

# U.S. Army Platoon Battered in Cong Encounter

IA DRANG VALLEY, South Viet Nam (AP) — First came the six unwounded men. Unmarked by bullets, the strain of exhausting battle was in their stumbling steps, glazed eyes, and filthy uniforms.

Then came the wounded. Some, with eyes bandaged, were helped along the jungle paths to the helicopters. Others were in stretchers.

And at the end of the column

came the dead, carried on stretchers.

This was a platoon from the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry, Airmobile, Division 36 hours after it met the Communists on a hillside seven miles from Cambodia and 12 from Plei Me.

They were battered and bloodied. Caught on a knoll at noon Sunday by an overwhelming North Vietnamese force, they were pummeled time and again.

In desperation, they even called their own artillery onto themselves to drive the Communists away.

In the end, the 2nd Platoon of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion of the 7th Regiment held out. The 7th Cavalry was Gen. George Custer's old regiment at the Battle of Little Big Horn in the Sioux Indian war of 1876.

Sgt. Clyde E. Savage from Birmingham, Ala., found him-

self in charge at one point.

Savage estimated that 250 Communists were after his little group of 30 men. The enemy, dressed in flowery camouflage uniforms, and peaked hats, flanked the platoon in some bloody maneuvering and pinned them down all day.

At night, with the Communists creeping in for the kill, Savage called for artillery on top of himself and his men in a des-

perate attempt to keep the enemy off them. It worked.

Savage, whose wife, Carolyn, and two children live at Fairfield, Ala., recalled, "I knew we would hold out. I wasn't ready to die just yet."

But Savage's friends died.

Spec. 4 James J. Blythe of Chester, Pa., lost his machine gun from enemy fire and his right thumb with it. He picked up an automatic weapon and

continued firing.

Sgt. Gerald Zallen from West Palm Beach, Fla., remembered being thirsty the whole 36 hours. "Our water ran out early. We gave some fruit to the wounded, but, oh, how we needed water," he said.

A three-company relief force reached the platoon at 2 p.m. Monday.

Seventy Viet Cong bodies lay around the platoon's position.



## General Says We'll

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Barechested Americans lead North Vietnamese soldiers to interrogation point

AP Wirephoto

## General Says We'll Quit Viet in Year

NEW YORK (AP)—An American general in Vietnam is quoted as saying he wouldn't be surprised to see U.S. forces out of that country within a year.

The remark by Brig. Ellis W. Williamson, commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, is in an article on the Viet Nam war in the current issue of Look Magazine.

He said American victories

against the Viet Cong would encourage South Vietnamese troops to take aggressive action on their own, thus paving the way for U.S. withdrawal from the war.

"We're going to show the Vietnamese what aggressive fighting can do," he is quoted as saying. "We'll give them a few wins, and then you just watch that 'palace guard' complex they've got fade away."

"You can quote me — I wouldn't be surprised if we're out of here in a year."

The article declares, however, that not all of his troops agree with him.

## Aircraft Carrier Due for Overhaul

PHILADELPHIA (UPI) — The aircraft carrier Shangri-La will arrive at the Naval Base here Tuesday to undergo a \$12 million overhauling which will last about six months.

Arrival of the World War II fighting ship, now the oldest attack aircraft carrier in the Atlantic fleet, marks the first time in many years that a ship of this class was assigned to the Philadelphia area for repair work.

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## U.S. Soldiers Grit Teeth In Viet Hell

By JOE GALLOWAY

CHU PONG MOUNTAIN South Viet Nam (UPI)—It was a valley of death and the man came walking out of the jungle and right across it. Bullets whined past his head and kicked up dirt at his feet.

"Get down you fool," we shouted.

Still he came on. He carried no weapon. He walked straight and tall. A mortar round exploded nearby. He didn't waiver. Shell fragments cut off branches above my head.

Still he came on until he was within a few feet of the battalion command bunker. He looked funny, dazed. Then we knew He was shell shocked. He paused for a moment and looked around. He seemed to recognize the aid station set up under the trees and started walking once again toward it.

Just as he reached it he slowly slumped to his knees, then collapsed and pitched forward on his face. That's when we saw his back for the first time.

It was raw from the wounds of a Communist mortar.

Medics hadn't been able to get to him because of the bullets and jagged steel fragments coming from the Communist-infested jungles. So he walked to them. The bullets and mortars did not bother him anymore. He had had his.

He had fought like a hero, like the men of the U.S. Army's 1st Air Cavalry. Some of them took their wounds without a whimper and seasoned veterans cried.

One was Col. Hal Moore of



GI guards North Vietnamese prisoner

AP Wirephoto

Bardestown, Ky., the commanding officer of the 7th Battalion, 1st Cavalry, which was catching hell from the slopes of this mountain range less than five miles from the Cambodian border.

"I'm kind of emotional about this so excuse me, but I want you to tell the American people that these men are fighters," he told me. Tears streaked his cheeks.

"Look at them," he said. He pointed to a Negro soldier lying in the shade of a tree. A bullet had torn a huge hole in his stomach. The soldier had his hands over the hole. You could see him bite his lip. He was in

terrific pain, but he made no whimper as he waited for a medivac helicopter.

"Look at them," Moore said again. "They're great and the American people ought to know it."

## North Viet Units Launch Laos Attack

VIENTIANE, Laos (UPI) — Communist Pathet Lao forces supported by North Vietnamese troops have attacked government units in Central Laos, the Defense Ministry reported Monday.

It said a heavy attack in violation of the cease-fire agreement pushed government units back more than 20 miles. The ministry said the attack occurred Tuesday in Khammoune Province, about 150 miles southeast of Vientiane. A communique said the fighting was continuing.

Sources said air support aided government troops in driving back the Pathet Lao forces in the past 48 hours.

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