

# Christmas message

This is the fifth Christmas to find the Blackhorse Regiment serving in the Republic of Vietnam. To each trooper, past and present, the passing of Christmas in this land far from home and loved ones has some special meaning known only to him. Additionally, each Blackhorse trooper is blessed in sharing the spirit of this Holy Day with his fellow troopers.

I encourage each of you to cherish your private thoughts and longings. Also, I ask that you join with me in offering a prayer of thanks for the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us.

I wish each of you a Merry Christmas as well as a Happy and Successful New Year.

John L. Gerrity  
Colonel, Armor  
Commanding

## ARP's, CO

### Troopers nab VC

Blackhorse troopers of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment captured three VC at an abandoned American night defensive position, 12 miles northwest of Bien Hoa, Nov. 19.

Shortly after 11 a.m., the pilot of a Light Observation Helicopter, Chief Warrant Officer Dennis L. Manes, of the Regiment's Air Cavalry Troop, passed over the former 1st Cavalry Division NDP and noticed some fresh foot prints.

The rotor wash from the helicopter blew up a piece of cardboard, revealing one Viet Cong hiding in a hole. The VC appeared to be unarmed. Chief Manes hovered over the old bunker while his observer-gunner, Private First Class John E. Liljegren, kept the enemy covered.

Manes then called in the information to a nearby unit, asking if there were any ground forces available to move in on the position. He was told it would not be possible because of distance and terrain.

The Regimental Commander, Colonel John L. Gerrity, monitored the report and directed that the Viet Cong not be killed, but that an attempt be made to capture him alive. He ordered the Aero Rifle Platoon (ARP's) of the Regiment's Air Cav Troop to be inserted.

Because the hovering LOH was running low on fuel and the ARP's were unavoidably delayed in reaching the site, Colonel Gerrity ordered his command and control helicopter to land 100 meters from the hiding place of the VC.

Dismounting, he and Command Sergeant Major Hiram T. Harrison advanced to cover any attempted escape by the VC.

When the ARP's landed and the VC was being taken prisoner, Sergeant Vincent J. Delorenzo noticed a slight movement in a mud-filled hole to his right. He fired several shots into the ground and called out to anyone there to surrender. Two VC reluctantly emerged and surrendered.

After a thorough search of the area, during which the ARP's recovered medical supplies, food, canteens, and entrenching tools, but no weapons, the ARP's were extracted.

It is believed that the VC were scavenging the area for supplies.

# BLACKHORSE

— Find the Bastards — Then Pile On —

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## Blackhorse continues supporting local forces

The capture of three Viet Cong by the Regimental Commander, Colonel John Gerrity, the Command Sergeant Major Hiram Harrison, and members of the Air Cav Troop's Aero Rifle Platoon (ARP's) was one of the highlights of the month's action as Blackhorse units continued to search out enemy staging areas and work in support of Vietnamese Territorial Forces.

The Regiment's 1st Squadron worked with an ARVN Land Clearing Company and provided security in Bien Hoa and Long Khanh Provinces.

The Squadron's A Troop participated in combined operations with local Vietnamese forces to interdict enemy movement and spend part of the month securing the ARVN 318th Land Clearing Company, as did B Troop.

At 10:15 Nov. 21, a dismounted ambush set up by B Troop at the edge of a banana plantation killed one enemy soldier and wounded two more.

B and C Troops also worked along Highway 1 and had their platoons conduct Quarterly Service at Fire Support Base Henderson.

In addition, C Troop closely supported the operations of D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, a wheel-mounted ground cavalry unit under the operational control of 1st Squadron.

D Company assisted the Kiem Tan Subsector in its rice harvest security operations while also providing security for a U.S. Engineer rock quarry and road building operations.

The Regiment's 2nd Squadron, still under the operational control of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (AM) ended the month of October with 17 enemy kills, more than half the 3rd Brigade total.

During the first week of November, F Troop moved to the extreme western portion of the AO and participated in reconnaissance missions. The troop was joined by E Troop Nov. 20. During the operation, the two troops were credited with 18 enemy killed.

The first part of November saw an interesting operation by 3rd Squadron, with platoons from M Company, K Troop and I Troop working jointly with Regional Forces soldiers to sweep through the Heart-shaped woods of Vinh Loi Jungle. Although no enemy were spotted, the troopers found numerous fighting positions, bunker and spider holes, all of which were destroyed.

The three line troops all participated in reconnaissance missions, with K Troop killing three VC and I Troop four.



A command and control helicopter sets down at a position secured by 1st Squadron's B Troop.

## An interview with Regimental Commander

This past month, the Blackhorse obtained an interview with Colonel John L. Gerrity, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regimental Commander. The text:

**Blackhorse:** We all read, in the newspapers, about Vietnamization and the gradual reduction of U.S. troops in Vietnam. How has this affected the role of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment?

**Col. Gerrity:** The Regiment's role has changed significantly. Vietnamization calls for the Vietnamese forces to shoulder an ever increasing share of the combat burden. They are doing just that, and their actions have not only allowed the sizeable redeployment of U.S. forces, but they have essentially replaced U.S. forces operating against the enemy's strongest main force units, those in the remote areas. We find the Regiment removed from the border area and operating on the fringes of heavily populated areas. Here, in

addition to assisting in the elimination of the significantly weakened remaining enemy forces, we are assisting the improvement of the Vietnamese Territorial Forces which ultimately will have complete responsibility for military security of the population.

**Blackhorse:** Can we expect more changes in this role before the Regiment is itself withdrawn?

**Col. Gerrity:** Yes, I believe the role of the Regiment will continue to change as long as it remains in Vietnam. There is no way to forecast specific changes with any degree of certainty; however, as more U.S. forces are withdrawn, the remaining forces will take on more and more the complexion of a "fire brigade" to be employed as needed. With this, I expect there will be a diminishing role in day-to-day combat operations without any reduction in the need to maintain the highest possible state of readiness to deal with

emergency situations.

