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DEDICATION

This magazine is dedicated to those Sky Soldiers who have fought, those who have fallen, and to those who continue to fight.

Sky Soldier Magazine

Summer, 1971

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Command Section



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Deputy Brigade Commander

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Staff Sections



S-1

Brigade S-1, tasked with the mission of personnel management and administration, constantly monitors the career status of all Sky Soldiers, providing them with a wide variety of personnel actions.

In addition to putting the right men in the right jobs and getting the best qualified Airborne people for the brigade, S-1 presides over the brigade safety program, Special Services, Post Exchange and club facilities and operations.



S-2

Intelligence is the primary function of the Brigade S-2 Section. The S-2 is responsible for keeping the commanding general completely informed on all aspects of enemy operations, weather conditions, and terrain. Control of classified documents and verification of security clearances are among other important responsibilities of the S-2.

S-3

The Brigade S-3 Section is responsible for the conduct and control of all brigade combat operations. This vital responsibility includes the 24-hour operation of the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) at the brigade headquarters.

The S-3, largest staff section of the brigade, is also in charge of planning future operations for the brigade and all brigade training in addition to many other responsibilities.



S-4

Supply and logistical management is the major function of the Brigade S-4 Section. Getting abundant supplies of ammo, food, combat equipment and other items from typing paper to poncho liners to the troops is the mission of this indispensable staff section.

The S-4 Section includes food service and command maintenance management inspection teams to continually check on the status and condition of the brigade in these important areas.

S-5

Psychological operation, or "PSYOPS," is one of the main activities of the S-5 Staff Section. The section uses leaflets, ground and aerial loudspeaker broadcasts, and other means to bring important messages to selected audiences. Community relations is another major function of the S-5. Constantly seeking ways to improve U.S.-Vietnamese relations, this key staff section smoothes problems between Americans and the Vietnamese, and supervises programs to promote better cooperation and more understanding between the two groups.



The Staff Judge Advocate Office, located at LZ English offers a variety of legal assistance to the individual trooper. Assistance in processing claims, advice on divorce proceedings, individual trial counsel, and many other services are available through the judge advocate general.

SJA

The office is staffed with a group of highly competent officers and enlisted men. Each officer assigned to the section is a graduate of an accredited law school and is knowledgeable on all matters concerning military justice.

The inspector general is a personal staff officer of the commanding general. He serves to keep the commanding general informed of current trends and potential problem areas within the brigade.

The role of the inspector general is a demanding one. The office investigates complaints and allegations, or renders assistance an average of 80 times per month. The IG Section is responsible for auditing the records of all non-appropriated funds within the brigade. These funds amount to approximately two million dollars annually.

The office coordinates closely with the USARV inspector general to plan the annual AGI type inspections. Many long months are spent in preparation for the USARV inspection and the IG Section plays an important role insuring that the brigade is fully prepared for these annual inspections.

IG



Surgeon

The Brigade Surgeon Section is responsible for all health and medical care for members of the brigade. In addition to the brigade surgeon, the section includes a preventive medicine officer, a psychologist, a medical operations assistant, five battalion surgeons and a dentist.

The staff section works to maintain the highest health standards through constant supervision and coordination of all medical care with all units of the brigade, Company B (Medical), 67th Evacuation Hospital, and other medical detachments.



Chaplains

Attending to the spiritual needs of troops in combat is one of the toughest jobs a man can have. The five men in the brigade assigned this tremendous responsibility perform this difficult task with relentless zeal and dedication. Travelling as often as possible to each unit of the brigade, the chaplains bring religious services to the men on a regular basis. Known as the "God Squad" by Sky Soldiers both in the rear and in the field, the chaplains, representing several faiths, bring opportunities for worship to all troops of the brigade.

The chaplains also listen to the personal problems of the soldiers and give advice and instruction in meeting the many problems life sometimes presents a man doing a difficult job away from home and family.

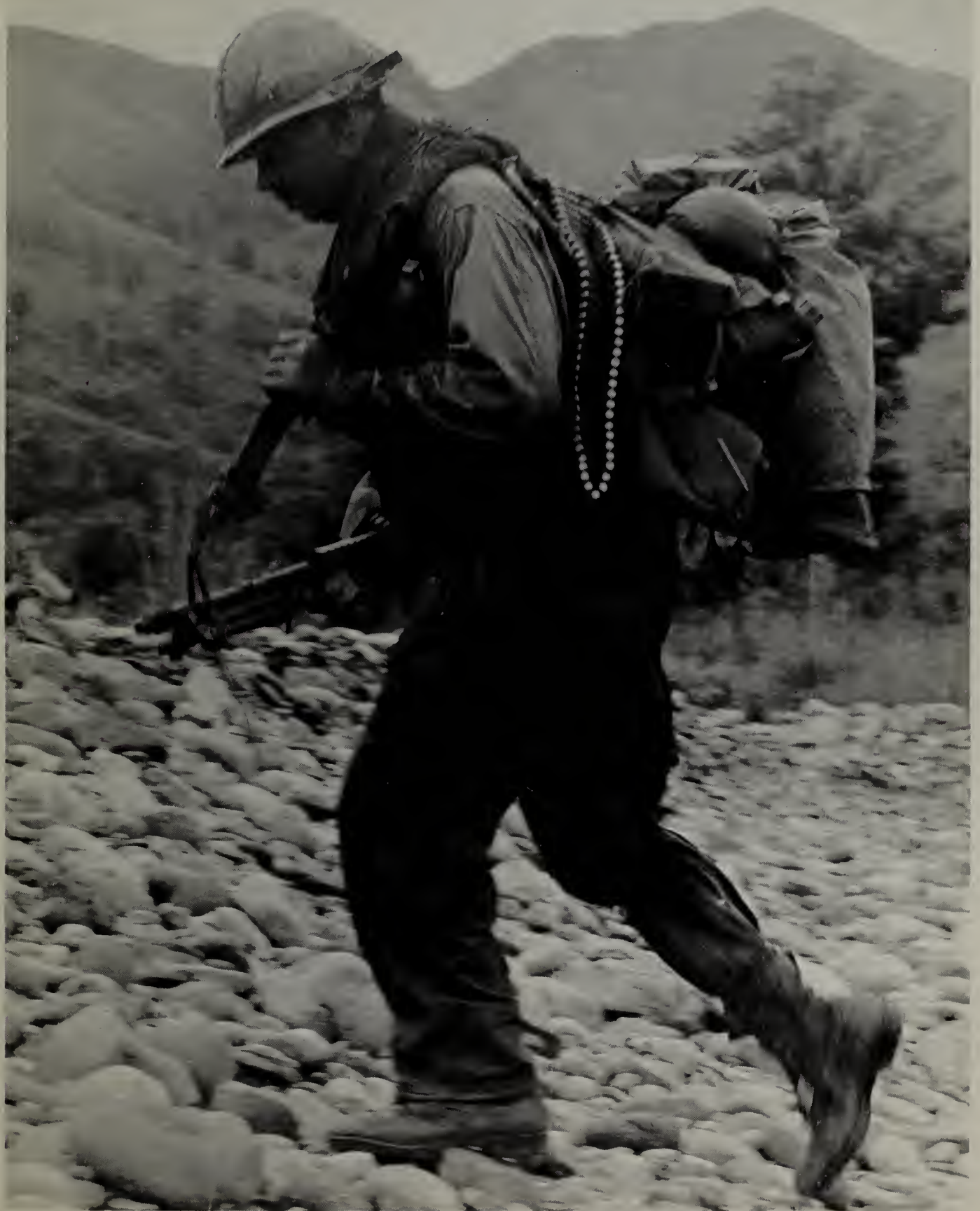


DSZC

The office of the Deputy Sub-Zone Coordinator was established in March 1971 to allow the commanding general to better utilize the management system of area coordination. This system eliminates duplication of functions and ensures full use of shared facilities in Sub-Zone II. The DSZC seeks to coordinate and solve common problems between units located in the sub-zone. Sub-Zone II, Military Region II, consists of Binh Dinh and Phu Yen Provinces.



Brigade History



Heraldry

Unit Crest and Patch

173d Airborne Brigade Non-Color Bearing Units: The simulated parachute and wings refer to the Airborne capabilities of the brigade. The unsheathed sword, pointing to the base, signifies the role of the paratrooper from sky to ground. The hilt of the sword against the red section of the parachute canopy alludes to the brigade's Airborne assault made Feb. 20, 1967 in Operation Junction City. The single sword also alludes to other brigade "firsts:" the first separate Airborne brigade in U.S. Army history, the first American combat unit in the Republic of South Vietnam, the first combat unit in War Zones C and D, and the first in the Iron Triangle. The lightning flashes are symbolic of the brigade's strike force capabilities.

The numerical identity of the brigade can be readily simulated by various combinations of the design elements. For example, the sword indicating one, parachute canopy equaling seven, and the three sections of the parachute canopy equaling three.

503d Parachute Infantry Regiment: The coat of arms of the brigade's four Airborne infantry battalions is that of the 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment. The colors are blue and white, those of the infantry. The inverted triangle terminating in the broken fort symbolizes the air assault on Corregidor. The three parachutes represent the three combat jumps of WWII: Markham Valley, Noemfoor and Corregidor. The motto is "The Rock."

