

1851 EDGEHILL RD  
ABINGTON, PA 19001



VIA AIR MAIL

PFC B. S. ALLEN, JR US 52817810  
BTRY B 1ST BN 8TH ARTY.  
25TH INF DIV.  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96225

1/30/69

DEAR BERT,

RANDOM THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, REMARKS REGARDING YOUR  
"PURPLE HEART LETTER"  
(RECEIVED TO-DAY)

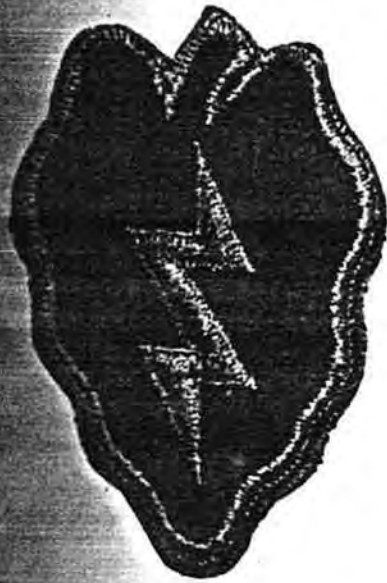
GODAMMIT, DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO "DUCK!!" ?  
IS THE METAL STILL IN YOU? WHERE? FOR HOW LONG?  
WHEN YOU WERE HIT DID IT KNOCK YOU OUT? WERE YOU  
WEARING YOUR POT? IF NOT, WHY NOT? WERE YOU ABLE TO  
MAKE IT TO THE HOSPITAL, OR AID STATION, OR WHATEVER ON YOUR  
OWN? STITCHES? OR ASPIRIN? ANYBODY ELSE HIT? BAD?  
YOU O.K.? FOR SURE!! DON'T HAND ME ANY SHIT!  
ONE PURPLE HEART IS ENOUGH, AINT IT? IF YOU'RE STILL  
CARRYING THE METAL IN YOU, WILL YOU BE ABLE TO PREDICT  
THE WEATHER FROM IT? OR PICK UP STRANGE RADIO STATIONS?  
RSVP SOONEST. SO MUCH FOR THAT.

BEFFIE GOT THREE LETTERS FROM KEN TO-DAY. ONE OF  
'EM IS SIX PAGES LONG, SHE ONLY READS US THE DULL STUFF  
LIKE BAYONET TRAINING, RIFLE RANGE, ETC. HE SAID HE WAS  
MADE "ASSISTANT FIELD FIRST", WHATEVER THE HELL THAT IS.

HOW ABOUT YOUR LAUNDRY? HOW IS THAT DONE? SLANTY-EYED GIRLS?

TAKE CARE !!

WE DON'T NEED ANY HEROES  
YOUR WHOLE FAMILY IS PROUD OF YOU  
DAD



# TROPIC LIGHTNING

A HISTORY OF THE 25th INFANTRY DIVISION

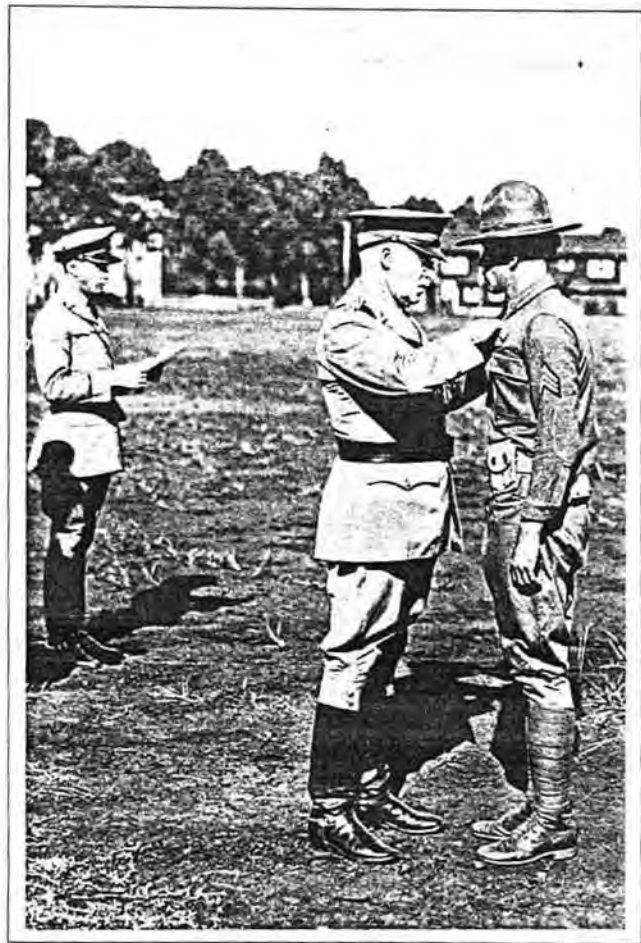
## A Home in the Pacific

Long before the annexation of Hawaii, the island of Oahu in the Central Pacific held supreme importance in the defense of North America. Its two fine harbors promised shelter for the American Navy and a haven for the Merchant Marine fleet in its passage to Asia. The Leilehua plateau seemed an ideal location for "a brigade of mobile troops." In 1908 Captain Joseph C. Castner was directed to take elements of the 4th Cavalry, MacKenzie's Raiders, and build a camp on the island to be known as Schofield Barracks.