**Blackhorse:** During the past months, a great many of our operations have been conducted jointly with Vietnamese Territorial Forces. What has been the purpose of these operations?

**Col. Gerrity:** As I mentioned earlier, we are assisting the improvement of the Territorial Forces -- Regional Forces Companies and Popular Force Platoons. Those forces are essentially light infantry units requiring tactical skills quite different from ours and making a direct training relationship impractical. We have found, however, that by operating together the Vietnamese forces gain significantly in confidence. A great many of those forces are newly formed and they appreciate the company of armored vehicles on their initial operations. The success enjoyed instills an enduring confidence, which is essential to the effectiveness of any military

unit.

**Blackhorse:** Looking back, how would you assess the success of the Regiment's Cambodian operation?

**Col. Gerrity:** The Regiment played a major role in the Cambodian operation, but its success cannot be viewed separately. The best overall assessment I have heard was given by Lieutenant General Davison, the Commanding General, II Field Force, when among other things he said: "Probably the most important result of all this is that we have written an insurance policy for the success of the Vietnamization program and the withdrawal of U.S. forces. . . ." In more immediately meaningful terms he also added: "I think that if we hadn't gone into Cambodia, there just would have been one hell of a lot of bullets and mortar shells that would have been shot at our troops. . . ."

**Blackhorse:** Sir, contact with

the enemy has been relatively light recently. Is this due to the Cambodian operation?

**Col. Gerrity:** Yes, in a large measure the present low tempo of operations can be attributed to the Cambodian operation. This is the essence of the insurance policy General Davison spoke of. The Cambodian operation set the enemy back in several ways, and while it is possible that he can recover to some degree, the interim is giving the Vietnamese Government precious time to improve its forces and to gain popular support for its social and economic programs.

**Blackhorse:** How would you rate the troopers of the Regiment in making the transition from one type of operations to another?

**Col. Gerrity:** Blackhorse troopers respond best to great challenge, and I believe the challenges of the Regiment's

(Continued on page 3)



# Major Wulff takes Thunderhorse reins

Major Roy A. Wulff has taken command of the Regiment's Air Cavalry Troop.

The Florida native succeeded Major Joseph H. Blanchard at a change of command ceremony Nov. 12.

Major Wulff, a graduate of Troy State College, Troy, Ala., entered the Army in 1957 and received his commission in 1958 upon graduation from Armor OCS. He received his first aviation training at Camp Gary, Tex., in 1959.

In 1959-1960 Major Wulff served with the first Army troop, the Aerial Reconnaissance and Security Troop, 2nd Infantry Division, Ft. Benning, Ga., to use the air cavalry concept.

Now on his second tour in Vietnam, he served his first year as a weapons platoon leader in the 1st Cavalry Division (AM).

A graduate of the Command and General Staff College, he began this Vietnam tour in May and has been serving as the aviation assignment officer at USARV until taking command of the Thunderhorse.

"This was my first choice - I wanted this job ever since I left the States," commented the new commander. He added that he was particularly pleased to be with the 11th ACR because of the close ties between ground and air operations.

Major Wulff's wife and two children are now living in Daleville, Ala.



Major Wulff

# Troopers become citizens

"It was a funny feeling out there, with the bullets flying over my head, fighting for something that was not a part of me. Now it's going to be a part of me - it will be different."

The speaker was Specialist 4 William Psiuk, a gunner on an Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicle (ACAV) in the 11th Armored Cavalry's 1st Squadron, A Troop, explaining his feelings on becoming a citizen of the United States.

This Belgian-born Blackhorse trooper, together with two other men from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, will board a plane on December 6 which will fly them and 164 other aliens from Vietnam to Hawaii. There, on December 11, they will become American citizens.

Psiuk, who has been with the Blackhorse Regiment 8 months,

came to the United States in 1956 with his family, when he was just seven years old.

Despite the fact that he was not a citizen, he had no doubts about coming over here. "If I'm going to live in the United States, I might as well fight for it."

His experiences in Vietnam, though, increased his desire to be naturalized. "Being over here and seeing things has made me appreciate a lot more the things we have back in the world."

Psiuk, Private First Class Jorge A. Maspons of C Troop and Specialist 4 Albin Wyszynski of G Troop, are taking advantage of a MACV program for those aliens in the Armed Forces in Vietnam who have been admitted for permanent residence in the United States.

Arrangements have been cleared through the Regimental

Legal Office, which coordinates with MACV and obtains the necessary R and R's for the individuals.

For PFC Maspons, who fled Cuba with his parents and brothers, the naturalization will mean the attaining of a long-sought goal. "The United States is the country that can give me the opportunities to study and work that I did not have in Cuba," he said. "And it is the country to let me express my thoughts and opinions."

# Honored for Valor

## SILVER STAR

Captain John C. Eberle, C Troop.  
Staff Sergeant Floyd J. Brooks, C Troop.  
Specialist 4 Bobby E. Byrd.

## DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Lieutenant Colonel James B. Reed, 1st Squadron Headquarters.

First Lieutenant Michael Huff, 1st Squadron Headquarters.

Chief Warrant Officer David C. Gow, Air Cav Troop.

## BRONZE STAR

First Sergeant Steve Billas, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.  
Sergeants First Class Colin F. Daves, 3rd Squadron Headquarters; Jerry L. Weicht, K Troop.

Staff Sergeant James O'Brien, K Troop.

## AIR MEDAL

Major Joseph Blanchard, Air Cav Troop.  
Sergeant Jerry B. Ferrel, Air Cav Troop.  
Specialist 5 Danny L. Knowles, Air Cav Troop.  
Specialist 4 John D. Brinkman, Air Cav Troop.

## ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

Captain John C. Eberle, C Troop.  
First Lieutenant Joe E. Clemons, Air Cav Troop.  
Specialist 5 Ronald D. Coleman, Air Cav Troop.  
Specialists 4 Harry L. Bowins, 919th Engineers; Daniel D. Gruender, Air Cav Troop; Donald R. Morin, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.