Shoulder Sleeve Insignia, 173d Airborne Brigade: The shoulder patch worn by the paratroopers of the 173d originated with the activation of the brigade in June 1963. It was designed primarily by the Brigade Sergeant Major, SGM Mickey Finn. The red bayonet signifies a strike force; the white wing denotes that this strike force can be flown by transport aircraft and dropped by parachute onto any assigned objective. The tab reading "Airborne" above the shoulder patch indicates that the men of this brigade are paratroopers and all the equipment of the brigade is air transportable. The colors red, white and blue are national colors.

Lineage and Honors

173d Airborne Brigade: Meritorious Unit Commendation, May 1965-May 1967; Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry (with Palm) May 1965-September 1970.

503d Airborne Infantry: Presidential Unit Citation (Army), streamer embroidered Corregidor; Presidential Unit Citation (Army), streamer embroidered Bien Hoa; Phillippine Presidential Unit Citation, streamer embroidered Oct. 17, 1944 - July 4, 1945.

Unit Background

173d Infantry Regiment, 87th Infantry Division: The 173d Airborne Brigade is a lineal descendant of the 173d Infantry Regiment, 87th Infantry Division. The 87th or "Golden Acorn" Division, was organized in August 1917 at Camp Pike, Ark., and deployed to Europe from June to September 1918. The 87th arrived too late to engage in combat and returned to the United States for demobilization. In 1921, the 87th was constituted as an organized reserve unit, and on Dec. 15, 1942, was reactivated at Camp McClain, Miss., training under the 2d Army. After taking part in the Tennessee maneuvers in December 1943, and January 1944, the 87th moved to Fort Jackson, S.C. for further training before leaving from New York for Europe in November of 1944.



The 173d Inf. Regt., 87th Inf. Div. fought in the Battle of the Bulge and participated in the Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Europe campaigns. It fought across Germany and on May 6, 1945, took Fadkenstein, about four miles from the Czechoslovakian border. Here, it consolidated its defensive positions and maintained these positions until V-E Day. The 87th returned to the United States in July 1945, and was inactivated in September 1945 at Fort Benning, Ga. In November 1946, the 87th Inf. Div. was reactivated into the organized reserves at Birmingham, Ala.

The 173d Inf. Bde. was relieved from assignment to the 87th Inf. Div. on March 26, 1963, allotted to the Regular Army, converted and redesignated as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173d Abn. Bde. and activated on June 25, 1963 in Okinawa.

503d Parachute Infantry Regiment: The development of combat Airborne units in the United States began in 1940 with the activation of an Airborne test platoon at Fort Benning, Ga. Battalions were not seen until 1941 with the organization of the 501st, 502d, 503d and 504th Parachute Battalions. On March 2, 1942, three of these parachute battalions were combined and redesignated as the 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment, the first parachute regiment in the U.S. Army.

After its activation, the 503d moved to Fort Bragg, N.C., training until October 1942. At the same time, the 2d Bn., 503d Parachute Inf. Regt. was detached and transferred to England. The 2d Bn. was later redesignated the 2d Bn., 509th Inf. It was this battalion that made the first battalion-sized combat jump in the U.S. Army's history at a later date in the European theater of operations.

In October, the 503d deployed to Cairns, Australia, where it conducted extensive training for combat operations in the Pacific theater. In the interim, the 1st Bn., 501st Inf. was redesignated the 2d Bn., 503d Inf. and it joined the regiment in Australia.

In July 1943, the 503d moved to Port Moresby, New Guinea, where it made final preparations for its first combat operations. On Sept. 5, 1943, the 503d Parachute Inf. was air assaulted over Markham Valley on New Guinea's northeastern coast to engage entrenched Japanese forces. This was the first Airborne operation of U.S. forces in the Pacific. After two weeks of fighting, the Japanese were defeated and the 503d was reassembled at Port Moresby for the return to Australia.

On July 3, 1944, the 1st Bn. parachuted into the jungle-covered Noemfoor, New Guinea. Under the cover of smoke, some planes came in to drop at an altitude of 175 feet- the lowest jump known. The following day, the 3d Bn. dropped in on a semi-secure air strip. Noemfoor, in three weeks time, belonged to the Allies. After Noemfoor, the 503d assaulted by sea onto Leyte, establishing beachheads for the 40th Inf. Div.

In the early morning of Feb. 16, 1945, after weeks of naval and aerial bombardment, the 503d hit Corregidor. The jump, made for C-47s flying at 500 feet, was made in 35mph winds. The Japanese forces were ready for an amphibious assault and were completely stunned. Taken by surprise, the Japanese defenders could not organize quickly enough. After 11 days of continuous fighting, Corregidor belong to the Allies and Manila Bay was opened. 4,509 of the enemy were dead. 503d losses totaled 144.

On March 2, 1945, the third anniversary of the activation of the 503d as a regiment, General Douglas MacArthur came ashore and was presented control of Corregidor by Colonel George Jones, the 503d's commanding officer.



The 503d's final action came in April 1945 when the regiment responded to a call for help from an infantry division on the Phillippine island of Negros. The island was secured and Japan surrendered. On Dec. 24, 1945, the 503d was deactivated.

Due to the emerging Korean Conflict, the 503d was reactivated on March 2, 1951, at Fort Campbell, Ky., and assigned to the 11th Airborne Division. The 503d did not see combat, but instead conducted extensive exercises in all parts of the United States, including Alaska. In 1956, the 503d moved with the 11th Abn. to Germany, and in 1957 was reorganized under the Battle Group Concept, becoming the 1st Airborne Battle Group, 503d Inf. The 1st Abn. Battle Group, 503d Inf. was organized in Germany as a part of the 11th Abn. Div. and the 2d Abn. Battle Group, 503d Inf. was organized at Fort Bragg as a part of the 82d Abn. Div. The 1st Abn. Battle Group returned to Fort Bragg in January 1959, and the 2d Abn. Battle Group departed Fort Bragg for Okinawa in May 1960, where it became the 2d Abn. Battle Group, 25th Inf. Div.

Formation of the 173d Airborne Brigade: On June 25, 1963, the 2d Abn. Battle Group became the 173d Abn. Bde. and the newly-formed brigade was assigned to the U.S. Army, Ryuku Islands. The brigade had an authorized strength of 133 officers, 3 warrant officers and 3394 enlisted personnel. Units comprising the brigade were the 1st and 2d Bns. of the 503d Inf., the 3d Bn. of the 319th Artillery and the 173d Support Bn., plus D Company 16th Armor, E Troop 17th Cavalry and several separate companies and detachments.

Under the command of Colonel, now Major General Ellis W. Williamson, the 173d trained hard on its home island of Okinawa and throughout the Asian theater. Extensive Airborne, guerilla, and jungle warfare training in the Phillippines, Taiwan, Korea, and Thailand brought the unit to a high pitch of combat readiness. It was from the parachute exercises on Taiwan with the Nationalist Chinese Army that the 173d paratroopers were given the nickname "Tien Bing," which is Chinese for "Sky Soldiers," by the admiring Chinese population. The name stuck and has since been the official nickname of the paratroopers of the 173d Abn. Bde.

During the time from its activation until the end of 1963, the brigade trained to become combat ready and capable of successfully accomplishing its assigned missions. A total of 10,719 parachute jumps were made during this period and six field training exercises were held.

The brigade began the year 1964 with its individual units trained, tested and operationally ready. The entire brigade, however, was handicapped due to equipment and personnel shortages resulting from the recent activation. During the calendar year, the brigade underwent varied and diversified training and plans were formulated to accomplish any contingency that might arise. Culmination of the year's activities was a full scale off-island exercise, Exercise Sky Soldier Tien Bing IV, which was conducted on southern Taiwan as a joint exercise with elements of the government of the Republic of China. This operation tested the ability of each brigade unit to accomplish its assigned mission as it operated in conjunction with all other elements.

The equipment and personnel status so greatly improved during the latter portion of the year that near-ultimate capabilities prevailed.

Field training exercises were extensively conducted during the year, and a total of 26,339 parachute jumps were made. The 173d proved itself an "Airborne-All the Way" unit, having demonstrated a splendid capacity for training, working together and combat readiness.



173d Airborne Brigade in the Republic of South Vietnam: The 173d Abn. Bde. continued its mission on "The Rock" (Okinawa) until alerted for deployment to the Republic of South Vietnam. On May 5, 1965, the brigade became the first U.S. Army combat unit in the Republic of South Vietnam. On its deployment, the brigade, due to its extensive training on Okinawa and numerous exercises conducted on other islands in Southeast Asia, was possibly the most combat-ready unit ever to enter an armed conflict under the Stars and Stripes of the United States.

Upon reaching the Republic of South Vietnam, the brigade secured the area around Bien Hoa and Vung Tau, with their base camp being Bien Hoa. It was the first U.S. unit to fight in the infamous War Zone D, a long known Viet Cong stronghold. Again and again, the brigade proved itself an exceptionally worthy U.S. combat unit.

