

## Deployment to Vietnam

On Monday, the 12th of July 1965, newspapers all over the world headlined the arrival of the first large force of combat infantrymen from the United States in the Republic of Vietnam. Morning papers from New York to San Francisco carried radio photos and on-the-spot accounts of the landing of American troops at Cam Ranh Bay. The 2nd Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division had arrived.

The brigade's destination had not been released to the public until the day of its arrival at Cam Ranh Bay. In fact, it was not until the ship was at sea that the troops were officially informed that the brigade was bound for Vietnam. But, long before Lt. Col. Edgar N. Glotzbach, the brigade's executive officer, announced their destination over the ship's public address system, everyone knew that it was to be Southeast Asia, and most likely Vietnam.

At the beginning of 1965 there was no indi-

cation that the brigade might be deployed overseas. During the months of January, February, and March, the brigade participated in rigorous training exercises at Fort Riley, Kansas, its home. At this time the brigade was also designated as the division's Rapid Reaction Force. In this capacity the brigade prepared plans and conducted practice for a rapid movement by land or air to any point in the world where US troops might be required on short notice.

This training was to prove invaluable when the brigade commander, Colonel James E. Simmons, was notified on Easter Sunday, 18 April 1965, that the 2nd Brigade had been selected to be the first US Army ground force to deploy from the continental United States to fight in Vietnam. The remainder of the month of April and the first three weeks of May were spent in detailed planning. As the brigade was to be deployed as an independent unit, plans and recommendations were made for augmenting the brigade headquarters with extra personnel and equipment to assist in carrying out the independent mission.

On 29 May 1965, the organization of the Brigade Task Force was established as follows: The 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, commanded by Lt Col Lloyd L. Burke; The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, commanded by Lt Col Norman J. Salisbury; 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry, commanded by Lt Col John H. Hougren; 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery (105mm towed), with C Battery, 8th Battalion, 6th Artillery (155mm towed) attached, commanded by Lt Col John H. Fye III; B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion; C Company, 1st Medical Battalion; B Company, 701st Maintenance; a detachment from the 1st Supply and Transport Battalion; the 50th Military Intelligence Detachment; an RRU (radio security) detachment; the 2nd Platoon of the 1st Military Police Company; 2nd Platoon, Company B, 121st Signal Battalion; and a complement of eight light observation helicopters, their pilots, and support personnel.

This composition would enable the brigade to act on its own with a minimum of support from other units. It was, in fact, a division on a much smaller scale.

In early June the brigade loaded equipment on flat cars at Fort Riley for shipment to the West Coast. During this period of planning, preparation and loading, the brigade received the full support of the remainder of the 1st Division. Personnel replacements were drawn from all units of the division. Brigade equipment was replaced or repaired from division resources; and, division units assisted in the control, packing, and loading of the Brigade Task Force.



New M35A-1 trucks are loaded aboard flat cars at Fort Riley for shipment to the West Coast.



Division personnel assisted the brigade in the move.



121st Signal van is loaded at Camp Whiteside, Fort Riley.





Troops of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry take a break before boarding aircraft for the flight to San Francisco International Airport.



Manhattan Airport, Manhattan, Kansas. First step on the road to Vietnam for the Vanguards.



Vanguards flew Trans-International from Kansas to the West Coast.

On the 21st of June the brigade's personnel departed by a combination of air and rail transport for the Oakland Army Terminal. Those personnel who made the 2000 mile trip by Trans-International Airlines enjoyed the attention of attractive and efficient stewardesses. Arriving at San Francisco International Airport the troops, armed with rifles and grenade launchers and in full combat gear, marched through the air terminal. Waiting buses carried them along the Bayshore Freeway to the Army Terminal and the Naval dock facilities in Oakland. Neither the troops arriving by air or those by rail met with the crowds of "Vietniks" and anti-war demonstrators who met later troop movements. Only a few unshaven individuals were on hand to protest the departure.



Brigadier General Randolph Dickens, Assistant Division Commander, spoke to Company A, of the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry before they departed from Camp Whiteside.