# Gallantry Crosses awarded

Colonel John L. Gerrity, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regimental Commander, received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm from the Commanding General, III Corps Tactical Zone, Lieutenant General Do Cao Tri, at a ceremony at Di An Nov. 20.

The Cross of Gallantry with Palm is the third highest valor award given by the Republic of Vietnam.

Sixteen other Blackhorse troopers received the Cross of Gallantry with Bronze Star at the ceremony, which was attended by Major General Jack J. Wagstaff, Deputy Commanding General, II Field Force, and province and district chiefs and senior advisors from the area.

Those receiving the Cross of Gallantry with Bronze Star were: Captain Norman D. Kulpa, 1st Squadron headquarters; Captain Arnold H. Gaylor, D Company; Command Sergeant Major Hiram T.

Harrison, Regimental Headquarters; Command Sergeant Major Howard V. Burkhalter, 1st Squadron Headquarters; Command Sergeant Major Howard E. Kelley, 3rd Squadron Headquarters; Sergeant Major Edgar E. Hammond, Regimental Headquarters; First Sergeant Vernon E. Nevil, 3rd Squadron Headquarters; First Sergeant Jerry W. Holloman, A Troop; First Sergeant Evans Washington, C Troop; Platoon Sergeant Jerry L. Weicht, 3rd Squadron Headquarters; Staff Sergeant James K. O'Brien, K Troop; Sergeant Steve L. Borneman, Regimental Aviation Platoon; Specialist 4 Daniel A. Kavouras, Air Cav Troop; Specialist 4 Billy L. Upchurch, 3rd Squadron Howitzer Battery; Specialist 4 James R. Radtke, L Troop; and Specialist 4 Phillip W. Sears, F Troop.

The USARV Band provided music at the ceremony.

# Interview with CO

(Continued from page 1)

changing role have evoked a splendid response. Most significantly, our troopers have shown deep compassion for the Vietnamese people, people they saw little of in War Zone "C".

**Blackhorse:** Are there some things you would like to see them improve in?

**Col. Gerrity:** Because the Regiment and each of its sub units down to the crews of hundreds of vehicles are teams dependent on the performance of every element and man, I will always be looking for near perfect practice of fundamentals. No team, with high player turnover, was ever successful without continuous concentration on fundamentals; I believe we can always improve our abilities to move, shoot and communicate - the basic ingredients of Armored Cavalry operations.

**Blackhorse:** In recent months we have heard quite a bit about drug abuse. What would you say to an individual who is thinking of experimenting with drugs in Vietnam?

**Col. Gerrity:** I would suggest that he also think about the consequences to his life and

those of his loved ones should he, as too many do, move on down the road from experimentation to use, and then to addiction. And, I would advise him to be especially thoughtful before experimenting with hard drugs, remembering that very high potency heroin is often pushed here in Vietnam under the label of other drugs.

**Blackhorse:** What are some of the lessons you have learned from your experience as commander of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment which you would like to share with the troopers in the field?

**Col. Gerrity:** The greatest lesson I have learned over and over again involves the troopers themselves. In that sense I cannot share it with them, but I would express it anyway. That lesson is that our people, the American people, should be forever proud and grateful for the performance of the young men who have served here. Regardless of how foggy the big picture may have become, the service rendered by these young men, Blackhorse Troopers, to something outside of themselves shines through and should never be forgotten.



First Squadron Troopers get ready to move out on an operation.

# 3rd Squadron Hows roar out

As if the enemy needed no other reminders, with tanks and Sheridans and ACAVs crashing through the brush in search of his hiding places, the crashing of high explosive rounds from the 155 Howitzers keeps the fact fresh in their minds that an armored cavalry squadron is in the area.

The six big "Hogs" of the 3rd Squadron Howitzer Battery, mounted on tracks and ready to move with the Bandits, have a unique position for artillery. Not part of a regular artillery battalion, they are organic to the squadron and are directly responsible to the squadron commander.

The big Howitzers fire an average of 80 rounds per day on various special missions in addition to support of contact.

But when the action heats up, the battery can easily fire off several hundred rounds.

The biggest problem that the battery faces, in working with armor, according to First Lieutenant David M. Coover, the battery executive officer, is keeping track of all the friendly units. "Armor can move so fast and so far that any of our units could wind up anywhere in a 360-degree circle during the day. And of course, we always have to know where everyone is before we fire..."