In 1916 the wooden barracks were replaced by regimental quadrangles to house the men of the growing garrison. When World War I took most of the regular units to Europe, the Hawaiian National Guard took over to build one of the Army's finest training camps. Under the flag of the Hawaiian Division, Schofield Barracks grew to become a vital military installation, girding itself against the warlike sounds of Imperial Japan.







## Forming the 25th

“At the final stroke of twelve last night a fine old soldier passed away, but into his place stepped two lusty sons to carry on.”

With these words, *The Honolulu Advertiser* recorded, on October 1, 1941, the formation of two new Infantry Divisions in the U.S. Army.

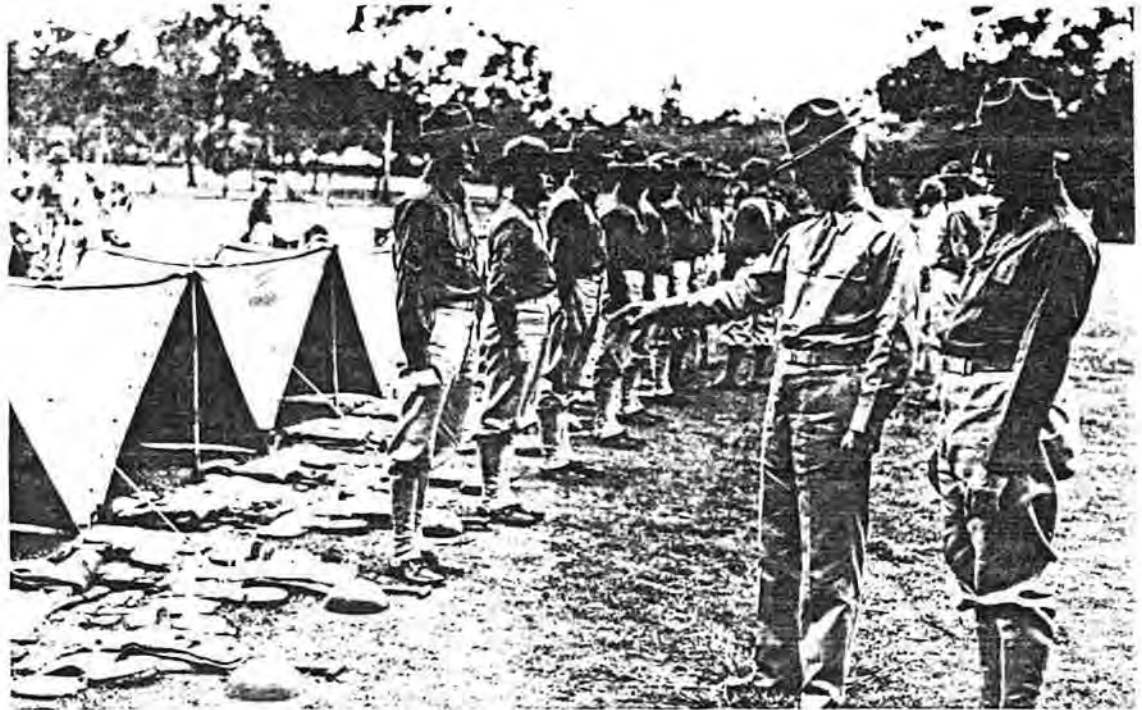
“The Hawaiian Division,” the editorial continued, “is no more. The proud organization that was stationed at Schofield Barracks has been inactivated. In its place this morning are two new ‘streamlined’ divisions, the Twenty-fourth and the Twenty-fifth.”

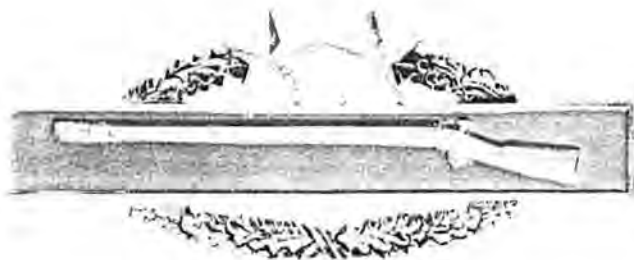
In those days “streamlined” meant the new triangular division. As the *Advertiser* put it, “the passing of the Hawaiian Division marks the end of . . . the Old Army.”

But in the days that followed, “streamlined” was destined to take on a new meaning in the Pacific. It would come to mean the swift move, the hard punch, and the professional strike force of the 25th Infantry Division.

Ten weeks later, on a slightly overcast Sunday, 353 Japanese planes screamed through Kolekole Pass in their bloody attack on Hawaii. “The Day of Infamy”: December 7, 1941. As the first bullets slammed into the headquarters building of the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry, men of the 25th Infantry Division took arms and returned the fire as best they could, becoming the first U.S. unit to engage the enemy.