Throughout the year of 1966, the 173d continued to conduct operations both in and outside of its tactical area of responsibility. Operations were conducted to continue to locate and destroy the enemy forces and their logistical installations, and to reduce the enemy's hold on thousands of loyal Vietnamese.

During the period Jan. 1 - April 30, the brigade participated in numerous combat operations. Operation Silver City was conducted from March 9 - March 22 and was engaged by an estimated Viet Cong regiment. The result was 343 Viet Cong KIA (by count) and 211 Viet Cong KIA (estimated). This operation was considered the most successful operation in which any American unit had participated during the Vietnam Conflict. Altogether, operations during this period resulted in 626 Viet Cong KIA (by count) and 493 Viet Cong KIA (estimated), while friendly losses were 84 killed in hostile action and 518 wounded in hostile action.

From May 1 - July 31, 1966, the brigade continued to conduct tactical operations over a large portion of III Corps Tactical Zone. To accomplish its mission, the brigade conducted a total of six combat operations of battalion size or larger. Each of these operations resulted in Viet Cong losses of personnel, equipment, and supplies.

During this period, the brigade continued to operate from its base camp located near the city of Bien Hoa in Bien Hoa Province. The 4th Bn., 503d Inf. arrived in the Republic of South Vietnam on June 25, 1966, being assigned to the 173d. A long range reconnaissance patrol had been formed on April 25, 1966. Volunteers within the brigade were transferred and provided the nucleus of the original unit. The long range reconnaissance patrol has continued to be a vital source of intelligence. It is the "eyes and ears" of the brigade.

The brigade continued combat operations, began to conduct revolutionary development operations and continued to consolidate Republic of South Vietnam control throughout III Corps Tactical Zone during the period Aug. 1 - Oct. 3, 1966. A total of four battalion size or larger operations were conducted.

During this period, the internal structure of the brigade remained the same. However, several new units were attached. These were the 39th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog), 24th Military History Detachment and the 45th Army Postal Unit.



The 173d conducted four more combat operations from Nov. 1 - Jan. 31, 1967. The rapid deployment for these operations indicated that the brigade could, while in a base camp situation, be rapidly deployed to a trouble zone in a matter of minutes. The 173d Abn. Bde. was by now well-known as the Republic of South Vietnam's "reaction unit," deploying to where the fighting was heaviest.

During the calendar year 1967, the 173d Abn. Bde. continued to launch numerous operations against Viet Cong and the growing North Vietnamese Army forces. It continued its strong civic action and civil affairs program and made numerous MEDCAP and DENCAP operations. It was during the month of February 1967, that the 173d achieved what is, for paratroopers, the best "first" of all. The 2d Bn., 503d Inf. made the first combat parachute jump in 15 years to spearhead Operation Junction City, one of the largest operations in the U.S. Army history.

In June, the brigade was called to send troops to II Corps Tactical Zone, in the area of Kontum, to aid 4th Inf. Div. in Operation Greeley. On Sept. 19, the brigade commenced Operation Bolling in the Tuy Hoa-Phu Hiep area (II Corps). In November, the brigade's rear elements moved from Bien Hoa to An Khe, Camp Radcliffe (II Corps) to better support the troops, as all line elements were now operating in the II Corps Tactical Zone.

Shortly after the rear elements of the brigade reached Camp Radcliffe, the 3d Bn., 503d Inf. arrived in the Republic of South Vietnam. The 3d Bn. was formed at Fort Bragg, N.C., in March 1967, and its arrival gave the brigade four Airborne infantry battalions. The battalion entered tactical operations on Nov. 5 in the Bolling area of operations. The 173d commenced Operation MacArthur on Nov. 1, but terminated its command participation in MacArthur on Dec. 14, 1967. However, the 1st and 2d Bns., 503d Inf. remained in the Dak To-Kontum area under the operational control of the 4th Inf. Div.

During this operation in late November, the 173d became engaged in one of the most critical battles of the war around the Vietnamese town of Dak To, and the brigade distinguished itself with the true spirit of the paratrooper.

The year 1968 found the brigade continuing Operation Bolling and MacArthur and on Jan. 16, the 173d began Operation Walker, replacing elements of the 1st Cav. Div. (Airmobile).

But the 173d had been looking for a "home of its own," its own TAOR, since deploying to the Republic of South Vietnam. This opportunity came in March 1968, when the brigade replaced elements of the 4th Inf. Div. and began Operation Cochise, thus assuming operational responsibility for Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, and Phu Bon Provinces.



Combat Flashback

The close of 1970 brought with it an end to a rich era in the brigade's history. The paratroopers had been engaged in operations with the local forces, largely of a security nature. They had been occupied with building schools, manning dispensaries, and working hand-in-hand with the hamlet officials and the village people. These same troopers were now once again called upon to shoulder their "rucks" and conduct more extensive combat operations.

This change of concept would take the veterans far from the villages and remove them to the unpopulated regions where the enemy was in hiding.

January 1971 found the 173d kicking off OPERATION GREENE LIGHTNING. In the early days of that month, the 1st/503d Infantry departed LZ Uplift by foot and began the long trek into the Nui Mieu and Tiger Mountain ranges. There, the men began conducting intensive combat and reconnaissance missions designed to harass the enemy and to interdict his infiltration routes.

On Jan. 6, 1971, the 4th/503d Infantry reached the climax of what was their community defense and local development role. On that day the Geronimo troopers turned over the installation of LZ North English to ARVN Forces and relocated their headquarters at LZ English.

Upon completion of that move, the troopers launched extensive operations in the Hoai An District of Binh Dinh Province. These operations were in support of OPERATION GREENE LIGHTNING and complimented the efforts of the 1st/503d Infantry.

At the onset of the operation it appeared that the enemy was content to remain in hiding and conduct isolated acts of terrorism directed primarily against the RF/PF locations.

The joint efforts of the battalions had a marked effect on the amount of success enjoyed by the enemy. The units relentlessly pursued his elements, uncovered his way stations, destroyed his base camps, and engaged him in mortal combat wherever they found him.

Although this first operation of the year resembled a game of hide and seek with the enemy, it must still be termed a highly successful one. The operation yielded 73 VC/NVA soldiers killed, 39 small arms captured in action, six of his crew-served weapons captured or destroyed, and thousands of pounds of his precious life-sustaining rice captured which were turned over to local government authorities for distribution to needy people.

While OPERATION GREENE LIGHTNING was in full swing in northern Binh Dinh Province, the 2d/503d and the 3d/503d Infantry along with "E" Troop, 17th Cavalry were lending assistance to TASK FORCE IVY in the vicinity of An Khe.

The 2d/503d Infantry was preoccupied with providing the perimeter defense for Camp Radcliffe. The recon elements of that battalion made occasional forays into the surrounding areas of that huge installation, but the primary mission of the Paragon troopers was to provide Camp Radcliffe with a strong sense of security.

"E" Troop, 17th Cavalry bore a large brunt of the security mission in that area also. The massive tracks and tanks of that armored unit performed bridge and road security in the areas in and around An Khe.

While its sister units were engaged in the security aspect of OPERATION HANCOCK DRAGON, the 3d/503d Infantry was conducting large-scale combat operations in cooperation with TASK FORCE IVY. The "Rock" troopers were discovering the enemy's hiding places in the Kannack Region, an area that contained the ruins of an old Montagnard village. These ruins served as a stark reminder of the days when American Special Forces units operated freely in this area.

GREENE STORM

Enemy Base Area 202 had long been considered to be an important staging area for the offenses launched against the Montagnard resettlement villages and highway QL 19. The natural caves and rugged terrain afforded the enemy protection against artillery fire, while dense vegetation provided him with excellent cover and concealment.

This was the target area of the 3d/503d Infantry. On Feb. 6, the "Rock" troopers moved into the formidable area saturating it with patrols, and ambushing the enemy's trails and streams. This was the onslaught of OPERATION GREENE STORM.

The "Hawk" concept was a new and frustrating encounter for the enemy. He lost valuable time adjusting his defenses accordingly. Artillery barrages and large American units were one thing, but these small five and seven man teams of Sky Soldiers were turning his stronghold into a battlefield. This area that had once been considered to be his sanctuary was turned into a deathtrap for many unwary VC/NVA troops. A total of 36 enemy soldiers had been ferreted out of hiding and killed, 18 small arms captured, and two crew-served weapons with assorted ammunition captured in action. OPERATION GREEN STORM ended in mid-March.

GREENE SURE

On March 14, 1971, the 2d/503d Infantry completed the turn-over of Camp Radcliffe to ARVN Forces. On that same day the unit boarded C-130 aircraft at An Khe Airfield for the return trip to LZ English. Later in the afternoon, the Paragon troopers combat assaulted into multiple LZs in the Nui Mieu and southern Crescent Mountains. With this accomplished, Phase I of OPERATION GREENE SURE had swung into action.

By March 17, the 3d/503d Infantry had completed its move from An Khe to LZ English. On that day the paratroopers boarded their Huey "Slicks" and conducted combat assaults into the northern fringes of Binh Dinh Province.

The 4th/503d and the 1st/503d Infantry Battalions were already into position and continued their operations as planned.