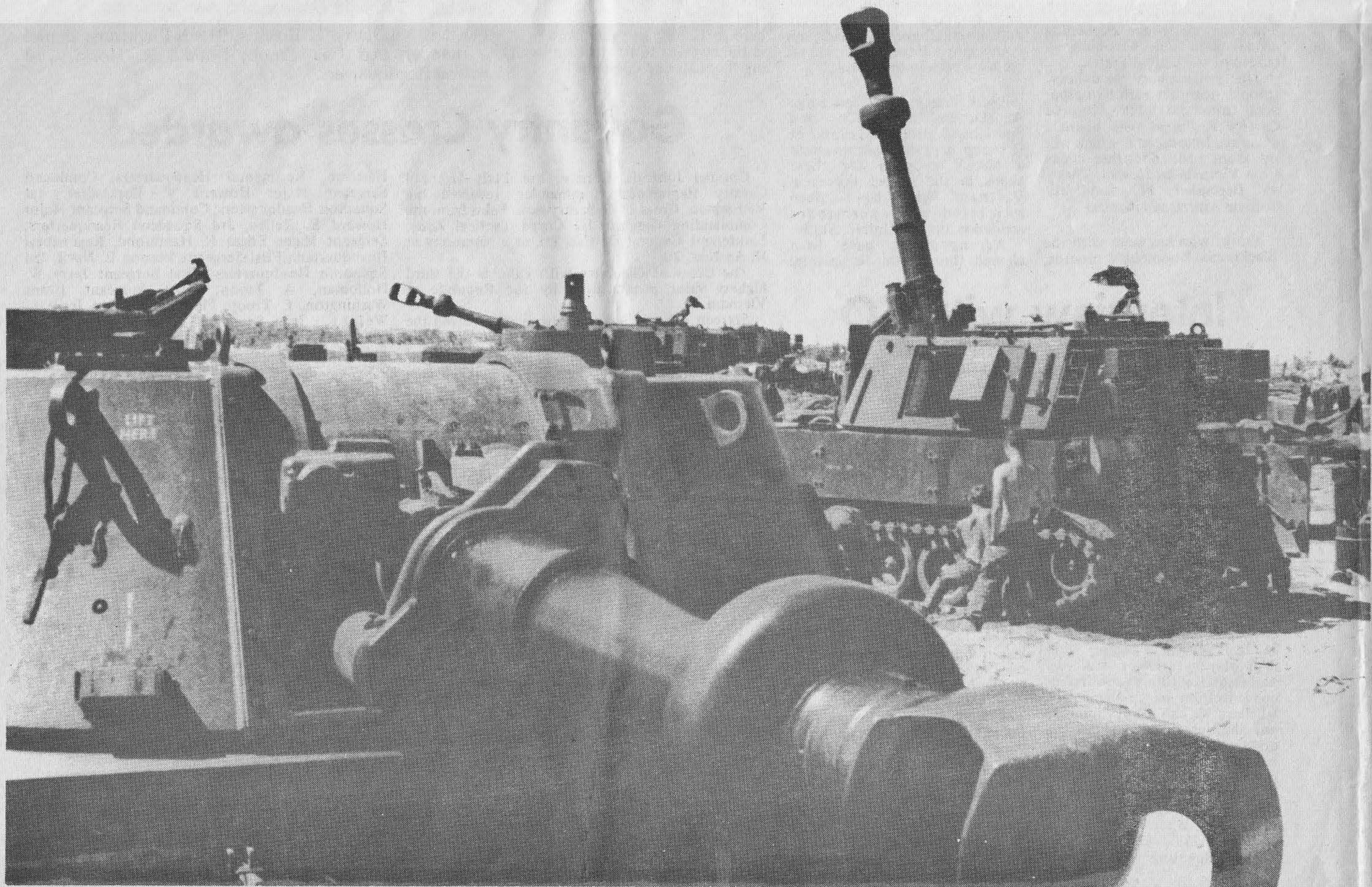
But there are compensations. "We get good security when we're shooting," says Sergeant First Class Willie "Smoke" January, the chief of the firing battery. "With all those tanks and ACAVs, we don't have to worry about the berm when we're firing."

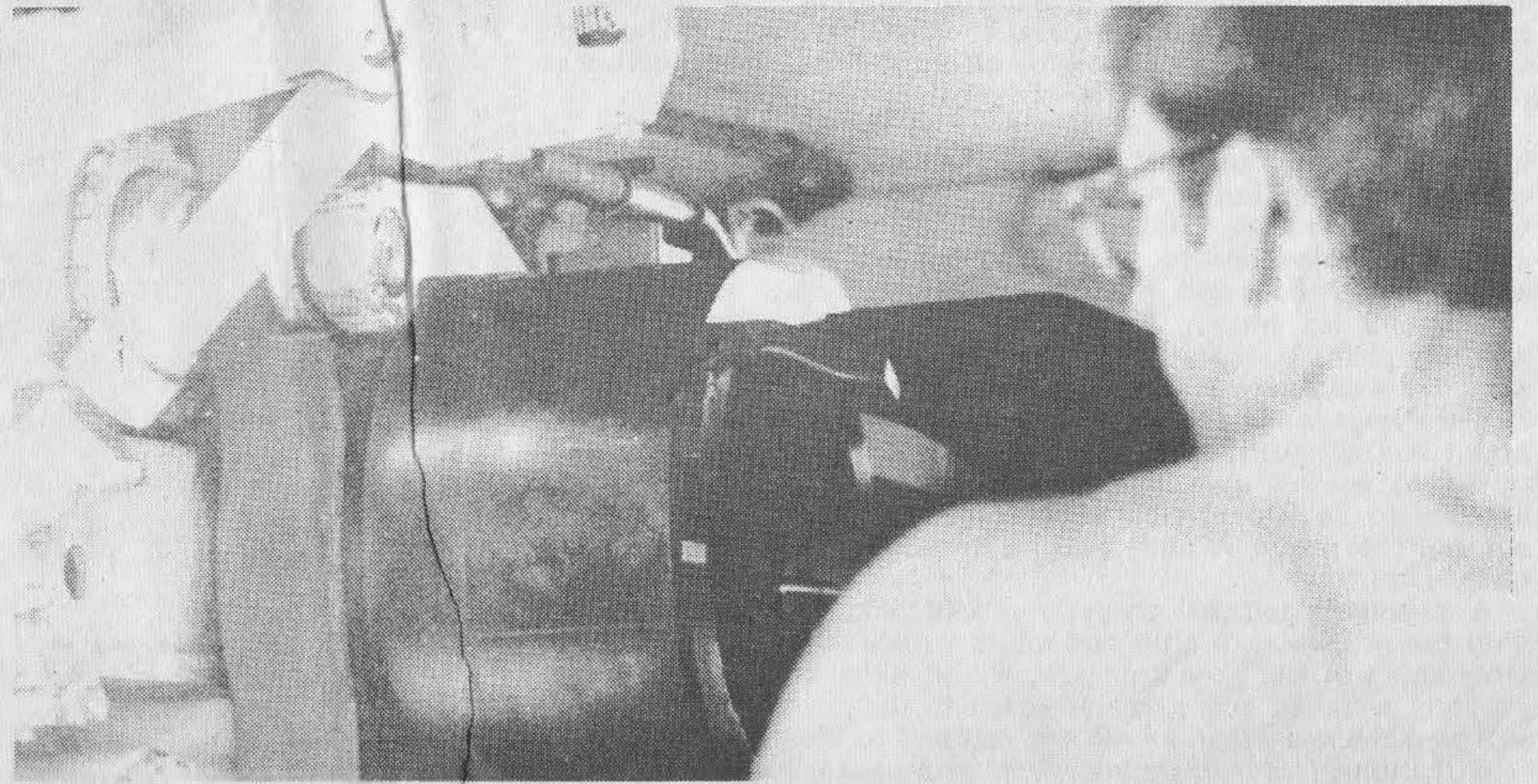
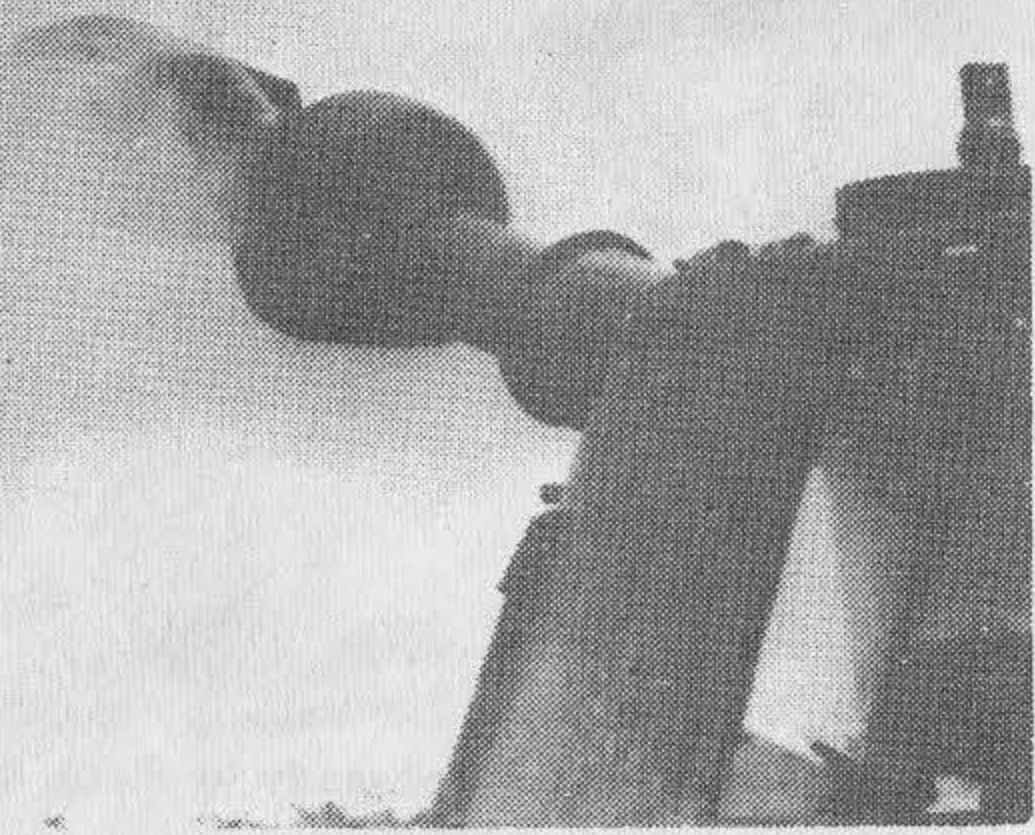
Working closely with Blackhorse units during a contact consists of providing supporting and blocking fires. "Armor has so much organic firepower that it is never caught in a position of being short of firepower against an enemy," explains Lt. Coover.