To counteract the threat of invasion, the 25th Division moved to the beaches to set up defensive positions around Honolulu and the Ewa plains. Training for jungle warfare was paramount, the climate was tense.





# Chronology

October 1, 1941

The 25th Infantry Division is formed from the 27th and 35th Infantry Regiments of the old Hawaiian Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.



December 7, 1941

“Day of Infamy” First to engage the enemy in World War II, the 25th takes the attacking Japanese war planes under fire and moves to the beaches to defend Honolulu and the Ewa Plains.



November 25, 1942

The Division moves to Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, to relieve the United States Marines; participates in the seizure of Kokumbona and the reduction of the Mt. Austen pocket on Guadalcanal. Captures Vella La Vella.

August 25, 1943

The Division moves to the Solomons capturing Zieta, Bairoko Harbor, New Georgia, Arundel Island and Kolombangara, earning the nickname “Tropic Lightning.”



January 11, 1945

D-Day for the Division in the Philippines: Tropic Lightning strikes across the Central Plains of Luzon taking the enemy at Binalonan and capturing Digdig, Putland, and Kapintalan.

June 30, 1945

The Division leaves Luzon after a record 165 consecutive days of combat. It is awarded the Philippines Presidential Unit Citation.



September 20, 1945	The men of the 25th Infantry Division arrive to occupy and aid in the reconstruction of Japan.	September 21, 1954	The 25th Infantry Division comes home to Hawaii after more than 12 years absence. Bands, hula girls, and 25,000 orchids attest to the admiration of Hawaii for her famous Division.
June 25, 1950	The North Korean Peoples Army crosses the 38th parallel in an unprovoked attack on the Republic of Korea. Within 10 days the 25th Division is in Korea as part of the United Nations Command, and at war again in Asia.	February 1957	The 25th Infantry Division becomes the first Infantry division to reorganize under the pentomic structure.
August 11, 1950	The Division has successfully and swiftly blocked the approaches to the port city of Pusan and receives the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation.	August 26, 1963	The Division organization is honed again under the new Army ROAD concept to become the Army's principal guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency strike force. Participating in an extensive new training program, Tropic Lightning sets the pace in Operation Dusty Trail III by lifting the Army off the ground, a prelude to the new airmobile concept.
September 16, 1950	The Division goes on the offensive trapping more than 50,000 North Koreans and driving them back to the Kum River.	December 1964	Combat troops from the 25th Division volunteer for the Republic of Vietnam to relieve the overworked door gunners.
November 3, 1950	The Chinese Communist Forces intervene and mass across the Yalu River pushing the UN Forces back all along the front.	August 22, 1965	170 men of Charlie Company, 65th Engineer Battalion leave Schofield Barracks for the Republic of Vietnam.
January 15, 1951	Tropic Lightning participates in a new UN offensive and in five hard-driving operations pushes the enemy north across the Han River securing the Iron Triangle. It is awarded a second Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation.	January 1, 1966	Operation Blue Light: In the largest single troop movement in history, the 25th Infantry Division moves to Vietnam to carve an area of operation out of the Viet Cong stronghold northwest of Saigon.
January 31, 1953	The 25th Infantry Division becomes the IX Corps reserve force during the UN-Communist negotiations; described by General Jenkins, IX Corps Commander: "Today the 25th Division is like a razor's edge."	February 1968	A desperate enemy launches his all-out "Tet Offensive" and is smashed against the anvil of land which the Tropic Lightning has cleared. The mauled enemy is pursued back into his redoubt with much of his combat capability destroyed.
May 5, 1953	The Division assumes the responsibility for guarding Seoul.	January 28, 1969	The 25th Infantry Division is awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm for spearheading 62 major combat operations in its area.
July 27, 1953	Korean Armistice. 25th Division stabilizes the main battle position and remains on guard.		

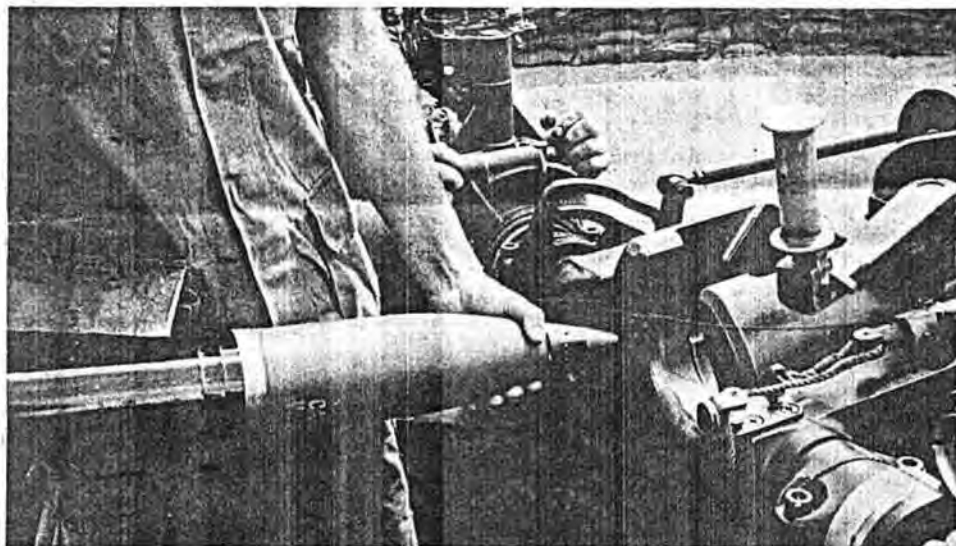




**PLOTTING**—Specialist 4 Charles Cline of Harrisville, W. Va., must plot the requested direction and distance of fire before firing data may be calculated and passed to the guns. (ILT R. S. PERRY)



