

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 1ST BATTALION, 30TH ARTILLERY
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)
APO San Francisco 96490

AVDAAR-J-A

11 April 1970

SUBJECT: Battalion History: 1 January 1969 to 31 December 1969

The 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery began the year 1969 with a new Battalion Commander, LTC Dwight L. Wilson, who assumed command from LTC Richard M. Jennings only 10 days before the first day of the new year. At that time the Battalion was located in the III Corps Tactical Zone in support of the 1st Brigade in AO Navajo Warhorse with Headquarters at Phuoc Vinh (Camp Gorvad), RVN. A Battery was located at LZ Grant in a GSR role, supporting the 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery. B Battery was GSR to the 1/77th Artillery occupying LZ Rita; while Battery C, GSR to 1/21st Artillery, was split with three howitzers on LZ Odessa and three howitzers on LZ Eleanor.

In February as the 1st Cav prepared to shift its operations south of the norther line of fire bases along the Cambodian border, Battery C (-) was airlifted from LZ Eleanor to LZ Andy. On the 11th of February, C Battery was reunited for the first time in two months when C Battery PLT was airlifted from LZ Odessa to LZ Andy.

On 17 February 1969, Operation Toan Thang II was closed. At the close of this operation the 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery had expended a total of 54,434 rounds of devastating explosives which credited the Battalion with killing 75 enemy soldiers and destroying countless bunkers during the operation.

The high spirit of the men and the effectiveness of the unit in deterring and eliminating the enemy did not end with the closing of Operation Toan Thang II but was carried over and increased as the Battalion moved into Operation Toan Thang III. This was evidenced on 23 February 1969 when Battery A, by this time on LZ Grant, came under an intense enemy standoff attack which killed one of that unit's members and wounded two others. Despite the threat imposed by impacting rounds from the enemy barrage, the battery fired 595 rounds in direct fire throughout the attack and was credited with 13 enemy KIA.

The other batteries, too, were maintaining the high tradition of the 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery. On 25 February, B Battery was airlifted from LZ Rita to LZ Terri in an attempt to block enemy

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forces infiltrating from Cambodia into III CTZ and the Saigon/Long Binh complex. The battery was GSR to the 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery on this move. The following day B Battery was split and B PLT was airlifted to LZ Tracy. At the same time the Battalion gained operational control of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery when that element moved into Camp Gorvad from LZ Elrod.

C Battery moved on 4 March in a combined road-air movement to the Cheyenne Sabre area of operations where the 3rd Brigade was engaged in blocking enemy movement toward Saigon. After completing the road march from Quan Loi to Eien Hoa on 4 March, C Battery was airlifted to LZ Lois on 5 March while its PLT was moved to LZ Cindy the same day. On the 13th C PLT moved from Cindy to LZ Lil and on to LZ Kate on the 29th of the month.

During March, A Battery which was located at LZ Grant came under attack from hostile forces twice. On 8 March A Battery came under an intense standoff and ground attack at 0300 hours by an estimated NVA Battalion. Throughout the attack, which lasted until Dawn, Battery A courageously displayed its professionalism by expending a total of 275 HE, 80 illumination, and 7 firecracker rounds which resulted in A Battery receiving credit for 39 of the 154 confirmed enemy KIA. In the action the battery lost 3 U.S. KIA and 6 U.S. WIA.

The enemy continued its pressure on LZ Grant when on the morning of 11 March, Grant was again attacked by an estimated NVA Battalion. Battery A suffered very heavy casualties receiving 5 KIA's and 26 WIA's but managed to repel the enemy attack through the skill and determination of the men and officers of the unit.

On 11 March A PLT was airlifted from Grant to LZ Dolly and on the 16th of March the Battery's mission was changed to GSR to 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery.

At the same time that A Battery was being attacked on 8 March, B Battery on LZ Terri also came under an enemy standoff attack which resulted in 5 WIA in that battery.

As the 1st Cav began to shift its operations back toward the north, B Battery prepared to move north toward Tay Ninh. On 26 March B Battery (-) was airlifted to LZ St. Barbara and B PLT was moved to LZ Grant. Both elements remained GSR to 2/19th Artillery.