This was the moment that the commanders and the troops had been waiting for. This would mark the first time in several months that the total combat forces of the brigade were launched into a single operation against the enemy. It heralded the return of the 2d/503d and the 3d/503d Infantry Battalions to Binh Dinh Province, and unified the Sky Soldiers of the 173d in a common goal: meet the enemy in northern Binh Dinh and defeat him.

Throughout the month of March, the 1st/503d Infantry continued the mission in support of OPERATION GREENE STORM. However, in April 1971 many suspicions were confirmed.

On April 1, 1971, in keeping with President Nixon's redeployment plans and Vietnamization program, the 1st Battalion began standown. That standown ended in a farewell ceremony conducted at LZ English Airfield on April 25.

On that day the proud unit's colors were cased and sent to Hawaii. The Paramount troopers had built for themselves an enviable record since arriving in war ravaged Bien Hoa almost six years earlier. The unit has participated in actions ranging from OPERATION JUNCTION CITY, in War Zone C, to the fierce fighting that took place in and around Dak To.

While understood to be part of plans for a future reduced force structure, the departure of their comrades-in-arms struck a sad chord in the hearts of the remaining members of the 173d Airborne Brigade.

The first two weeks of OPERATION GREENE SURE were relatively quiet ones. The combined force of paratroopers canvassed their areas of operation for the enemy, searching for his base camps and encountering only sporadic contact.

On April 2 came the intense and heavy fighting that was inevitable. Elements of the 2d/503d Infantry engaged a large number of enemy troops concealed in heavily fortified positions. It appeared that the determined enemy was prepared to defend his base camps at all costs.

The troopers launched several infantry assaults at the tenacious foe. During the course of the day, a total of 5 tactical air strikes were directed against enemy positions. Contact was finally broken sometime in the night, only to be resumed the following day. This was the beginning of an eight-day battle that was to become known as the "Battle of Nui Cung Chap."

April 3 found elements of the 4th/503d Infantry reinforcing the Paragon troopers. The paratroopers quickly made contact with the enemy soldiers. These two battalions were to experience much bitter fighting in the following days.

Viewing the actions that took place there in retrospect, it is quite possible that the enemy had plans of mustering his forces in the highgrounds of Phu My Ridge for an attack into the nearby lowland population areas of Phu My District.

The gallant efforts on the part of the 173d Sky Soldiers preempted any possible enemy plans for attack and certainly inflicted heavy personnel and equipment losses on the entrenched North Vietnamese Army Forces. The actions that took place on those days caused disorganization in the enemy's ranks and disrupted his plans.

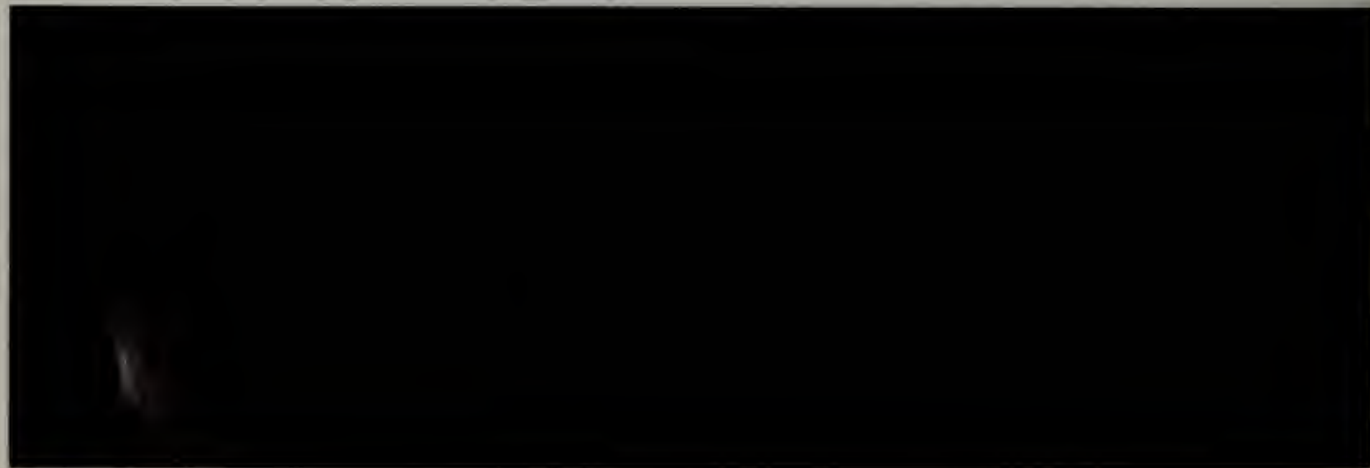
The paratroopers of the brigade had once again proven that they could meet the enemy in large numbers and defeat him. At the close of OPERATION GREENE SURE on April 21, 172 enemy soldiers had been killed, four valuable detainees had been taken, 39 small arms captured, 4 crew-served weapons removed from his arsenal, and one .51 caliber anti-aircraft gun destroyed in action.

After the enemy forces had been scattered and largely destroyed, the brigade began a multi-battalion operation designed primarily to prevent him from regrouping and staging an offensive at a later date.

Intensive operations in the Suoi Ca Valley, Kron River Valley, and along the well traveled "Oregon Trail" were conducted in an effort to destroy the enemy's lines of communication and to deny his movement into the populated areas.

These operations severely hampered the enemy's rice gathering activities. His freedom of movement has been greatly reduced. Once-familiar trails and streams spelled instant death to the enemy. He has been forced into hiding for extended periods of time by aerial observers and alert recon teams.

The enemy has once again been forced to take up a defensive role, shunning contact with the Allied soldier. Wherever he may run, wherever he may hide, he will never escape the watchful eye of the Sky Soldier. Soldiers of the 173d Airborne Brigade will continue to carry the fight to him, upholding the highest traditions of the Airborne soldier.





1st/503d

The 1st Battalion, 503d Infantry, operating out of LZ Uplift, pulled combat operations in the Crescent Mountains until its deactivation on April 25, 1971.

The unit, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Leslie K. Nakamura, did not allow its role in the pacification program during 1970 to diminish its combat capabilities. During the first part of fiscal 1971, the 1st Bn. accounted for 81 enemy kills, 118 detainees, 3 POWs and numerous weapons, equipment and caches of food.

The 1st Bn., 503d Inf. continued to conduct combat operations in support of pacification in Phu My, Hoai An and Hoai Nhon Districts. On Nov. 3, 1970, the battalion assumed operational control of the 538th Land Clearing Company and E Troop, 17th Cavalry and initiated land clearing operations in Bong Son Pass.





2d/503d

During 1970, the 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry, conducted combat operations to provide security for the brigade pacification program. While on this mission, the 2d Bn. made contact with enemy forces over 100 times; their results up through December included more than 64 enemy KIA, 38 small arms captured in action and tons of enemy material destroyed.

In January 1971, the 2d Bn. found itself in An Khe providing security and support for departing elements of the 4th Infantry Division. In addition they were responsible for the security of the 18 kilometer berm around Camp Radcliffe.

Second Battalion Headquarters moved to LZ Uplift in March 1971, and on April 1, Lieutenant Colonel Freddie C. Austin became the new battalion commander, replacing Lt. Col. Robert G. Hertel.

On April 2, the battalion clashed with heavily entrenched NVA regulars in an enemy base area in Phu My District. Paragon troopers fought several fierce battles killing scores of enemy soldiers in the rugged Nui Cung Chap Mountains.

The veteran Paragon Sky Soldiers continue to conduct combat and recon operations in the Phu My, Hoai An and Hoai Nhon Districts.



2d Bn. Repels NVA After 7 Fiery Days

NUI CUNG CHAP MTS. -- The 2nd Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, recently clashed with heavily entrenched NVA regulars on the eastern side of an enemy base area west of Phu My.

Paragon Battalion troopers fought several fierce battles against the enemy while U.S. Air Force fighter-bombers pounded these rugged mountains east of Soui Cai Valley. The F-4 "Phantom" jets alone were credited with numerous enemy kills.

The fighting erupted early Friday, April 2, when Delta Company, 2nd Bn., ran into unexpected heavy resistance while conducting a routine operation in the Nui Cung Chap Mountains. Delta Co. received six rounds of 75mm recoilless rifle fire while waiting for supplies. One of the rounds landed 25 meters from the company's LZ (Landing Zone), the others on the LZ.

Another Paragon element, Echo Co. Recon Platoon, also made contact early April 2 with four NVA who were some 50 meters from the team. Two enemy were reported wearing khaki uniforms, one a black pajama and another a green uniform.

After a short firefight, the enemy fled to the north and were pursued by Team Two, led by Sergeant Harry C. Posner, Hollywood, Fla. When the team came to a clearing, they made a reconnaissance, firing at suspected enemy ambush position with 40mm grenade launchers. The team crossed the clearing and checked out the area. Five rucksacks containing 150 pounds of rice and the ambush position that had been set up to catch the pursuing Sky Soldiers as they came across the clearing, were discovered.

BRAVO CO.

Early on the afternoon of April 2, Bravo Co., 2nd Bn., 2nd Plat., patrolling the area to the north, took heavy fire from a nearby hilltop. Several men were sent up the hill to recon the area.