**HEAD ON**—At Diamond III this 105mm was lowered and belched fire 159 times that lo Private First Class Mario Alvarando of Sunland, N.M.; Sergeant George Belich of Pittsb



**RAMMING THE PROJEO**—As the gunner sets the deflection and levels the bubbles on the sight, the #1 cannoner rams the projectile and cannister into the tube. (PHOTO BY 1LT R.S. PERRY)

# Artillery—the K 1/8 Puts It Wh

By SP4 Bert Allen  
FSB PERSHING — "Battery adjust!" These words command the respect of the men of 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery. At this command, cannoners rush to their positions around the big guns, and begin to perform their varied tasks to get the projectiles out where needed, when requested.

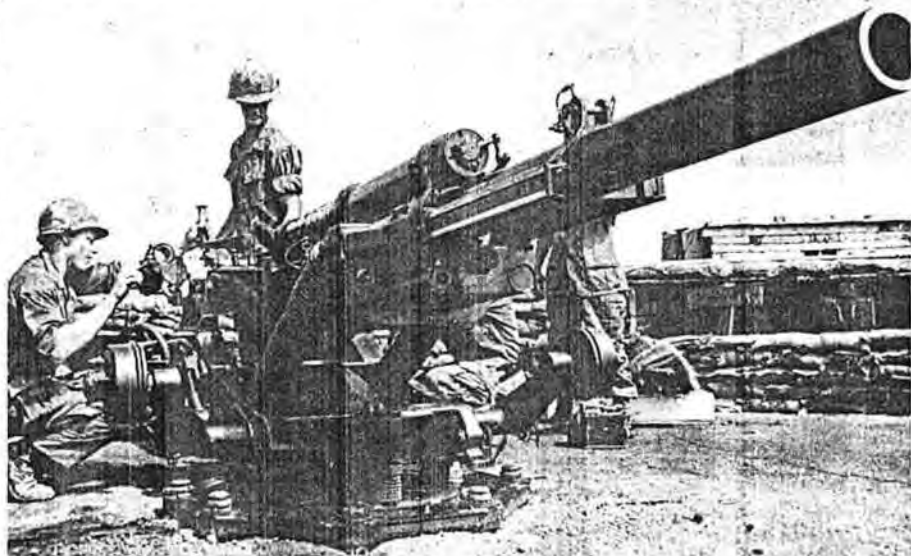
Located at three fire support bases and patrol bases Diamond II and III, the cannoners are constantly prepared to give their support.

The artillerymen have a never-ending task that results

in little visible reward. But the infantrymen and brown water sailors on the Saigon River have seen the effects of the battalion's precise firing. These elements have been rewarded and the cannoner is satisfied knowing that he has assisted in defeating the enemy, or destroying his resources.

Bravo Battery of the 1/8 is not only a fighting battery; it is a show unit capable of demonstrating the abilities of the artillery to any and all visitors from admirals and generals to Billy Graham or the stars of

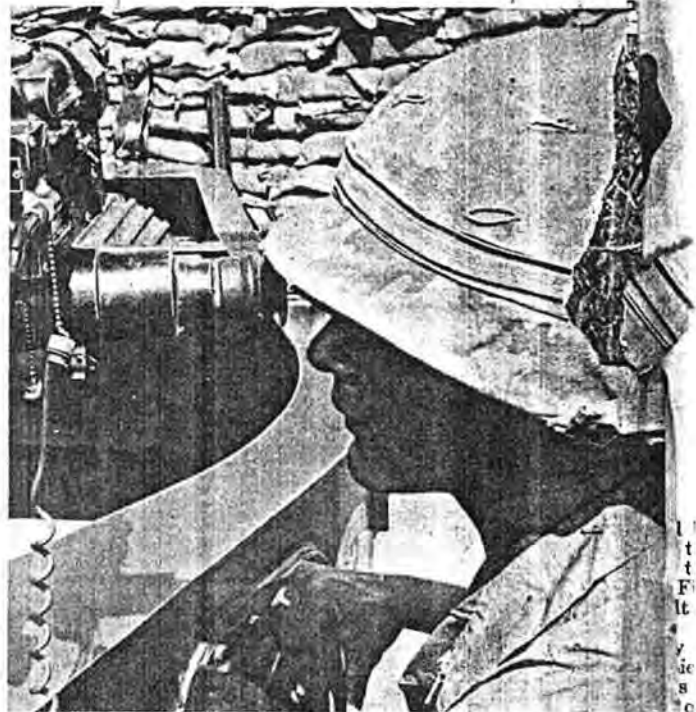
**READY AND SET**— Corporal Dale Dahlinger of Toms River, N.J., and Specialist 4 Doyle Reynolds of Bisbee, Ariz., assist in preparing the gun to fire. Dahlinger is setting the elevation of the tube while Reynolds rams the projectile into the chamber of the breech. (PHOTO: BY 1LT R.S. PERRY)