In their present AO, though, the battery has been getting more practice firing in support of infantry units, both American and Vietnamese. "The infantry usually call it in pretty close, so we've got to be accurate," he noted.

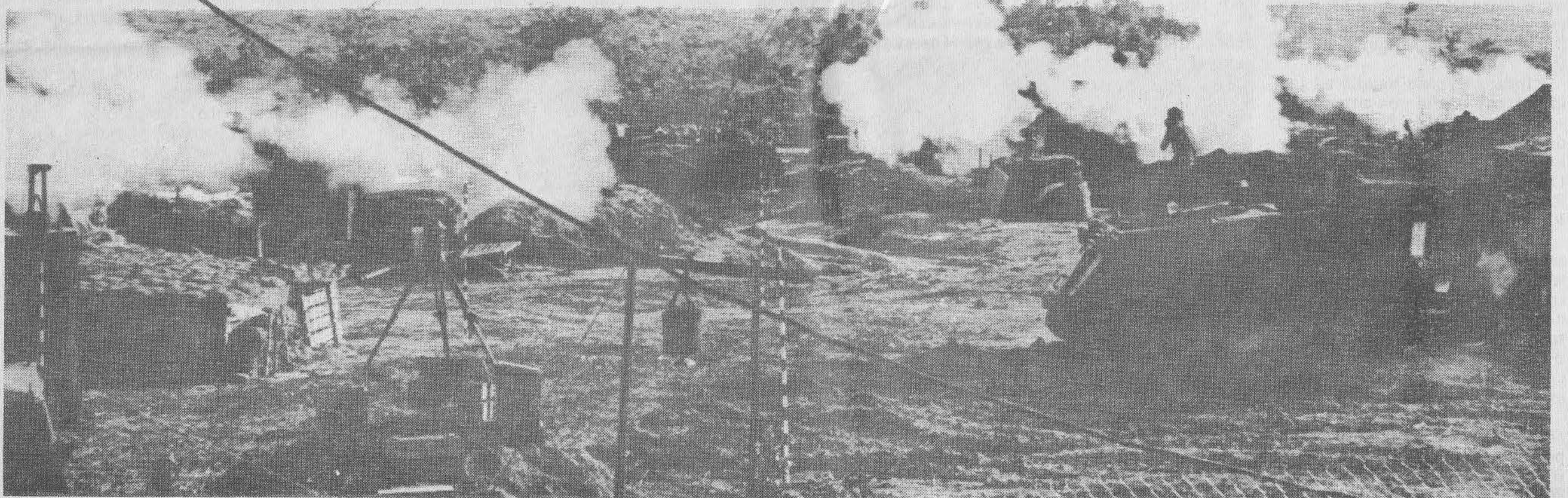
In addition to contact support, the battery has been firing LZ preparations for the 1st Cav, 25th Infantry Division, and the ARPs.