During the evening of April 2, Alpha Battery, 3d Battalion 319th Artillery, provided artillery support out of FSB Crystal. Echo Co., 2nd Bn., pounded the suspected enemy locations with light and heavy organic mortar fire from FSB Moon.

With first light of Saturday, April 3, Bravo Co's 1st Plat. tried again for the ridge-top while the 3d Plat. circled around and scaled another peak to the south.

HEAVY FIRE

Moving up the slopes a foot at a time, Bravo Co. troopers drew heavy small arms and machinegun fire. As they fought their way closer to the ridge, North Vietnamese soldiers began throwing hand grenades toward the GIs.

"It was like playing dodge ball with live grenades," Sgt. Myers, a squad leader with the 1st Plat., said.

The 3d Plat. met only light resistance to the south. Its men ran over a ridge 200 meters away and opened up on the enemy bunkers located to the north. Some enemy soldiers escaped the fire and made their way down the northwestern side of the slope, disappearing into the heavy underbrush.

First Plat. contact lasted over two hours. Some of the worst fighting took place on the steep hillside. The Reds held to the hilltop stubbornly, but not for long. The determined Paragon troopers, led by First Lieutenant Thomas Houf, Fulton, Mo., 1st Plat. leader, fought just as hard, moving step by step up the steep mountain.

Specialist Four Dennis A. Terschak, a 21-year-old Lorain, Ohio, native, crawled through the heavy elephant grass to within six feet of an enemy machinegun position, waited for the right moment and assaulted the emplacement.





3d/503d

The fall and winter months of 1970 found the 3d Battalion, 503d Infantry operating in Hoai An District, Binh Dinh Province. During this period the "Rock" troopers relentlessly pursued and initiated contact with the remnants of the 3d NVA Division and the VC Local Forces.

In January 1971, the battalion, under the guidance of Lieutenant Colonel George J. Stapelton, deployed to An Khe. The numerous combat and reconnaissance type operations conducted by the battle-hardened troopers severely limited the movement of enemy forces and denied them access to precious sanctuaries. The operations conducted during those rain-soaked months served to provide security for the local population living in that region.

In March 1971, the battalion once again gathered its men and equipment together and prepared to move to a new location. The "Rock" Battalion established its Tactical Operations Center (TOC) within the confines of LZ Uplift, while the line troopers embarked on combat operations in the Phu My, Hoai An and Hoai Nhon Districts. Operating in platoon and squad-size elements, the battalion enjoyed much success in locating and destroying enemy base camps and storage areas. The paratroopers often met and conquered the enemy in the lush river valleys and rugged hills that comprised their newly found AO.



3D BN 'ROCK' TROOPS STRIKE 'EM HARD AGAIN



In top photo, five members of the seven-man Echo Co., 3rd Bn. Recon Team are pictured. Left to right, standing, are Pfc. Rodney Wiggins, SSgt. Walter Smith, Pfc. David M. Townsend; kneeling are Spec. 4 William C. Knowles and Spec. 4 Joe Herndon. Plt. Sgt. James Minton and Spec. 4 Herman Paddie were unavailable for photo. In lower photos, team members examine captured weapons (left), and take to the field in column.

By Spec. 4 Eck Spahic
FSB Mattie—In two separate contacts within 10 hours, Sky Soldiers of the 173d Abn. Bde. killed 11 VC/NVA in the rugged jungle-covered mountains of Binh Dinh Province, 35 miles Southwest of An Khe.

Investigating a trail from the base camp, the pointman, Spec. 4 Herman Paddie, Joliet, Ill., "smelled" enemy personnel.

Platoon Sergeant James R. Minton, Wilkesboro, N.C., ordered a hasty ambush, and sent Spec. 4 Paddie, and Spec. 4 William C. Knowles, Little Rock, Ark., to trace the "smell." They approached a clearing and observed the enemy bathing in a spring beneath a large boulder.

After being spotted by two VC/NVA soldiers with weapons, Paddie initiated the contact killing one. While Paddie was occupied with the first, Knowles shot the second foe, who was drawing a bead on Paddie. The remaining enemy came under fire by the rest of the team.

After a fierce 15-minute firefight, the enemy fled, leaving behind four more dead, two blood trails, two rifles, an SKS and a Mauser. The 19-year-old Paddie, serving as pointman, was credited with three kills.

After their first contact, the team, that included Spec. 4 Joe E. Herndon, Algonquin, Ill., Pfc. Rodney B. Wiggins, New Orleans, Staff. Walter Smith, Reedsport, Ore., and Pfc. David M. Townsend, Warren, Ohio, moved 800 meters away from the base camp, and prepared their night position setting up an ambush.

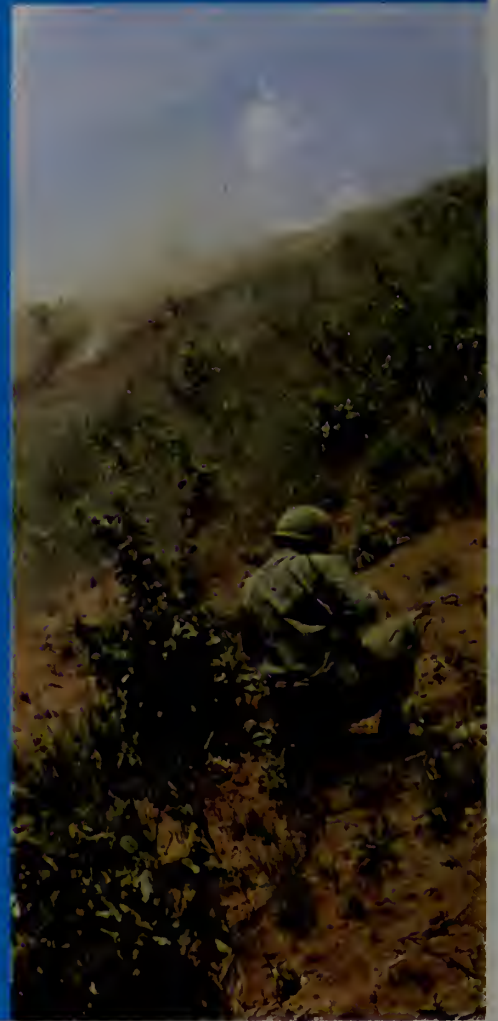
A company size enemy element ran into their ambush, for the second contact.

The recon team used hand grenades and claymore mines against the foes, who returned fire that included satchel charges and a B-40 rocket.

The Sky Soldiers fought hard, killing five more NVA.

After a 10-minute firefight, the recon element was forced to break contact. There were no allied casualties.

Moving several hundred meters from the contact area, the team called in artillery fire that was quickly provided by B Co., 3d Bn., 319th Arty., out of FSB Mattie.





4th/503d



The 4th/503d was the first of its kind in the world, a combination of the 4th and 503d, and the first of its kind in the world. The 4th/503d was the first of its kind in the world, a combination of the 4th and 503d, and the first of its kind in the world.

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'Delta Devils' Rip Stalking Foe

NUI CUNG CHAP MTS — Elements of the 4th Battalion, 503d Inf., 173d Airborne Brigade combat assaulted into the thick of fierce fighting with hardened enemy soldiers in a strongly fortified base camp area west of Phu My on April 2, 1971. The intense battle raged over several days, but the 4th Bn. troopers, led by Delta Company's "Delta Devils," forced the enemy into retreat and defeat.

Delta Co. was airlifted to a hot LZ in the late evening hours of April 2. The first birds to land spilled out hard-fighting "Devils" who peppered the enemy with enough fire to provide cover for the rest of the company as they landed.

As the company moved out in the early morning, they proceeded cautiously through the enemy-infested jungle. The 2d Bn. had been in heavy contact the two previous days, and enemy were known to be present in

force in the area. The 2d Platoon was given the task of moving ahead to a secure position where they could cover the movement of the rest of the company.

The platoon had been in movement approximately 30 minutes under the direction of the platoon leader, First Lieutenant Michael Barnes, Farmington, Maine, when the point element made contact with what was later determined to be entrenched forces on the perimeter of an enemy base camp.

Immediately, the enemy detonated claymores which were set up on the ridgeline. The explosion instantly killed two in the lead element. Other members of the squad were wounded by shrapnel from the mines.

The enemy opened fire following the explosion, while at the same time the 1st Plat. under the leadership of Staff Sergeant Frank Speight, Tolboro, North Carolina, moved forward to the aid of the wounded men in an attempt to evacuate them from the area of deadly fire. The battle then became intense as the paratroopers attempted to push forward to the aid of their wounded. The enemy, using automatic weapons, B-40 rockets, and mortars laid down a heavy base of fire, but still the men of Delta Co. pushed forward.

Meanwhile, as Delta Co. was in the midst of the heavy fighting, the rest of the 4th Bn. was mobilized and combat assaulted into the contact area. Because of the unexpected severity of the contact, the decision was made to bring in more support to the west of the contact area. By keeping to the west, the 4th Bn. hoped to block off the contact area from enemy troops entering the area, and at the same time stop any enemy who might be fleeing the area. Alpha Co. was the first to arrive in the area and immediately made contact with the enemy. Receiving heavy mortar fire on their LZ shortly after landing, the troopers pushed into thick terrain in the direction of the fire and engaged five to seven enemy soldiers. Results of their encounter were one enemy dead, one captured weapon, and other valuable materials. Alpha Co. sustained no casualties.