**TOTE THAT BOX**—Two cannoners tote two of the several hundred rounds



night. The crew, from left, consists of Specialist 4 Wayne Day of Anadarko, Okla.; Specialist 4 Roger Glover from Mansfield, La. (PHOTO BY SP4 R. B. WILLIAMS)



**SIGHTING IN**—Specialist 4 Mario Santana of South Pekin, Ill., performs the delicate task of setting the proper deflection before a round is permitted to leave the tube. His duty is similar to pointing a rifle in the right direction, but his work is much more complex. (PHOTO BY 1LT R.S. PERRY)

## ing of Battle— ere It's Needed

"Peyton Place." Its guest list is impressive.

Also impressive are the awards for valor presented to the battalion's cannoneers who stand by their guns during hostile fire.

First Lieutenant Stuart Green of Hartford, Conn., Bravo Battery Executive Officer, is able to say, "We're number one in Vietnam, and we're going to stay that way."

There is a strict discipline in the battalion in order to instill in the cannoneers the ability to put out supporting fires rapidly and accurately. The illusion of

disorganization and uncleanness at a fire support base in the fields of Vietnam is soon dispelled upon arrival at any of 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery, locations.

Each howitzer's parapet is constantly raked, and cleaned at least twice daily. It is almost impossible to find a cigarette butt in the battery areas.

The day of the artillerymen is long and arduous. If he's lucky, he gets a few hours sleep at night, and that may be broken by fire missions.

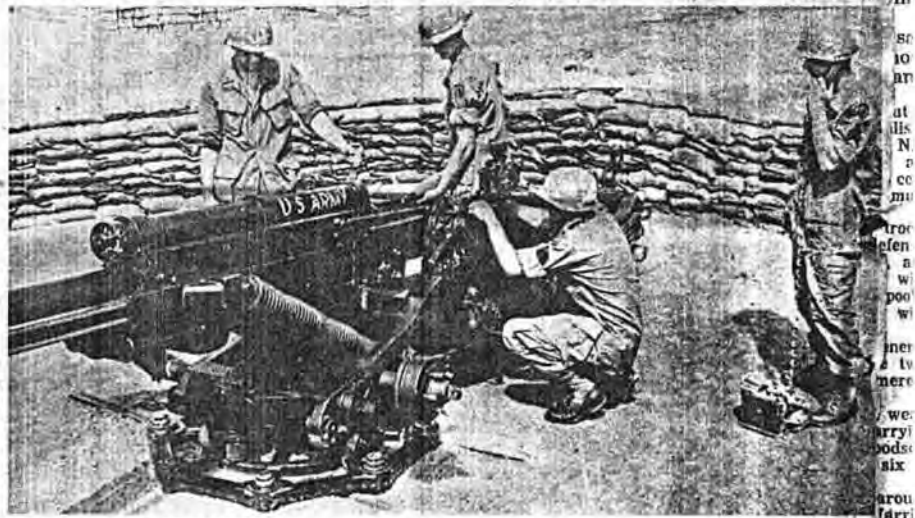
His early morning hours are spent maintaining and cleaning his weapon, as well as the "office"—the gun's parapet.

Sometime during the day a convoy arrives bringing a strenuous task for the gun bunnies — breaking out several hundred rounds of ammunition which weigh approximately 35 pounds each.

During the distribution of ammo, other cannoneers may possibly be firing more rounds, which makes the task seem eternal.

The never-resting "brain" of the artillery, the Fire Direction Center, demands quick reactions and smooth, calm thinking from its men under the most arduous conditions. It is not unusual to see the men of F.D.C. finishing a fire mission as exhausted as the cannoneers.

It is in F.D.C. that data is gathered from the forward observers, the "eyes" of the artillery with infantry units. The information is then calculated and given to the cannoneers in terms suitable for the guns' use.



**RECEIVING THE COMMANDS**—Sergeant Charles Garrison of Rome, Ga., gets the gun's commands from F.D.C. and passes them on to the cannoneers. Crew members are from left Corporal Dale Dahlinger of Toms River, N.J.; Specialist 4 Doyle Reynolds of Bisbee, Ariz.; and Sergeant Billy Browning of Little Rock, Ark. (PHOTO BY 1LT R.S. PERRY)



from Bravo Battery unload going to FSB Pershing daily. (PHOTO BY 1LT R.S. PERRY)



**PUNCHING THE TUBE**—Two cannoneers from the First Battalion of the Eighth's B Battery prepare to clean the bore of their howitzer. Performing this daily task are Specialist 4 Kenneth Sedbury of Hillcrest Heights, Ohio, and Private First Class Frederick DeBolt of Ottawa, Ill. (PHOTO BY 1LT R.S. PERRY)



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THE LOOK of eager anticipation was evident on the faces of the children as they patiently waited for their share of the supplies being distributed by the Tomahawks. (PHOTO BY PFC SAM DIXON)

# ARVN's Defend Vital Phu Cuong

CU CHI — One of the most strategic military positions in the III Corps Tactical Zone was recently placed under control of Vietnamese Regional soldiers after being secured for several years by the Tropic Lightning Division.

The Phu Cuong Bridge is now defended by the 312th Regional Force Company commanded by Captain Le Van Nam. Prior to the turnover, the bridge, which spans the Saigon River east of Cu Chi on Highway 8A, had been guarded by Tropic Lightning soldiers from the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry.

ENDLESS STREAMS of truck convoys snake across the Phu Cuong, moving urgently needed supplies and munitions, heavy construction equipment and other military machinery back and forth between Saigon, Long Binh and the Cu Chi base camp.

Lambrettas piled high with people and produce dodge in and out of heavy traffic as the Vietnamese people take their goods to market.

Many families cross the bridge twice daily going to and from work.

EVEN PEDESTRIANS enjoy the speed and ease of crossing the murky river by the bridge. At one time a ferry was the only means of crossing, which cost

each traveler both time and money.

The responsibility of protecting this vital link has now fallen to the South Vietnamese. To insure that the Regional Forces were ready, the departing Golden Dragons soldiers held classes in tactics and defense of the bridge.

"It was like an abbreviated Advanced Infantry Course back in the States," said First Lieutenant David Wood of West Palm Beach, Fla., a Golden Dragon platoon leader. "We gave 12 classes in such things as ambush patrols, reconnaissance in force, use of claymores, M16s, M79s and other infantry basics."

IN ADDITION to these basic classes, the Regional Forces were shown how to defend the bridge itself. As the number of Americans at the site was gradually reduced, the Vietnamese took over the duties.

Now there are only a few Americans at the bridge, advising the RFs on technical matters concerning the defense of the span.

"The Vietnamese soldiers are learning fast," said Staff Sergeant Danh Truong, interpreter for Delta Company, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry. "They seem to pay a lot of attention to the U.S. instructors."

## 'Hawks Wage Peace Fight



TAY NINH — For more than a month Tomahawks from the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, were engaged in driving enemy forces from Nui Ba Den and Tay Ninh City. Recently, they got the chance to perform a more peaceful chore.

When enemy forces entrenched themselves near the holy Cao Dai center in Tay Ninh, some civilian property was damaged. Some citizens were made homeless and hungry. The men of the Tomahawks' reconnaissance platoon helped alleviate the situation by donating and distributing over a ton of food and supplies to the

people. Under the command of Captain Glen H. Fleming of Hampton, Va., the reconnaissance unit worked swiftly to distribute all the supplies.

Commented battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel G.E. Taylor of Shelby, N.C., "I was concerned with the distribution of supplies, but when I got there it was obvious that Captain Fleming and the village chief were very well prepared. The village chief had prepared a roster of the civilians who had suffered damage to their property and had systematically listed their proportional need."

## Moore Wins Skeet Title

CU CHI — From all over the Republic of Vietnam, 35 select men were called to U.S. Army Headquarters at Long Binh for a special and unusual event.

The briefing was short. Weapons would be shotguns rather than M-16 rifles; the enemy, rather than Viet Cong, would be clay pigeons; and unlike a combat operation everyone was to enjoy himself. The operation: the 100 All-Gauge Skeet Shoot.

Accepting the call from the 25th Infantry Division to the shoot was Andy B. Moore, Red Cross Field Director at Cu Chi. Expertly demonstrating that Tropic Lightning strikes "anywhere, anytime," Moore, shooting as lead-off man of the first squad, turned in a perfect score of 100x100 to win the shoot.

For Moore, who is departing in September en route to Europe, this was a fitting climax to his tour in Vietnam.

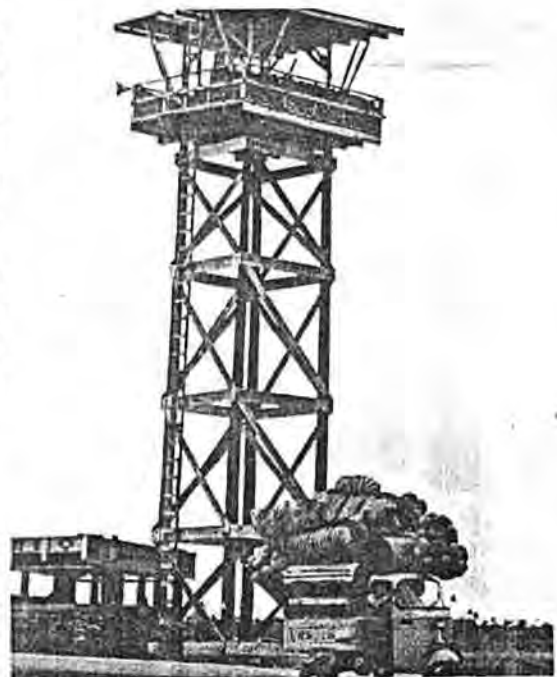
## 4 Support Units Have Birthdays

Four of the division's support battalions will celebrate their 28th anniversaries Aug. 26.

