

July 1972

The H/10th Cav ORLL states: In early July, the 22nd ARVN Division began a drive to retake areas in northern Binh Dinh Province lost earlier to the 2nd NVA Division. H Troop was heavily committed to the mission, constantly screening and reconning for the advancing elements. Because of intense antiaircraft fire and reported use of SA-7 antiaircraft missiles by enemy forces, H Troop was forced to employ the AH-1G's in a low level reconnaissance role. Though this tactic increased the vulnerability of aircraft to small arms fire and produced less in-depth recon, all mission requirements were successfully completed.

CPT Walt Moss recalls: I graduated from Artillery Advanced Course with 14 other guys on orders to return to Vietnam in 1972. Thirteen were removed from the orders and I was the only one reporting for the flight to Vietnam. Everyone else had been reassigned because there was not a need for them. When I arrived at Tan Son Nhut, they immediately flew me and the rest of the aviators to Long Binh for a briefing. There they showed us the current status of the NVA Offensive and that Kontum was under siege. It was at that time that an old Artillery friend of mine, Jim Stankus, stepped into the room and informed BG McCain (sp), 1st Avn Bde Cdr, of something and pointed at me. That something was that I had already flown a tour in OH-6As with the 4th Inf Div in the II Corps area. BG McCain then asked me to remain after the briefing. After the briefing, he informed me that the Scout Platoon Leader for the Cav at Pleiku had been wounded and was in the hospital there in Saigon. I was to go to Pleiku and take the Scout Platoon for 17th Cav. Having just finished CH-47 transition, you could understand that I voiced my desire to be assigned to a Chinook unit. Again, he mentioned that the usual voluntary job as Scout Platoon leader was, at that point, no longer voluntary. He did, however, tell me that after six months I could name the job I wanted and he would ensure I got it. I didn't realize then that there was less than 50% chance that I would make it six months. It was with a heavy heart that I put the lengthy CH-47 Checklist away to take up the skinny little OH-6A Checklist – you know the one that reads that if you have a mechanical malfunction, thank your lucky stars it wasn't caused by external forces, bullets, rockets, SAMS, trees, etc. Anyhow, I reported to the 17th Cav. MAJ Gibbs was the Troop CO, and 1LT Smith was the acting Scout Platoon Leader until I got there. WO1 Charlie Bos was the charismatic, wild, and daring young Scout Pilot who couldn't do anything but draw fire. WO1 Gunya was the other pilot who couldn't seem to fly anywhere without attracting attention to himself, his observer, his aircraft, and the flight overall. (Some humor). When I arrived, the Scouts couldn't believe they had been damned with an old man (24yrs old) in his second tour and wanted to teach me how to fly an OH-6A. None knew I had already spent a tour in the same place flying OH6s. CPT Tom Matason came to the platoon after me and flew missions as a scout pilot when LT Smith DEROSed. We were so short of pilots that he volunteered to help out. The pipeline had been shut off for pilots because we were going to stand down. "HA!" is all I have to say to that. I admired Matason for his spirit to return to the platoon and fly OH6s after having been hit. He had taken a .50 cal in the chicken plate. Only the armor piercing part penetrated between his ribs and collapsed his left lung. Over the years I've seen some of these guys. MAJ Gibbs retired as a LTC at Ft Sill, OK. I saw him off and on until 1999. He went to school and became a medical (X-ray, it think) technician and was still in the Lawton, OK area the last I knew. I saw then MAJ Matason in 1984 in an elevator at the Hoffman building when I was visiting DA Personnel to update my records. I have never seen LT Smith nor WO1 Gunya after he left the Cav in 72. I saw CW4 Charlie Bos in 1995 at FT Rucker. I was the Scout Platoon Leader from the time I arrived until January of 1973. At that time I found, upon my return from R&R, that BG McCain had kept his promise and ensured I received the staff time I needed to prevent my name from showing up on the RIF list. To say the least, if I ever stop trying to make a living, I will write a book about the period from 1966 through 1973 of my life. And any time I do write, I will always give praise to John R. Parker III - for ensuring that I am here today to

wish that I could stop and document the life I still enjoy, every day. Some people think my outlook on life is really different. It is, because until one day in 1972, I didn't think I had a snowball's chance in Pleiku of ever living to see DEROS. John Parker reported to the 17th and changed all that. I think of him as a brother to this day.

On the 8th, the VHPA has accident record for H/10th Cav Cobra #67-15822 flown by CPT Tom Butz. An edited version of the accident summary follows: On take-off the nose cover blew up through the main rotor and tail rotor blades. The front plexiglass was scratched. Tom provided:

On the 16th, the H/10th Cav ORLL states: While conducting these low-level VR's (using AH-1Gs versus OH-6As) H Troop lost an AH-1G southwest of LZ English. The pilots of the downed aircraft were successfully rescued, with one pilot being evacuated.

