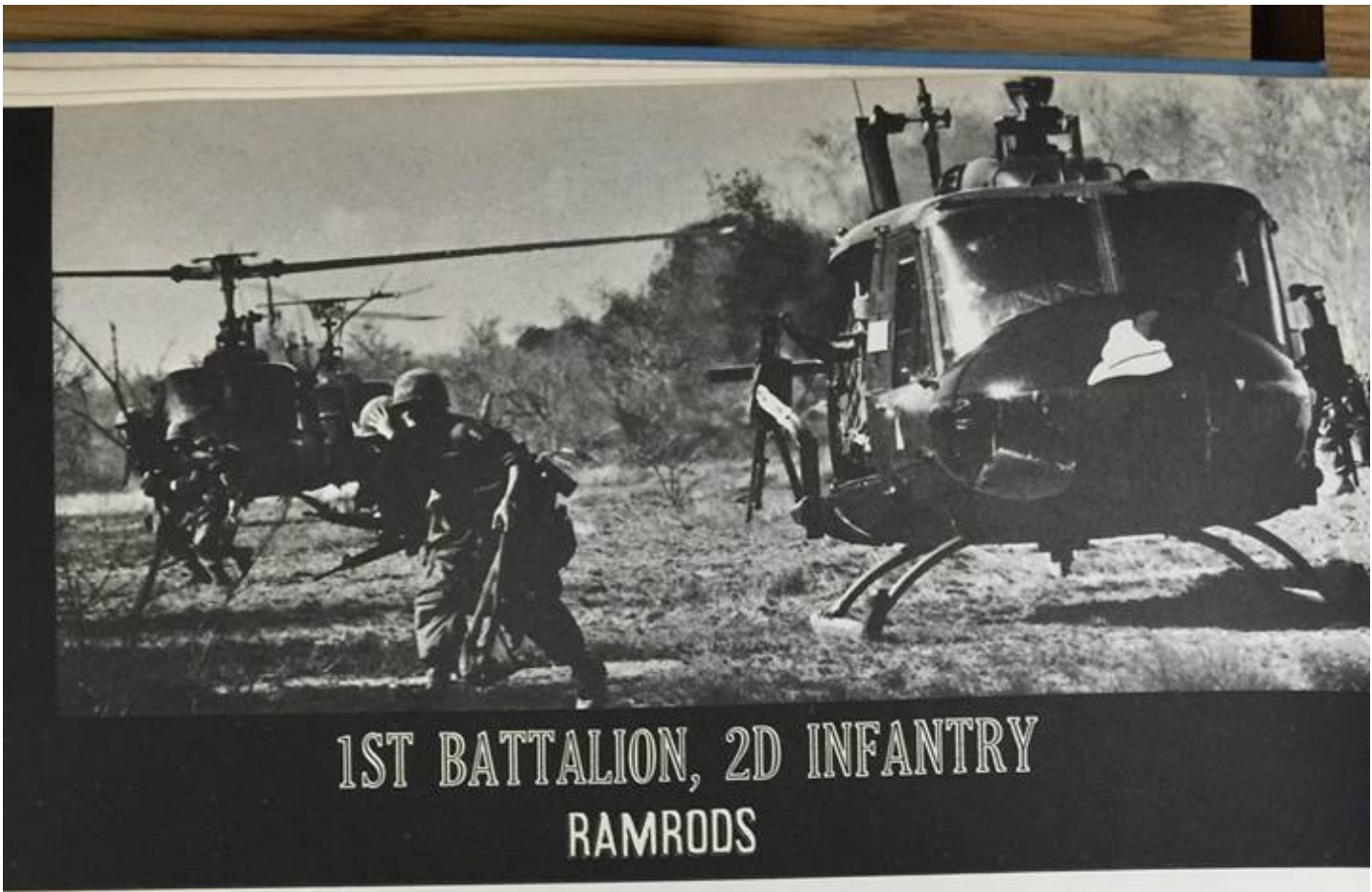


spectacular success in JUNCTION CITY occurred when the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry and the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry smashed an all out assault by the Viet Cong 9th Division's 271st Regiment. It was called the BATTLE OF AP GU and took place between March 31 and April 1, 1967. The major portion of the fighting occurred on the latter day. Under the command of LTC Alexander M. Haig, Jr., the *Blue Spaders* killed 609 vc while losing only 10 men.