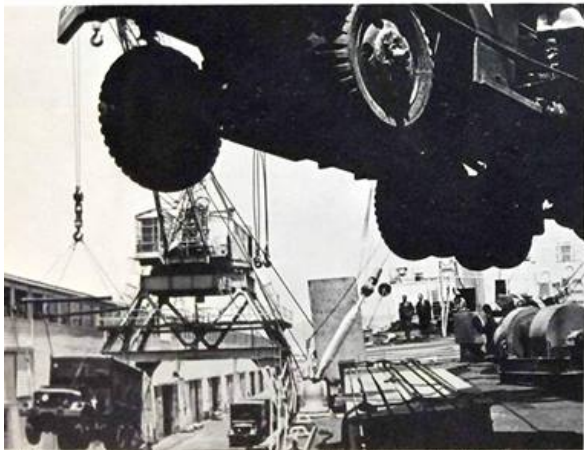


Company C, 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry prior to boarding the Union Pacific at Fort Riley.





The USNS Gordon transported all 3900 personnel of the brigade, except for the advance party which departed by air from Fort Riley on the 20th of June. The brigade's equipment was loaded on three other ships which departed a few days after the Gordon.



Lt Col Salisbury, Lt Col Burke, Capt Aldrich, Capt Liddle and Sgt Maj Donavon watch the loading.

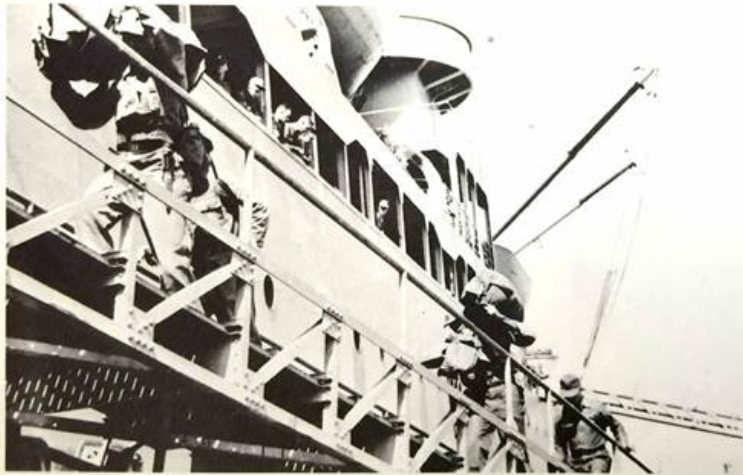


The brigade's vehicles were loaded aboard freighters at the Oakland Army Terminal.

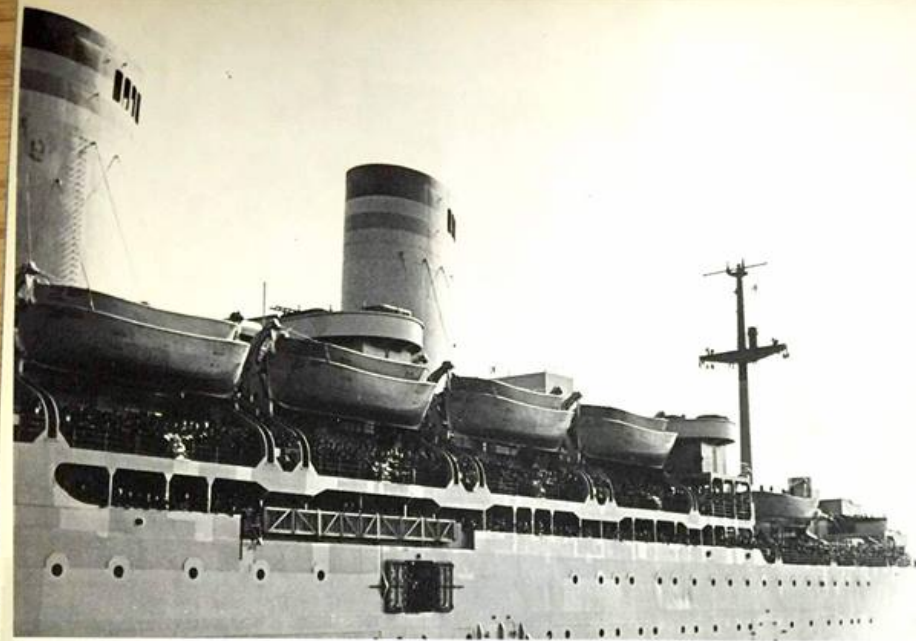
Carrying weapons and duffel bags, the troops boarded the USNS Gordon.