Bravo Co. was the next element from the 4th Bn. to be air-lifted into the area. They received light small arms fire shortly after landing but again there were no friendly casualties. Charlie Co. arrived shortly thereafter in the area with no contact with the enemy.





Photo Section

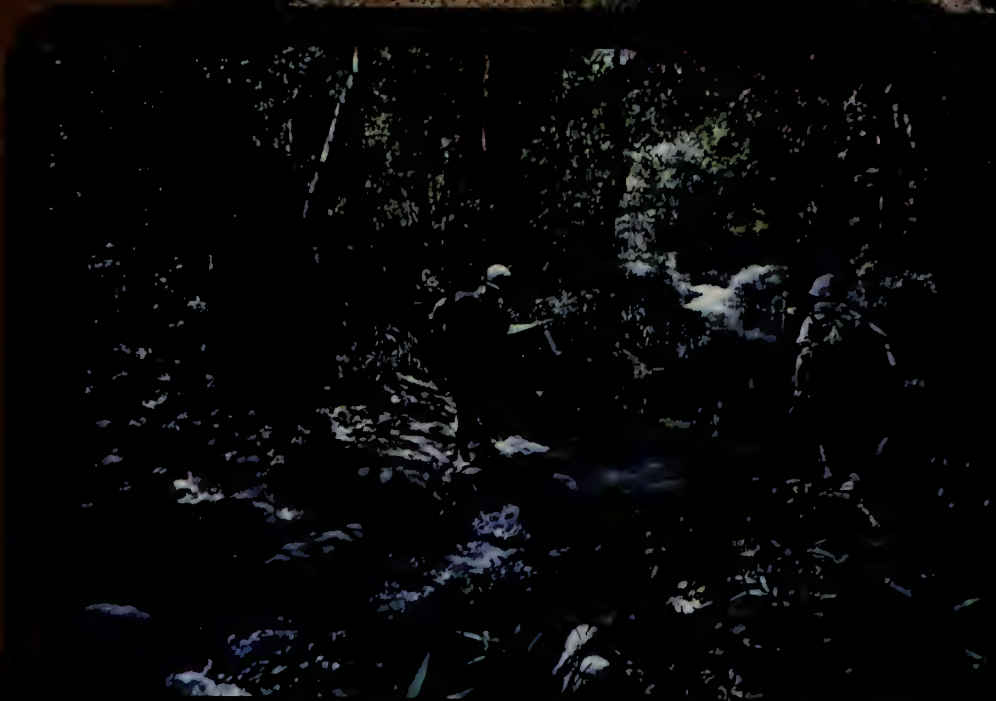


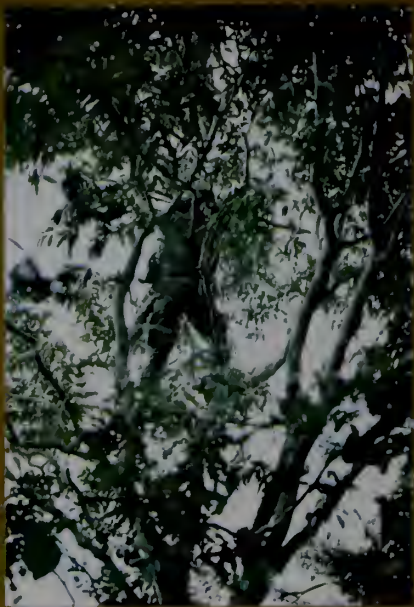






















3d/319th Airborne Artillery

The unit was constituted in August 1917 at Camp Gordon, Ga., as Battery C, 319th Field Artillery Regiment. The battery served with distinction with the 82d Infantry Division during WWI and won battle streamers for its efforts at Lorraine, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne.

The unit was deactivated at the close of the war and remained inactive until emerging in 1942 as the 319th Glider Field Artillery Battalion in support of the 82d Airborne. The battalion remained with the 82d Abn. throughout WWII and won its first Distinguished Unit Citation during that crisis.

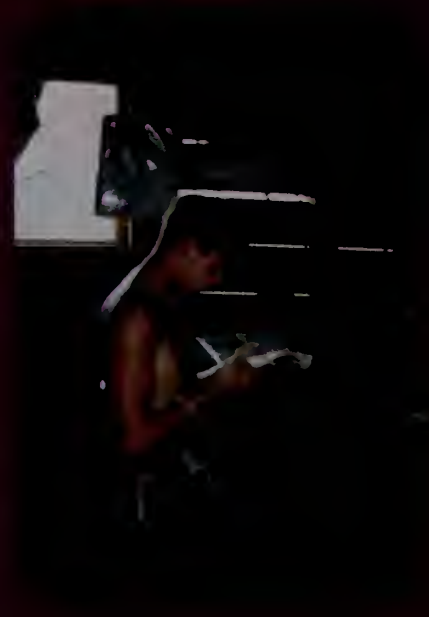
In April 1959, Btry. C, 319th Arty. set the record for the Army on entering "Fire for Effect" after an air drop. The cannoneers derigged and assembled their equipment, set up a fire direction center, established communications and went in to "Fire for Effect" after adjusting on a target of opportunity within 14 min. and 50 sec. after the last man exited the aircraft.

When the 173d Airborne Brigade was established in June 1963, this same record-breaking battery formed the nucleus of the present 3d Bn., 319th Arty.

The artillery battalion deployed to the Republic of Vietnam with the 173d in 1965. Since that time they have provided continuous fire support for the infantry battalions wherever they may be operating, insuring that devastating, decision-making firepower was never farther away than the nearest radio.









Special Troops Battalion

Special Troops Battalion, headquartered at LZ English, is unique in both organization and size. It is the largest unit in the brigade, boasting an assigned strength of over 1300 personnel. The battalion includes all aspects of a regular battalion except that it does not have an intelligence or operations section. The Battalion Commander, Major Lawrence W. Hoffman, presides over a headquarters staff of six officers and six enlisted men.

Special Troops Battalion is responsible for an all-inclusive mission that includes administrative support, combat support, and direct combat missions with assigned and attached units. The wide range of responsibilities are executed by ten separate company or detachment-size elements.

Units assigned to Special Troops Battalion run the gamut from the combat-ready Rangers to the one-man 24th Military History Detachment. In numerical order, the units assigned or attached to the Special Troops Battalion include: E Troop, 17th Cavalry; 24th Military History Detachment; 39 Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog); 46th Public Information Detachment; 51st Chemical Detachment; Company "N" (Ranger) 75th Infantry; 172d Military Intelligence Detachment; 173d Engineer Company; Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173d Airborne Brigade; and the 534th Signal Company.

With this wide variety of specialized units, the Special Troops Battalion is able to provide the 173d Airborne Brigade with the important services needed by a separate combat brigade.





Casper Platoon was organized in Okinawa in 1963. In that year the platoon joined the brigade's intensive training in preparation for deployment.

Arriving in the Republic of Vietnam during May 1965, the platoon has participated in operations ranging from the southern city of Bien Hoa, to the rugged hills of Dak To in Kontum Province.

Since its arrival the platoon has flown virtually every type of heliborne mission. Logistical, command and control, and courier flights are commonplace. However, the past years have witnessed Casper ships flying medevac, emergency-resupply, combat assaults, "snoopy missions" and many others.

During the heavy flooding that plagued Binh Dinh Province in the fall of 1970, the ships could be found flying in marginal weather conducting emergency extractions, and plucking Sky Soldiers from the rising flood waters.

The unit platoon has its own repair facility located at LZ English. Here the mechanics can perform maintenance from minor adjustments to engine change-over, thereby insuring that the pilots of Casper can "keep em flying."

17th Cav

The 17th Cavalry was organized at Fort Bliss, Tex., in 1916 as a horse cavalry regiment armed with sabers, pistols and carbines. In 1951, the Headquarters Troop was combined with the 17th Armored Group and redesignated as Headquarters Troop, 17th Armored Cavalry Group.

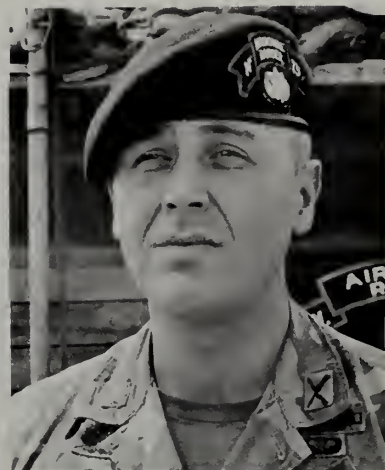
The remaining troops of the regiment were disbanded at that time, but Troop E was reconstituted in May 1959. It joined the 173d Airborne Brigade in Okinawa in 1963 as the only separate Airborne cavalry troop in the Army.

The 17th Cav. played an important role in the brigade's pacification program. Besides securing highways in the An Khe area, the troopers trained villagers of the Hoai An District in keeping hamlet security.