But most of their firing is during the night, when they fire on acquired targets to keep enemy soldiers off balance. "We fire just as a reminder that we're here," says Lt. Coover. "We keep those reminders going all night long."





Photos by Ralph Leigh



# PW Information

One of the most widely publicized aspects of the Vietnam war today involves a situation emphasized by the plight of the U.S. military men presently being held prisoner in North Vietnam. The Geneva Convention, to which both the United States and North Vietnam are signatories, requires that both nations have the same responsibility with respect to prisoners of war. All soldiers should be aware of the policies and procedures for detaining and handling prisoners of war.

The persons protected by the laws of war are all those who are party to the conflict, and are entitled to full protection of the Geneva Convention. In addition, members of militias and volunteer groups and organized resistance movements are protected, provided their organization meets the following criteria: (1) the commander of the group must be responsible for all his subordinates; (2) the members must have a distinct sign that is fixed and easily recognizable at a distance; (3) the members must carry their arms openly; and (4) the group must conduct all operations in accordance with the laws of war. Other persons who engage in hostile acts against one of the opposing forces are not entitled to full protection under the laws of war, but are entitled, at least, to humane treatment. These persons should be afforded the same protection as other prisoners of war.

While in the custody of members of the opposing force, all prisoners must be humanely treated. Any unlawful act or omission causing death or injury is a serious breach of the articles of the Geneva Convention. Prisoners will at all times be given needed medical attention and be protected from acts of violence, insults, and measures of reprisal. Every prisoner is entitled to respect for his person and his honor. They should be disarmed, searched, and carefully guarded, as well as tagged and evacuated from the combat zone to a secure area as soon as possible.

When questioned, a prisoner is required to reveal only his name, rank, date of birth, serial number, and armed force. Those who refuse to answer questions may not be threatened, insulted, or exposed to unpleasant treatment or psychological measures of any nature. The prisoners must also be questioned in a language they understand.

A prisoner's personal property should remain in his possession, with the exception of arms and military documents and equipment. Only on an officer's order may money be taken, and then it must be properly recorded and a receipt issued to the prisoner. Such money will be taken and put in an account credited to the prisoner.

With respect to performing labor, no prisoner may be tasked to undertake labor of an unhealthy or dangerous nature, unless he volunteers. Nor may a prisoner of war be employed in acts which would be considered degrading or humiliating for a member of the opposing forces. Removing mines or handling explosives is considered dangerous labor.

A violation of any of the laws outlined above is a crime punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Willful torturing or killing of prisoners, or compelling captured prisoners to serve in the armed forces of the capturing party are grave breaches of the Geneva Convention. Other war crimes include maltreating dead bodies, firing on non-military or undefended locations, abuse of the flag of truce or the Red Cross emblem, poisoning of streams, purposeless destruction, and violation of surrender terms.

It is worth noting for all members of the Blackhorse Regiment that observance of the rules laid down by the Geneva Convention is more than just a play at morality: the rules are hard and fast laws that must and will be observed by every responsible soldier. A considerable incentive toward treating prisoners humanely is that our deeds may somehow influence the treatment of American servicemen taken captive by the enemy. This in turn might encourage more enemy soldiers to surrender, and provide us with a valuable source of intelligence and information.

## RTO's

### 11th ACR's connecting link

"Wanted: fast-thinking, level-headed young man with high degree of maturity and intelligence."

If the Blackhorse Regiment were to run a classified ad for a radio-telephone operator (RTO), it would read something like that.

"Indirectly, we handle all the important traffic concerning the squadron. We don't make the decisions, but we're the relay between the officers and the troops," says Specialist 4 Richard R. Pane, one of four RTO's with 1st Squadron.

In a unit with the size and mobility of an armored cavalry squadron, a great amount of information needs to be constantly exchanged. Each troop must know the positions of the others, and the commander must know what everyone is doing.

Although the RTO's don't make the decisions, their performance is very important for smooth squadron operations. With the responsibility of keeping track of friendly units and providing clearance to fire, a careless mistake by an RTO

could mean disaster.

"All firing of any kind has to go through the RTO's, airstrikes included," Pane explains. "We have to get the clearance to fire and then keep track of where the friendlies are. The only exception is during a definite

contact when the troops can fire without going through us."

"It's a good job," Pane commented. "Because of the judgment involved, there probably won't be any situation I can't handle when I get back to the world."



Christmas Greetings go out from the medics at 2nd Squadron's Aid Station to all Blackhorse troopers.



A trooper from M Company and a Kit Carson scout get ready to check out a trail.

## 1st Sqdn.

### Range added to Q-Service

First Squadron has added a new twist to its Quarterly Service - a Combat Proficiency Course.

Each week, a platoon from one of the line troops has been rotating into Fire Support Base Henderson. There, the platoon spends five days receiving maintenance checks while it helps provide security for the fire base.

At the completion of the maintenance services, each

platoon spends a day on the Trang Bom Tank Range where they participate in a Combat Crew Proficiency Course. The course is conducted by Major Jay C. Cook, Squadron S-3.

The L-shaped course is designed to allow each crew member to demonstrate and practice his skills and reactions on the job. Each crew member gets to fire at a series of pop-up targets.

The track commanders also

get the opportunity to develop their skill in calling in mortar fire.

For the Sheridans and M-48's, there are old armored vehicles on the course which are used as targets for the main guns. Each vehicle fires five rounds of HE.

The men of 1st Squadron generally voiced approval of the range and its test. One trooper added, "It's nice to fire at targets without getting shot back at."

### 2nd Squadron raiders formed

by Darrel Jensen

"You suggested it, now you do it," was the answer of

Lieutenant Colonel John L. Ballantyne III, 2nd Squadron's commander, when his assistant operations officer, Captain Wayne T. Kirkpatrick, raised the possibility of a squadron long range reconnaissance patrol team.

So he did, and Kirkpatrick's Raiders were formed.