The 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, waited its turn to board the troop ship. San Francisco Bay bridge in the background.







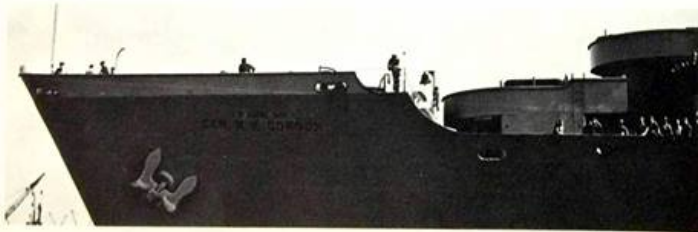
Troops of the 2nd Brigade Task Force lined the deck of the USNS Gordon as the ship pulled out of Oakland Army Terminal enroute to Vietnam, 25 June 1965.

The Gordon sailed from San Francisco on 25 June and began the nearly three week trip across the Pacific to Vietnam. It was shortly after departure that all personnel were informed of their ultimate destination: Vietnam.

Daily briefings were conducted at sea. The brigade's assigned mission was to establish a defense of the US logistical complex being constructed at Qui Nhon, a small port city on the east central coast of Vietnam. This was to be accomplished with two infantry battalions. A third infantry battalion was to be stationed at Cam Ranh Bay, south of Qui Nhon.

Shipboard activities soon became routine. Speculation about what the unit would meet when it landed was the favorite topic of conversation. Because of the crowded conditions aboard the Gordon, training and physical conditioning were conducted with difficulty. The only sport that really thrived in the close quarters was poker.

On the 4th of July, seven days before the ship was due to arrive at Qui Nhon, a message was received which changed the brigade's mission. Although one battalion was still to go to Cam Ranh Bay, the remainder of the brigade was directed to land at Vung Tau and move from there to Bien Hoa to participate in the defense of the large Air Force Base.



Tugs backed the Gordon away from the dock and into San Francisco Bay.



Under the "Golden Gate" . . .



and one last look. Then time for . . .



talking



life boat drills



recreation



and PT.





Cam Ranh Bay



The Gordon

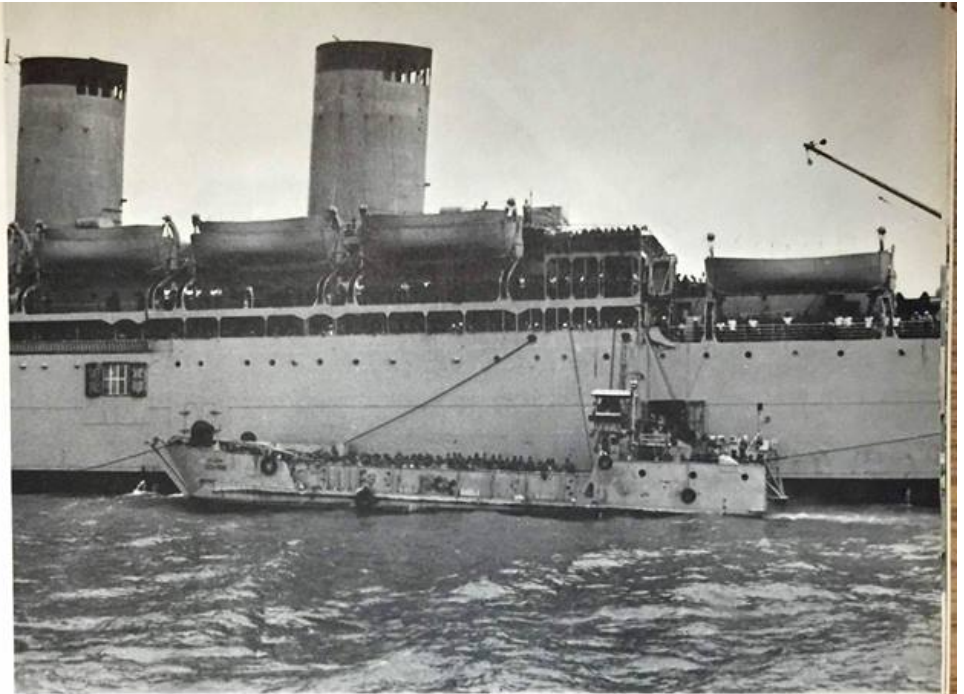
The Gordon altered course in Mid-Pacific and steamed for Cam Ranh Bay, arriving there on the 12th of July. As the ship entered the bay, its first landfall in Southeast Asia, troops lined the railing.

Cam Ranh Bay, one of the finest deep water ports in the world, was a more striking setting than anyone had imagined. High green mountains, some covered by low hanging clouds, rose directly from the dark blue waters of the bay. Black green pinacles of rock shot up from the white sandy beaches and green scrub brush lined the bay.

The first element to board the Army LCM's for the short run to the beach was Company B of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry. As the ramp of the flat bottomed barge was let down, Capt Phillip A. Pryor, the company commander, stepped ashore and was greeted by Colonel Simmons. After 18 days at sea, the 2nd Brigade came ashore in Vietnam.

The remainder of the battalion, C Battery of the 1st Battalion 7th Artillery (105mm towed), and the 3rd Platoon of B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion followed. Montagnard troops and Army personnel, along with over 40 press and television correspondents gathered on the beach to watch the landing.

"These guys haven't arrived one minute too soon," said an officer of the 35th Engineers. "We've been here by ourselves two months. We're getting scary."



LCM's carried the troops from the ship to the beach.



The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry shoulders duffel bags and prepares to go ashore at Cam Ranh.







Colonel James E. Simmons, brigade commander, greeted the troops as they came ashore. The brigade's arrival, on 12 July, brought to 71,000 the number of American troops in Vietnam.





The Press were there.



Montagnard troops turned out to watch the brigade land.



Supplies come ashore in deep sand.



Lt Col Edgar N Glotzbach, the troop commander aboard the Gordon and the 2nd Brigade executive officer, meets Colonel James E. Simmons, the brigade commander, at Cam Ranh Bay.



The 1st of the 18th on the beach at Cam Ranh Bay.





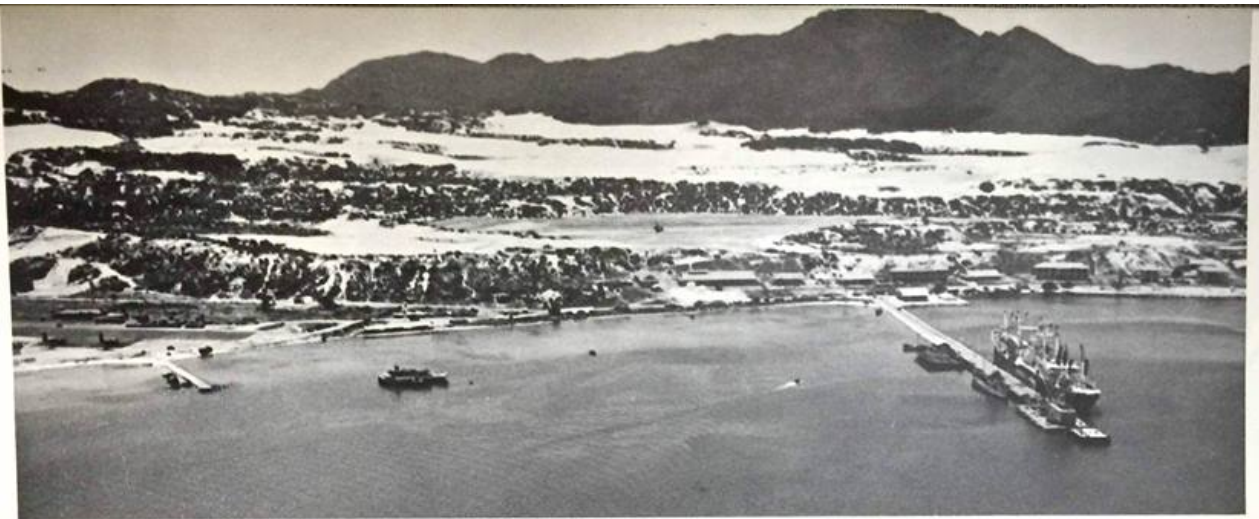
Vanguards set up concertina barbed wire on the beach.