B Battery (-) was not to stay long on LZ St. Barbara and on

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3 April accomplished an air move to LZ Jess. On the 15th of March B PLT also was airlifted, but from Grant to LZ Carolyn. B Battery (-) joined B PLT on the 20th of April at Carolyn.

In April Battery C (-) (LZ Lois) and Battery C PLT (LZ Kato) moved to their rear location at Bien Hoa. This was accomplished on 16 April and the following day the entire battery road marched to Quan Loi where A Battery rear was established. On the 18th Battery C was airlifted to LZ Jake where they reinforced the fires of the 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery.

The Battalion, in accordance with 1st Cav preparations, by the end of April was shifting back to the norther frontier along the Cambodian border to assume their pre-Tet posture. Up to this time the Battalion had expended 37,238 rounds which inflicted 125 enemy casualties.

Increased enemy activity in May saw attacks on several Battalion units. During the early morning hours of 6 May LZ Carolyn came under attack by the 95C Regiment, 1st NVA Division. Under the leadership of its officers and through the skill of the NCO's, the enemy force was deterred. The NVA had 101 KIL of which 25 were credited to B Battery. However, the battery did suffer 25 WIA's during the attack and expended 597 rounds in the successful defense of the LZ. B Battery finally moved off of Carolyn on 16 May when that LZ was closed and moved to LZ St. Barbara.

Battery A also was confronted by the enemy in May and successfully repelled the attack. On 12 May LZ Grant was attacked by the K-23 Sapper Battalion, 1st NVA Division. Although Battery A suffered five wounded personnel, their morale and courage were undaunted and their return fire tallied them 11 of the 45 enemy KIL's for that action.

Also on 12 May, men from H&B manning the Phuoc Vinh perimeter spotted individuals approaching the wire. The individuals were engaged with organic weapons before they could breach the wire. A first light recon revealed nine VC sappers KIL. Captured documents showed that the alert guards had thwarted an attack by a VC sapper company.

Battery C, which at this time was located at LZ Jake, was airlifted to LZ Andy (Quan Loi) on 13 May and the following morning road marched to Bien Hoa where they were once more airlifted and set down at LZ Lois. The move of C Battery to LZ Lois was

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made in support of Operation Comanche Warrior conducted by the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cav Division and the 18th ARVN Regiment. On 24 May C Battery moved from Lois to LZ Libby in support of Operation Creek II.

Although A Battery (-) conducted one airlift in June (from LZ Grant to LZ Jamie), C Battery dominated Battalion activity concerning moves for June. On 7 June the "Hard Chargers" of C Battery airlifted their howitzers from LZ Libby to LZ Joy. Only five days later, on 12 June, LZ Joy came under heavy mortar, rocket and ground attack. During the course of the attack C Battery suffered six wounded men but the loyalty of the men to their mission and overall courage resulted in the battery receiving credit for nine enemy KIA of 35 enemy dead found on the battlefield during the first light check the following morning. C Battery expended 476 rounds during this action.

Nine days after the attack on LZ Joy, C Battery was again alerted to "sling out", this time to Blackhorse. The next day the battery road marched to Long Binh and on 23 June moved their howitzers into Phuoc Vinh. With three days of rest, C Battery was again on the move. The road march this time took them to LZ Buttons (Song Be) to support the 1st Cav Division's Operation Kentucky Cougar in the 3rd Brigade area of operations. At the same time their Batter rear was displaced to Quan Loi.

Also of note in June, a 102mm rocket which impacted and exploded in the KHB compound on the 9th, resulted in one friendly KIA and four WLI's. The Phuoc Vinh Artillery Warning Control Center (AWCC) became the Battalion's responsibility on 10 June. This gave the Battalion the direct support responsibility for AO Chief.