When the cavalry is attached to another unit in the brigade, its mobility and firepower help to serve as a security, blocking or reconnaissance and surveillance force. Operating separately, the troops run road-clearing operations, escort convoys and conduct mounted and dismounted reconnaissance missions.



Rangers



Engineers

The 173d Engineer Company has been providing the brigade with support and assistance in a variety of ways since its early days in Okinawa.

The Company has often been called upon to construct forward base camps, build fire support bases, conduct mine sweeps, and also to make improvements on existing troop facilities.

As combat engineers, the men deploy with the infantry and are utilized primarily as demolition teams. Their job in this role is to cut landing zones, explode mines and booby traps, and to destroy enemy base camps and bunkers.

During its brief history the company was awarded the Itschner Plaque as the most outstanding engineer unit in the entire Army during 1967, and the 2d Platoon has been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for actions from 1965 to 1967.





Constituted at Fort Campbell, Ky., in May 1965, and subsequently attached to the brigade in June 1965, the 172d Military Intelligence Detachment has been an invaluable asset to the Sky Soldiers of the 173d.

The 172d MI Det. is made up of four sections: Counter Intelligence (CI), Order of Battle (OB), Image Interpretation (II), and Prisoner of War Interrogation (IPW).

The CI section's foremost concern is that of denying the enemy access to information that might be used against American or Allied Forces, and to prevent acts of sabotage or investigate them should they occur.

The OB section monitors and records useful information about the enemy such as his strength, location, mission and capabilities.

The Image Interpretation section makes an analysis of terrain and man-made objects as they appear in aerial photos.

The IPW section deals primarily with prisoners, detainees, Hoi Chans, and related captured or surrendered materials.

172d M.I.



39th Scout Dogs

One of the smallest, and yet, most effective units when it comes to detecting the enemy is the 39th Scout Dog Platoon.

The platoon joined the brigade at Bien Hoa in 1966. Since that time the dogs and their handlers have been instrumental in locating hundreds of booby traps, uncovering enemy ambushes, and locating arms caches.

The unit supplies a German Shepard dog and handler to an infantry unit upon request. When the team arrives, the handler explains the dog's limitations and capabilities. The commander then utilizes the team as needed, normally in the point element.

In countless situations, these remarkable canines have certainly lived up to their reputation of being "man's best friend."

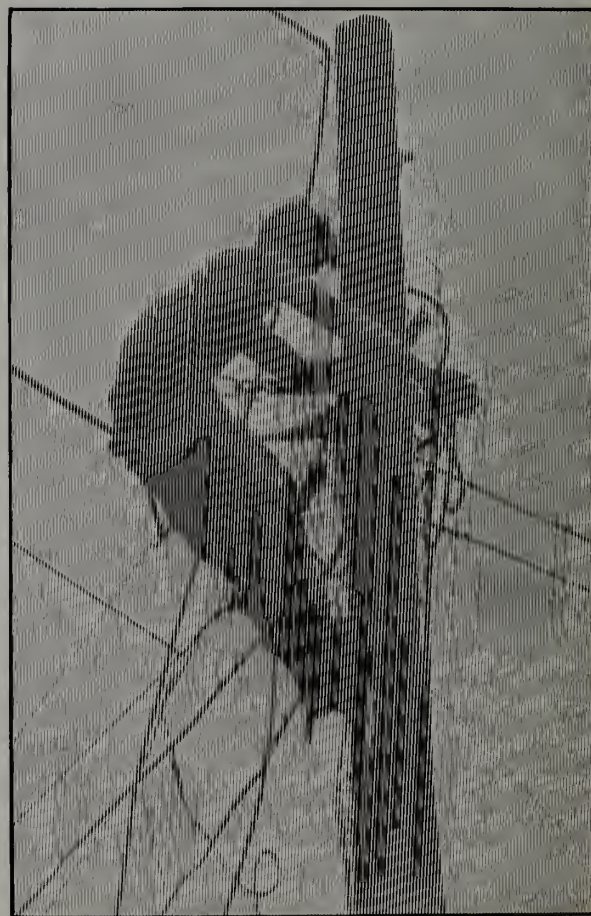
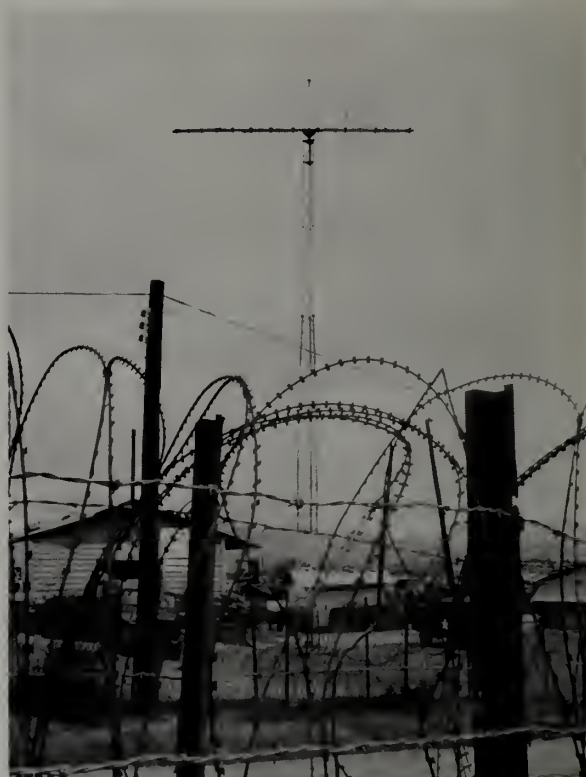
534th Signal Company

The contribution of the 534th Signal Company during the past year has been notable while technically diverse. Increasing the number of radio-teletype (RATT) stations in the brigade administration and logistics net, the signal company provided each maneuver battalion direct communication with Brigade AG, Finance, and various elements of the 173d Support Battalion.

Serving to bolster the brigade communications, the company obtained secure radio equipment in amounts comparable to a division-size unit in the Republic of Vietnam.

FM communication is another aspect of the company's diversity. Administering the brigade nets, signal personnel also maintain retransmission sites throughout the AO to overcome natural terrain and distance obstacles.

The 534th Signal Co. is also the home of the brigade's MARS facility, including a mobile MARS station now in operation at LZ Uplift.





The 51st Chemical Detachment is one of the smallest units attached to the 173d Airborne Brigade. Though small in size, however, it handles a mighty big job.

Some of the missions performed by the detachment in support of the 173d Abn. Bde. are tunnel clearance and denial, herbicide spray missions, personnel detection ("snoopy"), and flame munition support. In addition, the 51st Chemical Det. has provided technical knowledge and training assistance to the ARVN.

The 51st Chemical Det. received the Meritorious Unit Commendation for action in the Korean War where it participated in six campaigns: UN Offensive, CCF Intervention, First UN Counter-Offensive, CCF Spring Offensive, UN Summer-Fall Offensive and the Second Korean Winter Offensive.

The unit was attached to the 173d for duty in the Republic of Vietnam on June 7, 1965.



Airfield

"English International" is the 173d Airborne Brigade's own busy airport, an outlet to the fabled cities of the Far East-Saigon, Bangkok, Taipei-and, if you're lucky enough, a flight beginning from here can eventually deposit you, with a few minor stops and plane-changes, back to The World.

The airfield commander and his small but able staff coordinate all Air Force flights in and out of LZ English, and the take-off's and landings by the USAF Tonto Forward Air Controllers and the 219th Aviation Company "Headhunters." During March of 1971, the airfield played a vital part in the airlift of 2d Battalion and 3d Battalion, 503d Infantry, from An Khe to LZ English and their subsequent move to LZ Uplift.

"Headhunters" is the nickname for the men of the 219th Aviation Company, based at "English International." The Army flyers are famous for their daring forays deep into enemy territory, seeking out the enemy on the ground and destroying him. Flying their small, fixed-wing aircraft with acrobatic skill, the fearless pilots dodge enemy bullets during low-level swoops over the terrain. They then call in artillery or, sometimes, USAF tactical bombers to put the steel on the target.



MP's



The brigade MP Platoon arrived in-country with the advance party of the 173d in May 1965. In those early days of the war they were often called upon to perform duties not related to law enforcement. Many served as door gunners on helicopter gunships and others served with line companies as infantrymen.

The MPs now maintain a combined police station in Bong Son and work closely with their Vietnamese counterparts. Of particular interest is the drug suppression program that is an outgrowth of the cooperation between the Vietnamese and American law enforcement officials.

The members of the platoon furnish guards for the installations of the brigade, VIP escorts, Tactical Operations Center (TOC) guard, supplement the ready reaction force for LZ English, and facilitate normal peace keeping and law enforcement operations.



HHC



"I can find some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time; but I see no hope for ever finding all of the people all of the time," said Captain Tyron E. Tisdale, Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander.

Standing 460 strong, HHC boasts Sky Soldiers of every rank. Their mission is to support the commanding general in the command and control of the brigade.

All the personnel of the brigade staff sections are assigned to HHC. These include S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4, S-5 and the special staff sections. Organic to the company are the Brigade Aviation, Military Police, Medical and Security Platoons. Units attached to the company are 51st Chemical, 46th Public Information, 24th Military History and 364th Aviation Detachments.