Also on the 16th, the VHPA has a loss record for H/10th Cav AH-1G #70-16036 flown by WO1 Roger Lone as AC in the back seat and CW2 Vernon Stinson SIP in the front seat at BR844965. WO1 LD 'Al' Varner recalls:

Roger and I were close friends. I can remember this day very clearly. At the end of the day I remember all of us in the gun platoon were sad to have lost Roger to some serious injuries and we were also sad to have lost a brand new '20' (equipped with the 20-mm gun system) ship. [Editor's Note: After much discussion during the 2007 VHPA Reunion between Roger, Vern, Tom Butz, and Soup – the consensus was that it was not a '20' ship but it was brand new.] For some reason or other I still remember the tail number 036 after all these years. That day we conducted the mission with two Cobras and a C&C, no Scouts. Roger Lone and Vern Stinson were the pilots of the Cobra that was shot down. We were out in the morning reacting to a report that an NVA Division had come across the An Lao Valley over to the English side. We were supposed to go in there and take a quick look. The chuck chuck stays up high while Roger and I were going to cross the river to the west of the twin bridges, run low level just as fast as we can make those Cobras go then do a full 360 over this valley area around the city of Bong Son. Again no Scouts because we knew there were lots of bad stuff down there. The idea was to see how fast we could do it. We started the sweep from the south and headed up the west side toward the north and then started south again. We were over the trees about half a mile to the east of Bong Son heading back toward the river. We got toward the river and turned back toward the bridges. I'd guess we were 50 to 100 feet off the trees. There was just a lot of bad stuff down there so there was no point in having much altitude. I was about 800 feet behind Roger. Suddenly I saw his nose kick up like a rapid deceleration. Then I heard the call taking fire. He kicked right rudder and to the right was a big clearing. As this was going on you could see the enemy fire shooting up from under him. I start throwing rockets under him. I was screaming at Butch Nelson, the chuck chuck, to get in to get Roger. I noticed that Roger had made a good landing – he had autorotated into the clearing. Butch landed maybe 50 feet behind him. As Roger and Stinson were running back to the Huey you could see the bullets kicking up the sand around their feet. My front seater is calling 10 o'clock. So I kicked rudder and actually came to a hover because I couldn't fly past them. I fired off to the left side. The nose turret was already out of ammo. He had been firing continually. Then he yelled taking fire 2 o'clock. So I kicked some peddle and threw some rockets there. We did this for a while until I hear Butch yell coming out. I called back – feet wet, feet wet. I wanted him to break over the water but he turned the other way! I said, 'Man, you are going to take it now!' And he did –all the way down the valley to the pass. They called for the medevac ship to meet them at Crystal. They landed about the same time and the docs jumped on Roger. Stinson had been a medic on his first tour with the grunts. He was able to get Roger's throat to stop bleeding. They took him to the hospital in Qui Nhon. I stayed at Crystal. He was then medevaced to Saigon from there some time later.

CW2 Vernon Stinson provides: I was on my third tour in Vietnam at this time. I served in the 4.2 mortar section of HHC/173rd ABN in 65-66, then went to flight class in class 68-503, then flew OH-6As and AH-1Gs with D/1/1st Cav in 68-69. Between tours I went to AH-1G IP school. When I returned to Vietnam and joined H Troop, I needed to be signed off as an SIP. For some reason or other there wasn't an AH-1G SIP in the 17th CAG or in MR II, because I remember flying a Cobra to Cheo Reo airfield to meet an SIP from Saigon for my check-ride. I had been with H Troop about three months prior to getting shot down with Roger. Because I was very comfortable flying the Cobra from the front and was on my second flying tour in Vietnam, I often flew in the front and logged IP time to let the younger guys fly in the back and log AC time. I loved the view from the front of the Cobra. Since everyone needed 90-day check-rides, it was my custom to fly with everyone in the weapons platoon in the AO from time to time. Then after we were finished with the day's combat missions, we'd take the Cobra to Qui Nhon airfield or an open area along the ocean to practice autorotations and emergency procedures. Flying with Roger this day was just part of another check-ride. I also didn't mind flying in 036 this day because it was a brand-new ship. I recall that it has less than 30 hours on it when we started the day. It was like being able to fire the biggest and newest and fastest gunship in the Troop. Returning to this mission, we were running fast and low. I saw lots of cook fires in this area and mentioned this to Roger. He started a turn to return to that area. When I noticed the direction he was going to fly, I stated to tell him not to do with but it was too late – we were already taking fire. I remember I had turned my head to the left to look at something on the ground when the front part of the canopy was shot away by machine-gun fire. I wasn't wearing a chicken plate this day. I had seen too many guys injured in crashes by the chicken plate, so I didn't wear mine very often. I also didn't have my visor down. I remember picking pieces of Plexiglas from my face that would have been protected by the visor. Just a second or two after that there was a big explosion on the left side. Others who saw our Cobra said the left wing and pods were blown off and the cowling over the engine and transmission area was badly damaged. This blast sent something through Roger's neck because there was blood all over soon thereafter. We weren't very high up to start with – maybe 200 feet AGL. I remember grabbing the controls, rolling off the throttle and getting it on the ground. We landed upright. I pushed open what was left of the canopy, got out, and ran around to the right side ammo bay door. I had put a Car-15 in there 'just in case' but I couldn't get the door open. By that time Roger was getting out from the back seat, so I helped him down those small steps to the ground. The Huey had landed, so we ran to it. When we got in the Huey I put my thumb on Roger's neck artery to try to stop the bleeding. He was just pumping blood out like mad. As we lifted off I happened to glance back at the Cobra – the blades were still turning slowly, so that gives you some idea how long we'd been on the ground! We landed someplace and picked up two ARVN medics. They tried to give Roger some blood but he kept bleeding worse so we quit that idea. I remember trying to keep Roger awake – he wanted to drift off. I reasoned that if he went to sleep we might not get him to wake up again. We landed a LZ Crystal and from then on we had American medics that could work with us. Since I wasn't injured, I went back to Lane. The next morning I had several back pains and could not straighten up. I went to Saigon for X-rays and stayed there for about four days. They determined that I just had some crash related back injuries that would go away soon. I was grounded but returned to Lane. I remember working in Operations for a few weeks until I was OK again. Those were interesting days. If someone needed a Cobra check-ride, I was taken off grounded status and did the check-ride; then I was grounded again. Soon I went back to flying Cobras on a regular basis. The only battle damage I sustained was with Roger Lone. I did experience a precautionary landing once or twice. I left H Troop in Feb 73 when we ferried an OH-6A to Saigon to turn in. Later in the month we started getting the IR suppression kits for our Cobras. In addition to the toilet bowls, the Cobras received a special IR paint job. This added a noticeable amount of weight to the ships.