BRIGADE COMMANDERS

- July 1965—Present
- COL Stanley F. Parr
..... Jul 1965—Jan 1966
- LTC Steve F. Phillips, Jr
..... Jan 1966—Feb 1966
- COL Edgar N. Glotzbach
..... Feb 1966—May 1966
- LTC Paul M. Fisher
..... May 1966—Jun 1966
- COL Sidney B. Berry, Jr
..... Jun 1966—Feb 1967
- COL William B. Caldwell III
..... Feb 1967 — Present



1ST BATTALION, 2D INFANTRY RAMRODS

The men of the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry left the United States aboard the USNS Blatchford on September 25, 1965. They landed at Vung Tau on October 16. The *Ramrods* immediately set out to establish their base camp which was to be part of the 1st Brigade located near the village of Phuoc Vinh, some 35 miles northeast of Saigon.

On January 11, 1966, the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry played a major part in the capture of more than 1,500 tons of rice during Operation BLUE BOY. In early February, the *Ramrods* twisted and hacked their way through nearly five miles of dense jungle to successfully complete their role in Operation QUICK KICK IV.

On March 20, the Battalion joined other elements of the BIG RED ONE, as well as Australian and New Zealand soldiers, in a big sweep in Phouc Tuy Province. The operation became known as Operation ABILENE. C Company in a "stay-behind" ambush, killed five Viet Cong when the enemy turned up in an area evacuated by the Battalion the previous day.

During April and May, the *Ramrods* played a key role in Operation BIRMINGHAM, conducted in Tay Ninh Province, some 70 miles northwest of Saigon. The infantrymen cut off a major VC supply route in War Zone C. Moving north for four days through a continuous chain of camps and supply areas, the *Ramrods* seized more than 500 tons of rice; 100 tons of salt, and 400 gallons of cooking oil as well as numerous military items and several dozen base camps.

On April 30, near the village of Lo Go, the *Ramrods* came under heavy machinegun and small arms fire from the western side of the

Rach (River) Ben Go and simultaneously made heavy contact with a Viet Cong force on the eastern side.

The Battalion turned its machineguns, grenade launchers and rifle fire on the attackers. The firing from the west ceased. Then they turned their attention to the force on the eastern bank. During the fierce battle which followed, the American unit was forced to fight its way out of a partial encirclement. Fifty-four Viet Cong were killed in the BATTLE OF LO GO.

On May 4, the Battalion conducted its first night tactical march, covering a distance of 11 miles after dark and surrounding a VC village near Ben Cui. The VC were reported to be using the hamlet as a sanctuary by night and leaving at the first light of day. At the crack of dawn, the VC cadre in the village walked out with their weapons. All were killed, and the village was later evacuated by the Province Chief. On May 31, a similar operation netted three VC and sunk two sampans at Phouc Hoa, a village six miles south of Phuoc Vinh.

One of the most violent actions of the war took place on July 9 near the Minh Thanh rubber plantation. A task force composed of B Company, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry and B and C Troops, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry was attacked by the 272d VC Regiment. The action, part of Operation EL PASO II, was bitter and short. It began shortly before noon and was over three hours later when the VC broke contact. This engagement later became known as the BATTLE OF MINH THANH ROAD and 239 Viet Cong were killed by the BIG RED ONE soldiers.

Throughout May, June, and July, the *Ramrods* were used as the "fire brigade" of the

1st Infantry Division; on four different occasions, they were deployed to distant areas on a notice of one hour or less. These moves were made in counter-action to VC operations during the monsoon offensive, and were a severe test to the Battalion's flexibility and stamina; the men who wore the distinctive black scarves passed the test brilliantly.

On August 25, during Operation AMARILLO, the Battalion participated in the BATTLE OF BONG TRANG against the main force VC Phu Loi Battalion. The savage fight ended with 171 VC killed.

September found the Battalion on security missions at Phu Loi, Long Binh, and Lai Khe. On October 1, a search-and-destroy operation, LITTLE ROCK, was conducted near the Village of Binh My along Route 16. The rest of October and early November were spent securing the 1st Brigade's forward base at Quan Loi.

Then came Operation ATTLEBORO (November 5-25), conducted in Tay Ninh Province, in which the *Ramrods* uncovered numerous enemy base camps and captured large quantities of vital enemy supplies. During Operation CEDAR FALLS (January 8-26, 1967), the Battalion was deep in the infamous Iron Triangle, uncovering numerous supply cache's and base camps.