Mail from Home



Support Battalion



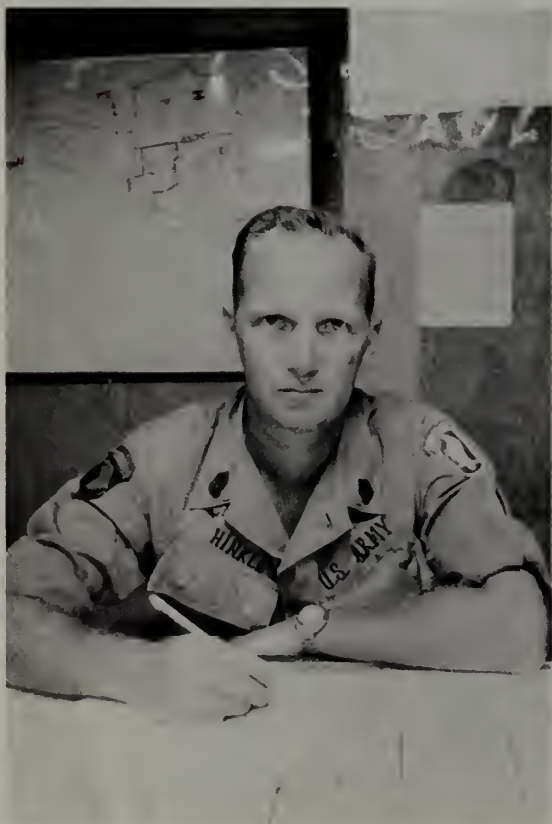
The 173d Support Battalion was formed in Okinawa in 1963 and accompanied the brigade to the Republic of Vietnam in May 1965. The battalion has constantly provided the 173d with an extensive support program from Bien Hoa to Bong Son.

Headquarters for the support battalion is located in Phu Tai. Here, Company A (Administration) houses the main finance office and the various administrative branches which process pay records and daily paperwork.

Company C (Supply and Service) is located at Cha Rang Valley with headquarters in Lifeline Compound. The transportation platoon operates from this installation and has the mission of carrying supplies and equipment to the forward areas. Brigade Supply Office (BSO) and its many tons of supplies are also located in Cha Rang Valley.

Company B (Medical) attends to the medical needs of the brigade from its modern treatment facility at LZ English. The company has a normal capacity for 80 bed patients, and provides the brigade with dust-off capabilities.

Also located at LZ English is Company D (Maintenance). The company supervises the brigade maintenance programs and repair parts services, while providing direct support maintenance for all units within the 173d.



AG Finance



COMPANY "B" MEDICAL



COMPANY "C" (S+S)



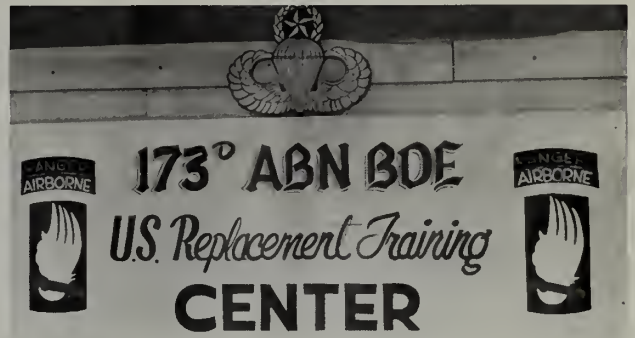
COMPANY "D" MAINTENANCE



Brigade Schools

The 173d Airborne Brigade Schools at Cha Rang Valley give each new Sky Soldier coming into the brigade a quick but thorough course of instruction in the vital skills needed by all combat troops in the Republic of Vietnam. Subjects taught at the schools include enemy tactics, marksmanship, booby traps, and basic patrolling. The many lessons learned by veteran Sky Soldiers are passed on to each fresh group of "newbies" during their week at the schools located in Cha Rang Valley.

Instruction is also given in preventive medicine, dustoff operations, Vietnamese culture and customs, and use of artillery support. 173d Airborne Brigade Schools, staffed entirely with combat veterans, also have a special Advanced Marksmanship School for carefully selected students.



AIR

FORCE



Tonto Forward Air Controllers (FAC) are U.S. Air Force personnel who fly small two-engine fixed-wing aircraft to spot enemy concentrations and bunker complexes. When the enemy areas are pinpointed, the Tonto FAC's call on the tactical fighter-bombers to obliterate the targets with 250lb. to 2,000lb. bombs.

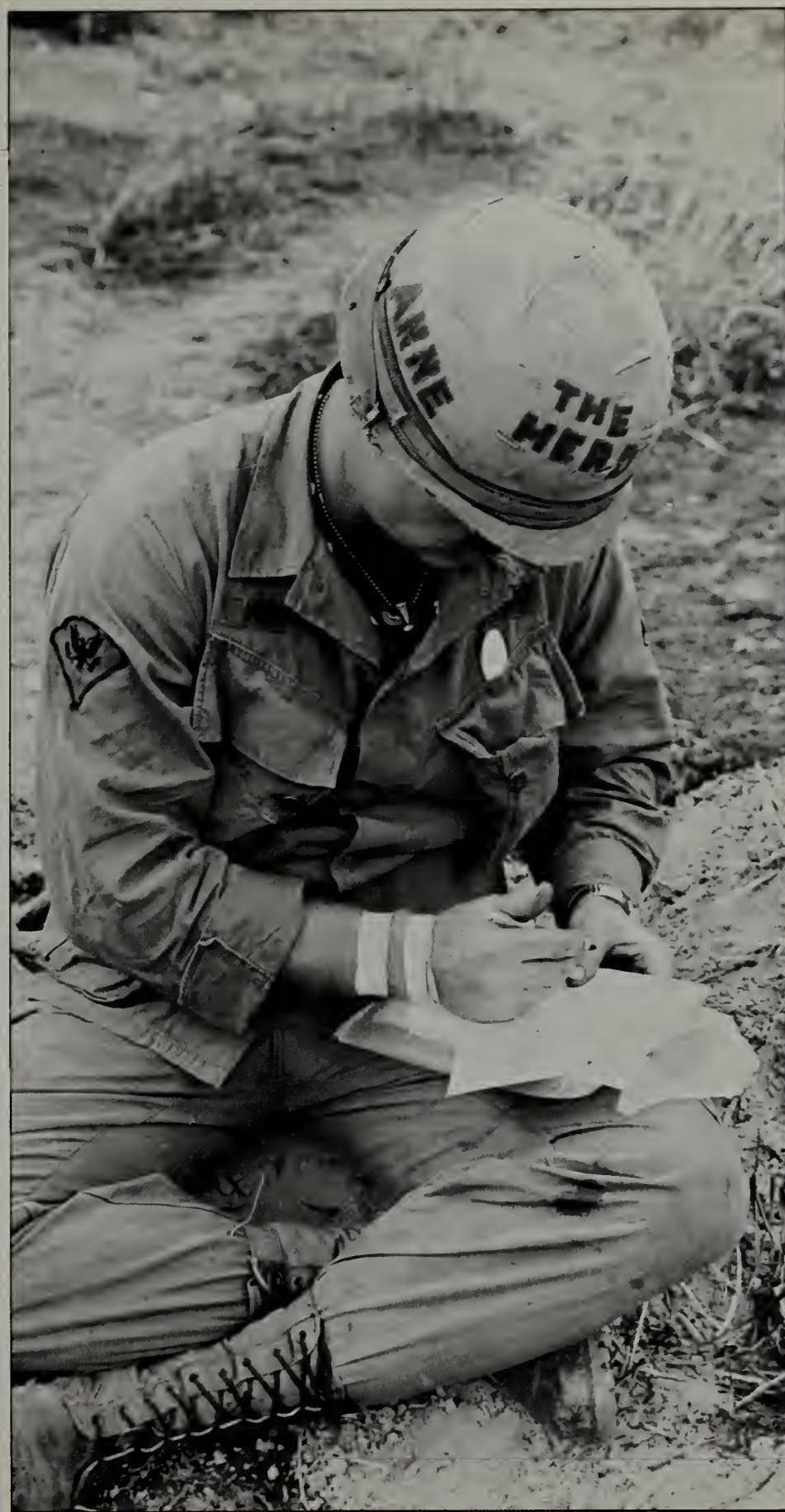
The Tonto FAC's have the capability to call in ground artillery and direct helicopter gunships to destroy the enemy. Tonto FAC's are part of the 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron, headquartered at Cam Ranh Bay. They call in Air Force high-performance aircraft from a wide variety of air bases in Southeast Asia.

The FAC's are a vital part of the fire support available to the ground infantryman, and provide the Sky Soldiers with powerful and welcome assists from our Air Force brothers.

The Tactical Air Liaison Officer (TALO) is another member of the Air Force who works closely with the brigade, although his function is completely separate from the Tonto FAC's. The TALO coordinates all Air Force airlift support for the brigade, including scheduling and supervising USAF flights into LZ English.



Dear Folks, Things are fine here...



This magazine was prepared by personnel of the 173d Airborne Brigade Information Office. The following individuals deserve full credit for producing all photographs and copy for this magazine:

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HEADQUARTERS 173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE