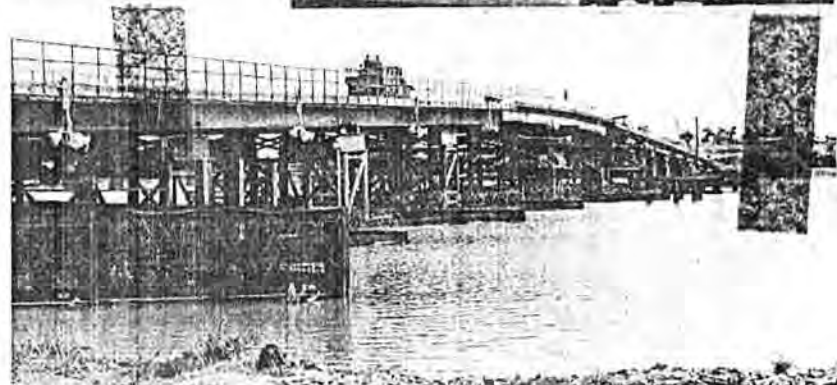
The 25th Medical Battalion, the 25th Supply and Transportation Battalion, the 125th Signal Battalion, and the 725th Maintenance Battalion all were officially organized on Aug. 26, 1941, more than a month before the division's organization.

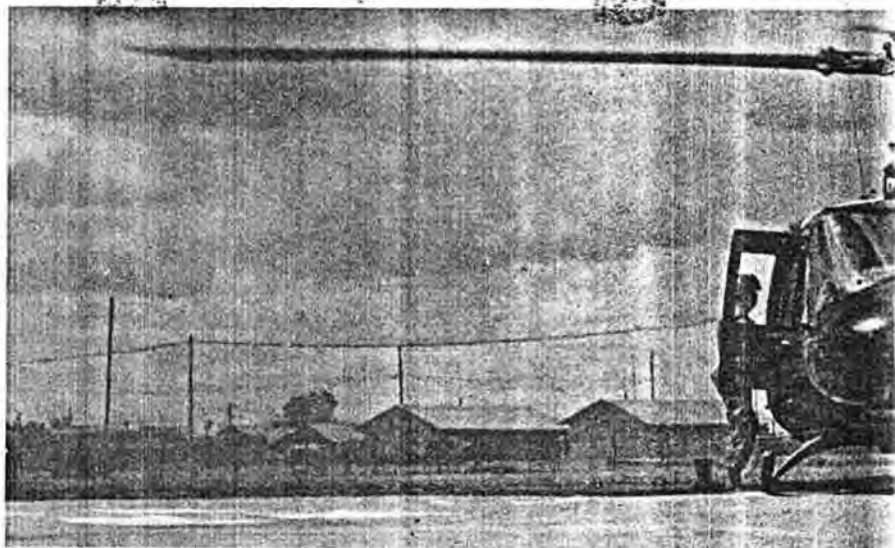
NO SWEAT — Even though the weather was steaming, one venerable old man came to the distribution point in a French dress coat. (PHOTO BY PFC SAM DIXON)

RIGHT—A loaded mini-truck is typical of the kind of traffic sustained by a secure Phu Cuong Bridge, now being defended by Vietnamese Regional Forces. (PHOTO BY PFC FRANKIE DITTO)



BELOW — Bunkers, PSP, cat walks and barbed wire are all a part of the mighty bridge that the 312th Company is defending. (PHOTO BY PFC FRANKIE DITTO)

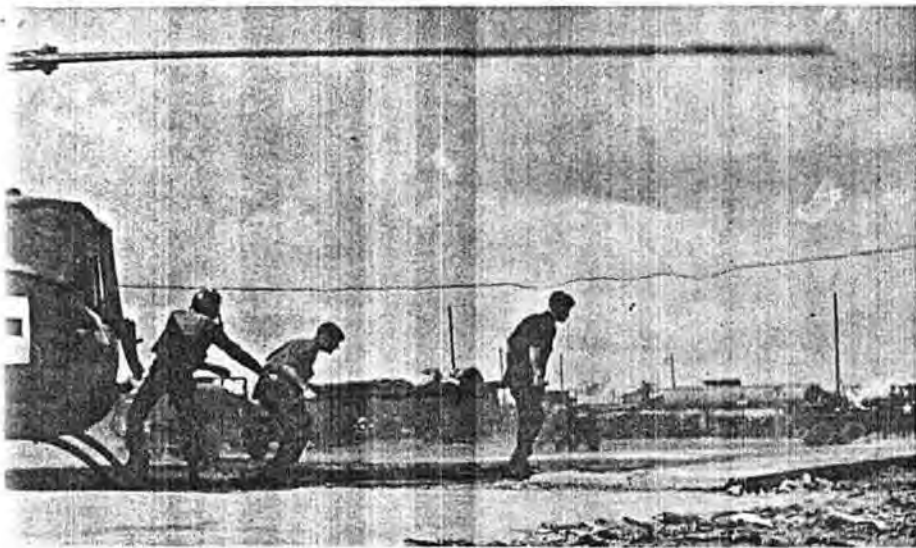




**Medic!**







Heroism is part of his daily routine.  
He is the first leg of an efficient,  
fast, professional medical operation.



# Muleskinners: Big, Ugly and Vital

By Sp4 Bert Allen

**CU CHI** — From the swamps of the Delta marshlands to the top of Nui Ba Den, the CH-47 chinook helicopter has been an invaluable tool for resupply in Vietnam.

And for the men of Tropic Lightning, chinooks mean the Muleskinners — the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company. Operating out of the home base in Cu Chi, the Muleskinners fly missions to nearly all corners of the division area of operations.

"The Muleskinners support not only the 25th Division but also Special Forces troops, ARVNs, Royal Thai Volunteers and the Australians. We operate in all of III Corps and down into IV Corps," said Chief Warrant Officer Carl Gillberg of North

Plainfield, N.J., a chinook pilot.

**THE CHINOOK** IS primarily a cargo-carrying ship weighing over 10 tons. The craft is capable of carrying 8,000 pounds maximum load at speeds comparable to other lighter helicopters. The flight crew is composed of an aircraft commander, pilot, flight engineer, door-gunner and crew chief who doubles as a second door-gunner.

Every 100 hours, complete maintenance inspection is made on each chinook. Parts are cleaned, inspected and lubricated by the Muleskinners' own maintenance staff.

"All maintenance is performed right here in Cu Chi by our own mechanics, unlike other helicopter companies," said Gillberg. "The flight crew per-

forms what is called crew maintenance, changing oil, checking systems and all minor functions. Our own maintenance section cares for flight systems, power plants and avionics."

Most Muleskinner missions are cargo-hauling sorties, but occasionally the "big bird" transports troops. Tropic Lightning soldiers on the summit of Nui Ba Den rely on Muleskinner chinooks as their only artery of supply. Everything that gets to the top of the mountain goes by chinook. The sides are impassable.

**TROPIC LIGHTNING'S** famed patrol bases near the Angel's Wing — the Diamonds and Frontier City — were built and defended with invaluable assistance from the Muleskinners.

Artillery pieces, ammunition, sandbags, C-rations and even observation towers were brought in by chinooks.

During recent action on the flanks of Nui Ba Den, troopers from the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, were aided by Muleskinner chinooks which dropped cannisters of riot con-

trol agent on the entrenched enemy positions, driving the enemy soldiers down into the kill zone.

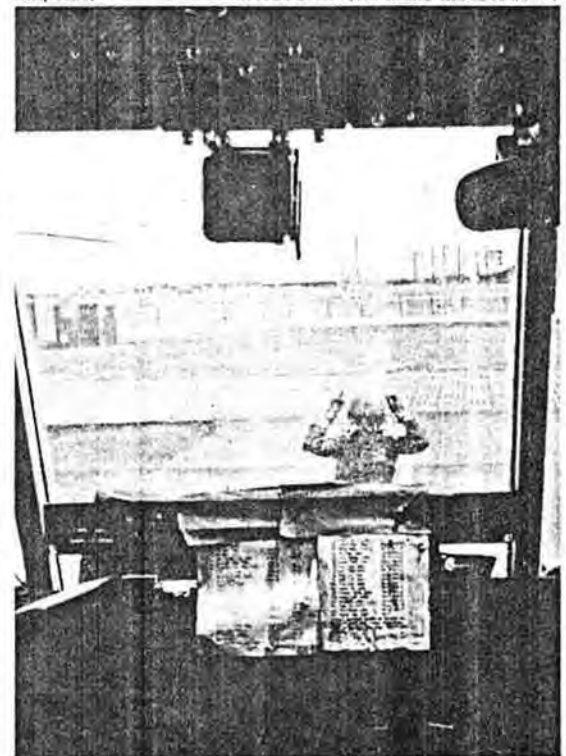
The "big birds" look clumsy and awkward next to a sleek Cobra or a shining Huey, but in the war effort, the Muleskinner chinooks' role is vital and undisputed.



**OUR COMMAND INFORMATION SPOKESMAN** this week is wearing a nifty keen little number from Cole of California. Though she is attired in a play suit and is going barefoot on the shore, she wants to remind all Tropic Lightning soldiers that proper off-duty wear does not include shorts and does include socks. It's true.



**UP IN THE AIR**—Making a periodic inspection of the rotor assembly in the tail pylon of a Muleskinner Chinook are PFC Rick Piercy of Tipton, Mich., and SP4 David S. Carter of Hampton, N.H. (PHOTO BY SP4 KARL KARLGAARD)



**YOU'RE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT**—Specialist 4 Merrill E. Herring, Muleskinner crew chief from Larkspur, Calif., guides a ten-ton CH-47 aircraft from its parking place.

(PHOTO BY SP4 HAROLD ANDERSON)