After going to the squadron's three line troops for volunteers, Captain Kirkpatrick chose nine for his team.

One of the men chosen, Specialist 4 John D. Apler, explains why he joined: "I was a leg man before and I just enjoy being on the ground."

The armored cavalymen - turned - infantrymen immediately started training in ambush techniques and in working together.

Their first mission was an endurance test of 'humping' through the jungle. "We did all right, but we sure were tired," remembers Sergeant Willis N. Andrews, an infantry-trained trooper.

Captain Kirkpatrick, who has had experience as a platoon leader with the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, explained that the team will not attempt to engage the enemy, but only act as spotters.

A special technique, the artillery ambush, enables the team to stay away from large enemy forces but still be close enough to act as spotters for the pre-planned artillery strikes.

After the raiders are inserted by helicopter, the troopers are on their own. They have to move as inconspicuously as possible to the observation point.

Once there, the team members secure the observation point, always practicing light and noise security.

Each mission lasts about three days.

**Fire base defense**

# An iron wall of armor

by Ralph Leigh

"A VC would be a fool to try to come in here on a ground probe."

The speaker was Sergeant First Class Ashby S. Burkett of C Company, and "in here" was 3rd Squadron's Fire Support Base Bandit II, whose perimeter Mike Company has quite a lot to do with protecting.

The physical protection begins outside the perimeter with a net of claymores and trip flares and rows of concertina and double apron wire.

At the berm is the formidable steel wall of tanks, from M Company, and ACAVs from Headquarters Troop and the 919th Engineers. Each of these vehicles keeps a crew member on guard 24 hours a day.

Before sunset each day, crew members on each track make out range cards which mark the location of various possible spots in their range of fire from which the enemy could launch an attack. When darkness comes, the man on guard is especially watchful for movement in those areas.

Between the setting and the rising of the sun, the sound and light discipline is punctuated only by periodic sitreps around the berm and an occasional "mad minute" when enemy movement is suspected.

The long range perimeter defense is handled by the Squadron howitzer battery with help from 81mm mortar crews. The gunners use pre-planned fires for the defensive concentrations around the fire base and troop night defensive positions. The mortar tubes and big howitzers can also throw up illumination flares to light the areas outside the perimeters.

The life span of a fire support base can last

anywhere from a couple of days to a couple of months, but for every day that it remains in one place, improvements are made to both the fire base and its defensive system. No Blackhorse fire support base ever ended its life because of enemy action, however.

## 'One-weekers'

by Darrel Jensen

One-weekers - that's what 2nd Squadron troopers have named the mini-stand downs each of the line platoons have been having at the old 199th Light Infantry Brigade Fire Support Base Riviera.

Each troop sends one platoon at a time to Riviera, which has been used as the squadron forward support area.

The one-weekers serve a dual purpose. "We perform Q (quarterly) service on the vehicles and they act as a security force for the base," explains Captain John T. Gray, the squadron motor officer.

At the support base, each vehicle receives a quarterly inspection of the engine, road wheels, tracks and transmission. "These vehicles have been climbing mountains and working in mud well over the road wheels," Captain Gray said in explaining why the inspection has come sooner than is usual.

In addition to maintaining their vehicles, the troopers have been able to get away from the routine in the field and even enjoy a pizza and a movie.

As a result of the stand downs, the squadron deadline rate has been cut markedly during the month of November.



B Troop mortarmen fire away!

**919th Engineers**

# 'Operation Dust Control' Begins

For Blackhorse troopers, the end of the monsoon season means the beginning of the dust season.

Without any moisture, the constant grinding of the armored vehicles' track knocks all the cohesiveness from the soil, leaving a thick layer of dust everywhere, just waiting to be kicked up by a vehicle or helicopter.

To hold this problem down, the 919th Engineer platoons with each of the squadrons have instituted Operation Dust Control.

The "Red Devils" are putting penta-prime, a mixture of asphalt and diesel fuel, on the landing zones for helicopters at the squadron fire support bases.

When the project began in early November at 2nd Squadron, the engineers were using a five-gallon can with a perforated bottom. They found that they could not put the mixture on fast enough, however, and so with a little 919th ingenuity they loaded a 55-gallon drum on a bucket

loader and hung a radiator hose of an ACAV from the drum down to the can that is

suspended from a stick held by two engineers.

It is a messy job and at the

end of the day there is usually a group of oily "Red Devils" walking around the fire bases.



Those oily "Red Devils" with their funny looking machine -- 919th Engineers put down penta-prime on the pad at Fire Support Base Bolan.

## How's Short Round

Anyone around the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's 3rd Squadron How Battery, talking about how it feels to be short is likely to have Specialist 4 Stanley "Short Round" Brown respond, "Tell me about it."

Although he still has four months to go in Viet Nam, Brown is the shortest man in the Army. "That's what they told me when I came into the Army."

Standing in at 4 feet 11 inches (on an Army measure it says 4 feet 11½ inches), Short Round is the senior mechanic for the How Battery.

Called Shorty as far back as

he can remember, his nickname was lengthened to Short Round when he joined the artillery battery.

Although he had to sign a waiver to come into the Army, he hasn't experienced too many problems. "In basic training, it was hard to keep up with the guys marching, though," he recalls.

Over here in Viet Nam, his biggest problem is pouring water into the shower bucket. But old obstacles, such as the fit of his uniforms, have disappeared. "I just put on a pair of medium regulars, wrap some wire around me, and blouse my pockets."

## Mess Daddy's chow

Sergeant First Class Bobby J. McKinzey and his crew of cooks from 3rd Squadron's Howitzer Battery prepare three hot meals each day.

What's so unusual about that? Sgt. McKinzey acts as mess daddy to the men of the How Battery, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, and the 919th Engineers platoon at the fire support base.

"Someone has to feed all these people and I'd rather see them eat a hot meal than C-Rations," commented the Siloam Springs, Arkansas, native who has been serving up chow to G.I.'s for the past 21 years.

Although he occasionally has problems with refrigeration and resupply, Sgt. McKinzey thinks that the effort is made easier by the men on his crew. "My cooks are outstanding for the equipment and the conditions. Besides working all day, they keep food on the chow line all night for the guards and the gun crews."



A 1st Squadron trooper introduces Vietnamese orphans to the game of football.

## Troopers help orphans

by Bob Eveler

"The children have a basic happiness which I haven't seen in most of the Vietnamese children, in spite of the fact that they have no parents."

Chaplain (Captain) F. Walter Montondon was speaking of the 150 boys and girls at St. Teresa's Orphanage in Tu Duc. The burden of the five sisters of the Order of the Holy Cross who take care of the children has been lightened recently, thanks to the troopers from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's 1st Squadron who visit the orphanage each week with a truckload of food for the kids.

These Sunday trips, headed by Sergeant First Class Rodney Graham of the squadron's personnel office, bring the food saved by the Squadron's mess sergeants during the past week. In addition to the food, the men try to bring whatever else the sisters may need. "Right now, we are looking for a large refrigerator which the orphanage needs to keep the milk and other perishables from spoiling," Sgt. Graham said.

The weekly trip usually turns

into an all day affair, with the 1st Squadron troopers staying to play with the children. The youngsters do a good job of wearing out the men playing football, softball and other games.

The men hope to take the kids to the Saigon Zoo soon and

are also planning a Christmas party for them.

Chaplain Montondon summed up the weekly trips by commenting, "Every soldier who has gone to the orphanage with me felt that their visit was the bright spot of their tour."

## Blackhorse impresses New Zealander

When Sergeant Stewart Mckensie Couchman left the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's 3rd Squadron, he went to his next duty station at Waiouru.

Waiouru?

If his assignment does not sound very common, it is because Sgt. Couchman is no ordinary Blackhorse trooper.

A career soldier in the New Zealand Army, he spent the month of October working with M Company and L Troop of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

"I'm one of the lucky few," commented the New Zealander. "I came to Vietnam from New

Zealand as an armor man and I was fortunate enough to get attached to an American armor unit."

Sgt. Couchman was most impressed with the efficiency of the American troopers, particularly because most of them are non-career men.

"In the New Zealand Army," he remarked, "a man spends six months in Singapore and Malaya taking extensive jungle training, in addition to his regular military training, before he comes to Vietnam. Americans

usually don't have the same type of professional training."

One of the things he found to be especially agreeable was the ready supply of beer and soda available to the men in the field.

The Regiment's equipment impressed him most favorably. "I'd like to see some of the equipment you have at hand available to the New Zealand Army. You have helicopters and recovery vehicles. We don't."

Sgt. Couchman's own unit, the 1st Armored Squadron of the New Zealand Army, uses

both British and American armor. "American vehicles lack the comfort of British vehicles, but for ease of maintenance and maneuverability, your equipment beats them hands down."

Reflecting back on his month with Blackhorse troopers, Sgt. Couchman commented, "They're a fine bunch of people who have treated me very well. My unit at home would certainly benefit by having more of our people in units like the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment."

## Bandit's singing chaplain

by Ralph Leigh

Around 3rd Squadron moves a man with a guitar slung over one shoulder and the legend "El Padre de los Banditos" painted on the back of his flack jacket.

He's the singing chaplain, Captain F. Walter Montondon, of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's 3rd Squadron, the "Bandits."

The Bandit priest has a busy schedule which takes him to each troop and unit in the squadron. In addition to his weekend "Chaplain's run", during which he and the other Blackhorse chaplains visit each unit in the field to conduct religious services, he makes weekly visits to nearby hospitals and to the Catholic orphanage at Dong Hoa, to teach the sisters English and play with the children.

But one is most likely to find him at a troop night defensive position (NDP), playing his guitar, singing, and talking with the men.

The 39 year old native of Beaumont, Texas had been a priest for 12 years before he joined the chaplaincy last year, five years after he first applied to his Bishop for permission to become a chaplain.

He has no regrets about joining the chaplaincy. He

speaks with respect about the troopers he serves: "The young men over here have the courage not just to fight a war, but to say what they believe in."

This respect has been reciprocated by the troopers themselves. "He's out in the field with us all the time, seeing what he can do for you,"

commented one trooper. "He's all right."

"He's one of the finest chaplains I have ever served with," states Lieutenant Colonel Frank E. Varljen, the Blackhorse Regiment's 3rd Squadron commander. "The men respect him a great deal."



El Padre de los Banditos.

## Girl writes Sqdn.

Lillian Roach is a 15 year old girl who until recently was living only by the use of an artificial kidney machine. Now, thanks to the efforts of her neighbors and the 1st Squadron of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, she is on her way to leading a normal life.

Lillian's Uncle, Earl Burton, was willing to donate one of his kidneys but the cost of the operation was prohibitive. A neighbor started the campaign to collect money for the operation.

When Specialist Four Garry O. Gose of 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment read about the campaign in a copy of his home-town newspaper, he went to Squadron Command Sergeant Major Howard V. Burkhalter and asked for help. In a short time over \$2500 was collected from the Squadron's troopers and sent to Lillian.

Recently CSM Burkhalter received a letter from Lillian; it read: To the Officers and Men of 1/11 ACR,

I, Lillian Roach, am writing this letter in gratitude for the money you men collected for my kidney operation while you were fighting in Cambodia.

My transplant was highly successful, although I'm still under a doctor's care. I return to Ohio State University once every three weeks for treatment.

Now I would like to tell you something about myself. I am now fifteen and attending school for the first time in two years. I am a Freshman at Olive Branch Junior High School. I live in New Carlisle, Ohio and my father is a farmer.

I wish to express my appreciation for your thoughtfulness and contributions and a special thanks to Gary Gose for his efforts and the expenses.

The money was used for medicine and some hospital expenses. It was very helpful to me and my parents.

I wish all personnel in the Republic of South Vietnam a safe home coming. I will keep in touch.

All my Love and Prayers  
Lillian Roach