Battalion activity in July was relatively light, the only move being made by Battery B PLT on the 19th to LZ O'Keefe in support of 3rd Brigade operations against the 5th VC Division. However, with the lull the Battalion did not allow itself to become lax but continued in training of its men and maintenance of equipment to remain in a constant state of readiness should the enemy become active again. Also in July the Battalion welcomed a new commander. On 24 July 1969, LTC Jack G. Callaway received the Battalion colors from LTC Wilson in a ceremony held at Camp Gorvad, thus assuming command of the 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery.

At the beginning of August, Battery A, GSR to 2/19th Artillery

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was located at LZ Jamie. Battery B (-) also GSR to 2/19th Artillery, was located at LZ Grant while Battery B PIT, GSR to 1/77th Artillery, was located at LZ O'Keefe. Battery C was located at LZ Wescott and was given the mission of GSR to the 1/21st Artillery. Battery C PIT, GSR to 1/77th Artillery, was located at LZ Buttons. On 1 August Battery C PLT was airlifted from LZ O'Keefe to LZ Caldwell to support 2nd Brigade operations in that area. On 8 August, Battery A split, as Battery A PLT was airlifted to LZ Becky. On 12 August Battery A PLT was returned to LZ Jamie as LZ Becky was closed. On 15 August, Battery C PLT was airlifted from LZ Mary to LZ Buttons remaining GSR to 1/77th Artillery. On 17 August Battery B PLT moved from LZ Caldwell to LZ Alvarado to support 2nd Brigade operations in that area. This completed the Battalion's moves in August.

The keen sense of duty, fighting spirit, and outstanding courage of the men of the 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery were exemplified during August by the men of A Battery PLT on LZ Becky. A PLT's three howitzers were airlifted from LZ Jamie to LZ Becky on 8 August. LZ Becky was 14 kilometers to the northwest of Jamie and only nine from the Cambodian border. It was a small LZ with the treeline close on all sides.

The contingent on Becky was led by CPT Donald White, with 1LT Paul Stuhr acting as FDO. Senior enlisted man was 1SG Thomas Vernor. Although intelligence reports indicated that an attack might be expected on the night of the 9th, the attack did not come until about 0300 hours on the morning of the 11th. At that time the LZ came under attack from mortars and B-40 rocket fire in connection with a squad size sapper attack. The sapper attack was aimed at two bunkers on the northwestern corner of the LZ. During this action four of the Battery's personnel were wounded.

This was the first attack of any significance the battery had experienced in three months. Reaction to the incoming rounds was enthusiastic and decisive. A high volume of direct fire was returned even before the incoming had ceased.

Late in the afternoon of the 12th intelligence was received advising of the presence of three battalion-size enemy forces in close proximity to the LZ. Direct fire was initiated shortly after dark. At 0200 hours CPT White placed the battery on 100% alert. At 0300 hours the LZ came under an intense mortar and rocket barrage. Within minutes after the inception of the attack rounds were impacting in all three 155 parapets. CPT White upon

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seeing rounds impact inside the parapets, immediately started checking the men. Casualties were heavy. Completely disregarding his own safety, CPT White went to the aid of the wounded, although he too was wounded. While moving from the #1 howitzer to the #3 howitzer CPT White was mortally wounded.

Even as this selfless act of heroism was transpiring, SSG George E. Snyder and SSG Samuel Abrams Jr. also moved to the gun sections. SSG Snyder rallied his section together in order to begin firing direct fire at the enemy. Although many of his section were wounded, he continued to fire his howitzer against the enemy. He was mortally wounded while insuring that his wounded men were cared for.

SSG Abrams moved from gun to gun encouraging the men and aiding and assisting where needed. During the height of the attack, SSG Abrams, with complete disregard for his own safety, moved between the gun sections to provide assistance and direction until finally he was mortally wounded. Battery A suffered a total of nine KIA and 19 WIA. CPT White, SSG Snyder, and SSG Abrams were all awarded the Silver Star posthumously. Their personal bravery, extreme devotion to duty and concern for their men was an example which enabled the men of Battery A, although severely crippled by personnel losses and two howitzers out of action, to find the spirit to repel the aggressors and inflict 59 KIA's on the enemy.

The sheer "guts" displayed by the officers and men in A Battery typifies the proud heritage of the 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery.

The attack on A Battery at LZ Becky was not the only attack experience by the unit in August. On the 15th of that month the enemy attacked Jamie with RPG's, mortars and a sapper attack which resulted in two friendly KIA's and two WIA's. Again on the 17th Jamie was hit and six more WIA's resulted.

September showed increased enemy harassment of all Battalion positions by nightly mortar, rocket, and RPG attacks with light casualties sustained upon two occasions at Jamie. On 6 September Jamie received incoming rounds. LTC Callaway upon being notified, departed the next morning to determine the damage, despite the apparent danger. As LTC Callaway's helicopter was descending, Jamie again received incoming rounds. LTC Callaway, although wounded by shrapnel from an impacting round, instead of seeking medical attention immediately, instructed the pilot to take evasive measures to save the aircraft even though the enemy was

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"walking" mortar rounds directly at the aircraft. This is another example of the responsible thinking and personal heroism that has become distinctive of the 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery.

Still in support of 1st Cav Division's Operation Kentucky Cougar, the Battalion's line batteries were located as follows in October: Battery A, GSR to 2/19th Artillery, was located at FSB Jamie; Battery B (-), GSR to 2/19th Artillery, was located at Grant; Battery B PLT, GSR to 1/21st Artillery was located at FSB Mary; Battery C(-), GSR to 1/77th Artillery was located at FSB Jerry; and Battery C PLT was located at FSB Wescott. On 11 October, Battery C (-) moved from FSB Jerry to FSB Ellen. On 13 October Battery B (-) was airlifted from FSB Grant to the 155 position at Camp Gorvad. Also on 13 October Battery A PLT moved from FSB Jamie to FSB Grant. The final move of the month was made by Battery B (-) on 14 October when it was airlifted from Camp Gorvad to FSB Judie.

By the beginning of November the Battalion's line batteries had assumed a split configuration which put three howitzers on six separate fire support bases. To maintain and supply these positions put added pressure and responsibilities on all members of the Battalion. However, the additional requirements were successfully fulfilled through the teamwork and esprit de corps of the "Hard Chargers" unified efforts. This challenge was met so successfully, in fact, that the split configuration was adopted by the Battalion and used to more effectively support the 1st Cav Division in its area of operations.

A Battery and A Battery PLT were most aggressively active in the latter part of November. After receiving almost nightly incoming during the month, A Battery fired 2 WP and 19 HE rounds on the 27th which resulted in one NVA KBA, eight bunkers and three fighting positions destroyed. This was A Battery's only activity except for A PLT receiving credit for killing one VC in their perimeter wire.

B Battery and its platoon were also active in the second half of November. On 14 November B Battery was credited with one NVA KBA and two nights later killed 15 NVA by artillery fire. On the night of the 17th the Battery had a gas attack, but when 17 NVA were reported in the wire, despite the gas, accounted for six NVA KBA.

B Battery PLT concerned itself mainly with bunker missions in November, pounding the enemy's emplacements and accounting for a total of 27 NVA KBA.

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Whereas A Battery and B Battery were active mainly in the last part of November, C Battery PLT took up the slack in the first two weeks of the month. On 2 November the PLT fired a bunker mission which resulted in one NVA KBA, one 8' x 10' bunker, and six 10' x 20' hooches destroyed. The following day on another bunker mission the PLT was credited with 15 VC KBA. On 4 November, after receiving incoming in the early morning hours, C Battery PLT reported that it had 35 NVA KBA and two NVA POW's. Activity then decreased for C Battery in November.

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, located at Camp Gorvad on 15 November received two rounds of 122mm rockets. One round impacted 15 feet from the mess hall ripping the cooking-serving portion apart. Two WIA's resulted from this, but the men of the battery, with the same conviction shared by their fellow "Hard Chargers", immediately began clean-up and protective measures to insure that duties would be carried out normally and missions accomplished as usual.

By the beginning of December the batteries were located in the following manner: Battery A (-), GSR to Battery B, 2/19th Artillery located at FSB Jamie; Battery A PLT, GSR to Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery, was at FSB Ike; Battery B (-), GSR to Battery C, 1/77th Artillery was at FSB Judie; Battery B PLT, GSR to Battery A, 1/21st Artillery was at FSB Lee; Battery C (-), GSR to Battery C, 1/21st Artillery was at FSB Ellen; and Battery C PLT, GSR to Battery C, 1/21st Artillery, was located at FSB Carolyn.

On 2 December on 0245 hours, Camp Gorvad received an unknown number of 82mm mortars. No casualties or damages were incurred by the Battalion, due in part to the immediate response of two crater analysis teams from the Battalion which enabled the artillery to place counter fires within minutes after the first rounds had impacted.

On 8 December Battery A fired preparation fires in support of an insertion of a 1st Brigade element and received credit for five enemy KBA. The following day Battery A and PLT were credited with five more enemy KBA. On 20 December Battery A (-) fired a reconnaissance by fire mission which resulted in four enemy killed, four 8' x 10' bunkers and two 3' x 5' bunkers destroyed.

On 12 and 13 December Battery B and its PLT fired both "Enemy in the Open" and "Counter Mortar" missions with the results of 17 enemy KIA and two enemy KIA, respectively for the two missions.

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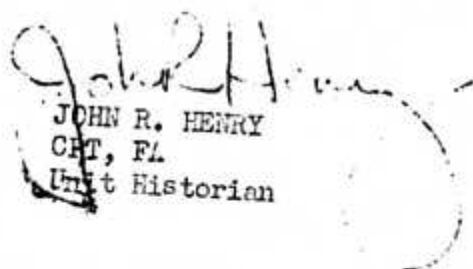
On the 16th, B PLT accounted for an additional three enemy KBL and the destruction of two 10' x 20' bunkers and two 10' x 15' hooches.

C Battery PLT tallied three enemy KBL on 10 December during a bunker mission to complete the KBL's on the enemy for the Battalion in December.

During December the 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery also participated in the Dong Tien Program, a program sponsored jointly by U.S. and ARVN forces, and received the task of training an ARVN Airborne 155mm howitzer battery in airlift procedures. During the period 27 through 29 December much time was directed toward the Dong Tien Program which included reconnaissance of new positions, surveying, organization for airlift, and coordination with the ARVN unit. On 30 December 1969, three howitzers were successfully airlifted from the ARVN base, Chon Thanh, to FSB Diane by the American and ARVN forces.

The 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery engaged in many tactical displacements in the year 1969. A Battery made a total of 24 moves; B Battery 22 moves; and C Battery 26 moves. Whenever the call came for firepower, it was quickly and professionally supplied, making the Battalion an outstanding asset to the 1st Cavalry Division. The Battalion's overall military prowess during the year 1969 displayed the pride of the Battalion in its role as a medium field artillery unit that is continually "Striving to the Highest."

FOR THE COMMANDER:


 JOHN R. HENRY
 CPT, FA
 Unit Historian

ABBREVIATIONS

1. AO	-	Area of Operations
2. ARVN	-	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
3. CTZ	-	Corps Tactical Zone
4. FSB	-	Fire Support Base
5. GSR	-	General Support-Reinforcing
6. HE	-	High Explosive
7. KBL	-	Killed by Artillery
8. KIA	-	Killed in Action
9. LZ	-	Landing Zone
10. NVL	-	North Vietnamese Army
11. PLT	-	Platoon
12. POW	-	Prisoner of War
13. RPG	-	Rocket Propelled Grenade
14. VC	-	Viet Cong
15. WIA	-	Wounded in Action
16. WP	-	White Phosphorous

1969 COMMAND SECTION

Bn CO

LTC Dwight L. Wilson	-	Jan 69 - Jul 69
LTC Jack G. Callaway	-	Jul 69 - Dec 69

CSM

MSG George Wigham	-	Jan 69 - Apr 69
CSM Wayne E. Radoko	-	Apr 69 - Dec 69

Bn XO

MAJ Alton R. Sparks	-	Jan 69 - Aug 69
MAJ Ronald Chapman Jr.	-	Aug 69 - Dec 69