On February 1, the *Ramrods* returned to Minh Thanh, where they had been in late December, to again provide security.

On February 22, 1967, the largest American offensive of the Vietnam war was begun—Operation JUNCTION CITY, conducted in War Zone C. The *Ramrods* were among the several unit's which were helilifted into northern Tay Ninh Province to form a horseshoe around



a 250 square mile area. In the days to follow, the Battalion uncovered extensive vc base camps and supply areas, then went on to secure Route 246 in Binh Long Province from An Loc to the border of Tay Ninh marked by the Saigon River; their area of responsibility was subsequently expanded and the *Ramrods* were mortared on two occasions and made minor contact almost daily. JUNCTION CITY ended on April 15.

In late April, the men of the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry, moved out on Operation MANHATTAN, conducted just northwest of the Iron Triangle. The *Ramrod* Battalion was the first to land in the area as the action began.

BATTALION COMMANDERS

July 1965—Present

LTC Steve F. Phillips, Jr.
 Jul 1965— Mar 1966
 MAJ Ronald T. Theiss
 Mar 1966—Apr 1966
 LTC Richard L. Prillaman
 Apr 1966—Oct 1966
 LTC Douglas A. Huff
 Oct 1966—Nov 1966
 LTC William C. Simpson
 Nov 1966 — Present



1ST BATTALION, 26TH INFANTRY BLUE SPADERS

The men of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry *Blue Spaders* left the United States on September 25, 1965, aboard the USNS Blatchford. Along with rest of the Division Artillery Task Force, the *Blue Spaders* landed at Vung Tau on October 16.

The unit was transported to Bien Hoa and, then, on October 22, moved on Operation TEA KETTLE to Phuoc Vinh, the wilderness site of the future 1st Brigade base camp.

The *Blue Spaders* began their first major combat mission nine days after they arrived at Phuoc Vinh: Operation RED BALL I, a road security operation requiring infantry battalions to secure assigned portions of the 45-mile stretch of dirt road connecting Phuoc Vinh and Saigon.

The unit went to Vo Dat on November 23 on Operation NEW LIFE 65, an effort to secure the fifth largest rice-producing area in Vietnam.

On December 28, the 26th Infantry was securing a segment of vital Highway 13 during Operation RED BALL IV, a resupply mission.

On January 10, 1966, the *Blue Spaders* began a series of search and destroy operations in the vicinity of their Phuoc Vinh base camp. By the end of this series of missions on February 9, the infantry unit was credited with the largest tonnage of captured food stores in the history of the Vietnam war.

On February 24, the "Spaders" participated in the BATTLE OF TAN BINH, a fierce engagement in which three Viet Cong battalions repeatedly threw themselves at the 1st Brigade area at Tan Binh, some seven miles south of Phuoc Vinh.

The battle marked the first time that VC main forces had elected to attack a major US unit in the field in the III Corps area; it re-

sulted in a striking defeat for the enemy.

From March 9-22, the "Spaders" were on Operation SILVER CITY, a massive search and destroy mission undertaken by the reinforced 1st Brigade and conducted jointly with the 173d Airborne Brigade.

In May, Operation LAM SON, a joint US-ARVN revolutionary development effort began with the *Blue Spaders* conducting Medical Civic Action Programs (MEDCAP), saturation patrolling and search and destroy operations in the area of Phu Loi.

In late July, the "Spaders" conducted search and destroy operations and secured a convoy route of Binh Duong Province on Operation CEDAR RAPIDS.

In Binh Long Province, the infantrymen conducted search and clear operations on Operation SPRINGFIELD II (July 27-August 1, 1966) and patrols on EVANSVILLE (August 5-15, 1966).

They conducted search and destroy missions in Binh Duong Province on Operations GAL-LUP (August 16-19, 1966) and CASTINE (August 20-22, 1966).

Operation AMARILLO began on August 23. On August 25, in a full day and night of savage fighting, the *Blue Spaders* along with the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry; 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry; the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry; and A and C Troops of the 1st squadron, 4th Cavalry, engaged the crack main force Phu Loi Battalion. The BATTLE OF BONG TRANG was a demonstration of the ability of BIG RED ONE troops to obtain a victory against seemingly overwhelming odds as they fought under difficult conditions in the adverse terrain of a VC base camp located in heavy jungle about four miles east of Lai Khe and 25 miles north of

Saigon on Highway 16. For his superb leadership in this battle, LTC Paul F. Gorman, battalion commander, was presented the Distinguished Service Cross by President Lyndon B. Johnson during the Commander-In-Chief's visit to Vietnam in October 1966.