A guy didn't have to go very far to fill a sandbag.



Sp4 Crowley's first morning in Vietnam.



Cam Ranh Bay



The sands of Cam Ranh

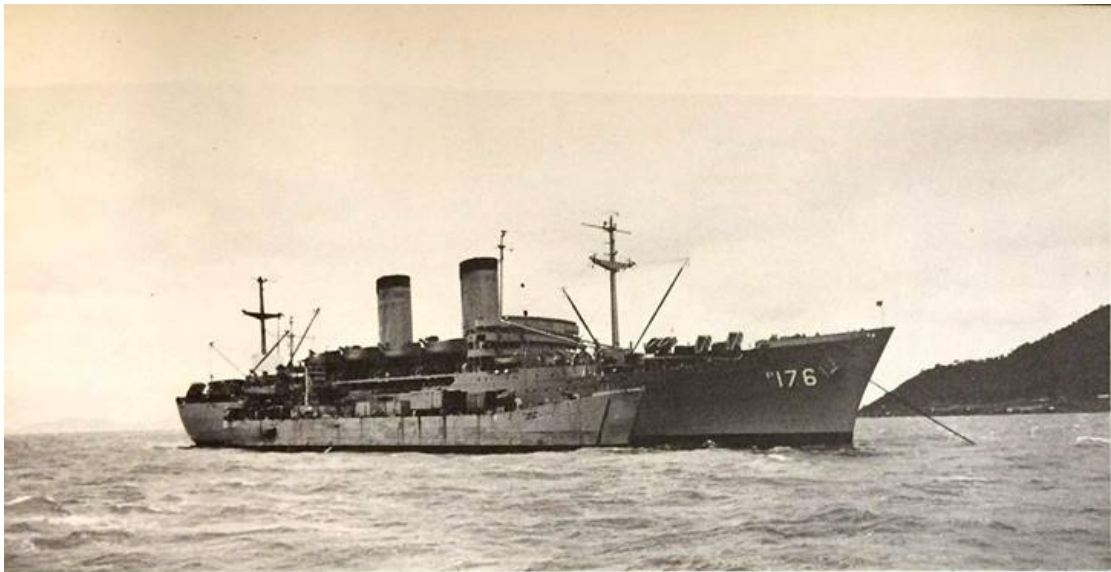




General Westmoreland, Secretary McNamara, Lt Col Salisbury, Colonel Hart, Ambassador Taylor, Sgt. Maj Knox and SP4 Crowley.



PFC's Watson and Pienis meet Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, who visited the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry shortly after they arrived at Cam Ranh Bay.



The Gordon anchored off Vung Tau and began transferring deck cargo to lighters.

On the evening of the 13th of July, the Gordon sailed south along the coast of Vietnam through rain squalls and rough seas, arriving the next morning at Vung Tau. The 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry crowded aboard LCM's for the ride to the beach and then mounted trucks and amphibious Army BARKS which carried them to the airstrip and the waiting Air Force C-130 "hercules" transports. In the next two days the 2nd of the 16th was followed by the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry, the brigade's Headquarters Company, the Engineers, Medical Company, Maintenance, Supply and Transportation, and the Artillery. From the airfield at Vung Tau each unit was airlifted to Bien Hoa. As the troops left the four engine transports, each man lugging his weapon, full combat gear and duffle bag, they were bundled aboard two and a half ton trucks supplied by the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate). With weapons unloaded and pointed skyward, but ammunition close at hand, the units set out for their respective base camp areas.

The 2nd Brigade Colors stood by as the Rangers came ashore at Vung Tau.







After coming ashore the troops boarded trucks for the trip to Vung Tau Air Base.



Every 20 minutes a C-130 "Hercules" carried 2nd Brigade troops from Vung Tau to—



—the US Air Force Base at Bien Hoa.



The Rangers brought their favorite chow.



The 2nd Brigade loaded aboard trucks at Bien Hoa Air Base for the journey to the new base camp area.