On October 28, during Operation SHEN-ANDOH, the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry along with other BIG RED ONE units inflicted a grave defeat on the VC in the BATTLE OF CAM XE, fought east of the Cam Xe River and west of Highway 13.

In November on Operation ATTLEBORO, the *Blue Spaders* together with other Division units searched though War Zone C for the 9th VC Division. The 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry helped to capture some 1,136 tons of rice and nine enemy base camps in the operation conducted in Tay Ninh Province.

In late November and early December, the "Spaders" participated in Operation BISMARCK whose mission was to secure Highway 16 from Di An to Phuoc Vinh. During this 10 day operation, the unit uncovered a large VC complex.

Operation CEDAR FALLS was initiated on January 8, 1967, with a seal and search of the VC sympathetic village of Ben Suc. The raid was spearheaded by the *Blue Spaders* with Co A, 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry attached under the control of the 2d Brigade. It was during this raid that the unit captured a VC professor of mathematics educated at the University of Peking. Afterwards, the "Spaders" continued to participate in CEDAR FALLS, a multi-division operation conducted in the Iron Triangle, some 20 miles north of Saigon.

Operation JUNCTION CITY began on February 22, in War Zone C some 65 miles northwest



of Saigon. Its aim was the destruction of vc installations. On April 1, one day after the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, again under the 2d Brigade, had made an air assault into an area some 25 miles northeast of Tay Ninh City near the village of Ap Gu, the "Spaders" smashed an all-out assault by the 9th vc Division's 271st Regiment. At the end of the three and a half hour BATTLE OF AP GU, the "Spaders" counted 609 enemy dead.

BATTALION COMMANDERS

- July 1965—Present
- LTC Erskine Smith
..... Jul 1965—May 1966
- MAJ Henry J. Weresynski
..... May 1966—Jun 1966
- LTC Paul F. Gorman
..... Jun 1966—Nov 1966
- LTC Alexander M. Haig, Jr
..... Nov 1966—Apr 1967
- LTC Joseph H. Hoffman, Jr
..... Apr 1967 — Present





1ST BATTALION, 28TH INFANTRY BLACK LIONS

The 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry *Black Lions* arrived in Vietnam on October 9, 1965, aboard the USNS Mann. A few days later, the Battalion moved to its base camp at Phuoc Vinh and began the task of hacking a camp site out of the jungle. By the end of 1965, the unit had entrenched itself in a highly fortified base camp and had gained valuable experience at counter-insurgency warfare.

Early in January 1966, the Battalion received notice to prepare for Operations CRIMP and BUCKSKIN. The *Black Lions* moved out on January 7 for their first major operation of the year. During this operation, which was to last almost a month, the *Black Lions* were attached to the 3d Brigade for the rugged mission of sweeping an area in Tay Ninh Province bordering the infamous Iron Triangle. The 25th Division was scheduled to move into the area and thus a major part of the mission was to clear the area for them.

Although no pitched battles were fought on this operation, many tunnel and trench complexes were found and large stores of vc supplies discovered and destroyed. While engaged in Operation BUCKSKIN on January 15, 1966, LTC Robert Haldane, Battalion Commander, distinguished himself by heroic actions while in conflict with a hostile force. For these actions, he was awarded the Silver Star.

When not engaged in extended field problems, the Battalion conducted "Red Ball" clearing projects for convoys carrying essential supplies from Saigon to its base camp. Constantly on the move, and ever alert for signs of the enemy, these "Red Ball" clearings were often the most wearisome operations that the Battalion engaged in.

During Operations YORK and LIGHT II, from late March to early April, a need was realized for the existence of an additional rifle company to supplement and reinforce the regular line companies. The existence of this provisional force was instrumental in providing both security and tactical support, allowing the line companies to devote far greater time to completely tactical operations.

The first large operation that the Battalion was engaged in during the year was Operation BIRMINGHAM which was a thrust into the heart of a Viet Cong stronghold in Tay Ninh Province. As the Battalion moved through the heavy foliage and dense jungle, they were successful in uncovering extensive Viet Cong base camps, and heavily entrenched defensive positions, destroying all and depriving the enemy of valuable sources of supply and refuge. On May 15, the *Black Lions* returned to their base camp, ending the largest operation it had engaged in up until that time.

During Operation ADELAIDE, the Battalion became engaged in a fierce firefight on June 2 when the 1st, 2d, and 3d Platoons of A Company encountered a heavily entrenched and fortified Viet Cong bunker and trench complex, and began receiving a heavy volume of insurgent fire. Under a hail of enemy fire, the men of A Company moved through the jungle, firing and throwing hand grenades. The situation was made more difficult when the vc began to lob mortars into the *Black Lion's* positions. After hours of continuous fighting, armored personnel carriers (APC) from the 4th Cavalry came crashing through the jungle, began laying down a heavy base of fire with 50 caliber machineguns and caused the Viet Cong to break contact.

For their heroic actions on this date, Privates First Class Robert Briggs and Donnier R. Barnes were awarded the Silver Star Medal.

In late June, the Battalion was committed to Operation EL PASO and on the 26th of that month the *Black Lions* encountered a highly entrenched enemy force. With the support of US gunships and jet fighters, the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry succeeded in driving the vc from their village fortress.

Early July found the Battalion engaging in two firefights while assisting sister units of the BIG RED ONE. On the night of July 2, mortar rounds were heard landing in a zone approximately one mile away at the camp of the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry. The *Black Lions* were placed on immediate alert to go to the aid of this unit, but no call was received during the night. Early the next morning, heavy firing was heard in the direction of the other unit. The 28th immediately formed up and started for the relief of their comrades, who, it was learned, were under heavy attack from a large Viet Cong force.

For over two hours, they pushed through dense jungle. As they approached their destination, they began encountering dead Viet Cong. As the *Black Lions* stepped over the scores of dead insurgents, they were greeted by the battleweary, but highly successful 18th Infantry *Vanguards*. This engagement became known as the BATTLE OF HO KRIGNOU and accounted for 78 vc killed. On July 9, operating out of Quan Loi, the Battalion was placed as ready reaction force (RRF) for an expected ambush of the 4th Cavalry as that unit moved down Highway 13. As soon as the ambush materialized, the *Black Lions* were helilifted into the battle area. They participated in this



fierce battle which proved to be a decisive victory for US forces.

Between August and November the men of A Company took time out from combat operations to move a statue of the Madonna from the village of An Linh One, which had been deserted because of VC terrorism, to the village of An Linh Four. It was only one example of the humanitarian projects carried out by the Battalion during the year.

On November 5, the entire 1st Infantry Division was plunged into action in Tay Ninh Province, where embattled elements of the 25th Division were fighting two regiments of Viet Cong.

At daybreak on the morning of the 8th, the listening posts and ambush patrols were coming in and the *Black Lions* conducted a recon-by-fire around the perimeter. As the recon-by-fire moved along the northern perimeter from east to west two trip flares went off and many Viet Cong weapons began firing into the

perimeter from the north and northeast. Air and artillery support were immediately requested from Brigade. By 1100 hours the fight had been reduced to automatic weapons and sniper fire, as the badly beaten Viet Cong began to withdraw, leaving the battlefield littered with bodies, equipment and weapons. The Battalion Commander, LTC Jack G. Whitted and SP4 Kirk James each received the Distinguished Service Cross for heroic action in this engagement. It was to become known as the BATTLE OF AP CHA DO and 484 VC were killed. On the 11th of November, at Dau Tieng, over 100 awards for valor were presented to the victorious *Black Lions* in a colorful awards ceremony by the Division Commanding General MG William E. DePuy.

The Battalion celebrated Christmas in their base camp with another outstanding meal and Christmas party. Guests of honor included several Vietnamese children from a nearby orphanage and Army Chief of Staff GEN Harold

K. Johnson, who presented the nation's second highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross to the newly promoted SGT Kirk James for his heroic actions and also to LTC Jack G. Whitted for his great leadership.

During the early months of 1967, the Battalion participated in Operations CEDAR FALLS, TUCSON, and JUNCTION CITY, and in late April began participation in Operation MANHATTAN.

BATTALION COMMANDERS

July 1965—Present

LTC Robert Haldane
 Jul 1965—Aug 1966
 LTC Jack G. Whitted
 Aug 1966—Feb 1967
 LTC Stanley J. Kuick
 Feb 1967—Present