On the 19th according to 22nd ARVN Infantry Division documents, Operation BBV 22/8 began to break the enemy's siege north of Binh Dinh. The US Army aviation assets at Lane would be heavily involved in supporting this ARVN operation.

On the 25th, the ORLL dated 1 Nov states that MAJ Sidney Lyons assume command of H/10th Cav replacing MAJ Edward Brown. This may be 'the official version' of the history, but does not reflect the facts that (a) MAJ Brown departed Vietnam maybe as early as April and (b) CPT Sam Slaughter was at the very least an acting commander for several weeks.

On the 26th, while working the LZ Crystal and Tam Quan area at BR776893 H/10th Cav Cobra #68-15103 crashed and burned. **WO1 Harold McCaslin, Jr.** died of a broken neck in this crash caused by his chicken plate. The VHPA copy of The Wall database lists WO1 McCaslin's tour start date as 2 June 1972. WO1 Larry Richards was also a pilot in this aircraft. He tried to get out of the wreck but fell back into the burning ship. The C&C landed, the EM got out to try to help and the pilots hovered the Huey over the burning Snake to try to control the flames. They were able to get Larry out but he was badly burned. The H/10th Cav ORLL states: Another gunship was lost while covering a LOH at the mouth of the An Lo Valley. WO1 McCaslin, the co-pilot, was killed on impact, the pilot, WO1 Richards, evacuated due to severe burns.

WO1 Larry Richards recalls: I was with C Troop from late September 1971 until 26 July 1972. After flight school I went through Cobra transition and then to Vietnam. I never flew anything but Cobras. Our mission that day was to run from An Son up to the Bong Son bridge area to conduct a reconnaissance in force with four or five Cobras and one C&C. This was still during the aftermath of the Easter Offensive and you just couldn't put a LOH down in that area. It is my opinion that after April of 1972 there was no hesitation on the NVA's part to hold their fire. They would shoot at you whenever and wherever they could. Maybe there were times up at Kontum where they waited to shoot at you until they got you in the right spot, but they were never afraid to shoot at you and they shot readily. We took fire at some point and lost the trail rotor. I wouldn't call it an autorotation, but it wasn't much of a powered flight either to the ground. On the way down we started taking very heavy small arms fire. We landed and the aircraft exploded at the same time. Now whether we were hit by a B40 or landed on a mine I am not sure. I know one thing for sure the front seat, WO McCaslin, was dead before we hit the ground because I saw parts of him blowing up into the canopy. I've read reports that he died of a broken neck but this isn't true. I wasn't on the ground long at all. It was crash, big fire, stumble around trying to get out. The aircraft didn't crash per say – it landed rather well. It didn't smash into the ground. I had it under control up to the time when the front of the airplane came down. Then there was a huge explosion. I didn't get hurt one bit except for the burns. I had no impact injuries, no crash injuries. I had a chicken plate on and wasn't hurt by it. The heels of the skids touched down very gently. The explosion happened when the toes touched down. The aircraft didn't wade up in a ball or anything like that. I don't think I was on the ground five minutes if that long. One of our ex-crew chiefs, Chadwick, was flying doorgun on the C&C ship. I do remember him getting out of the Huey, running over, grabbing me and shoving me toward the slick. It could have been CW2 John Lucius flying that ship. Anyway, I spent the night at the hospital. I was accidentally taken to an ARVN hospital and then later was moved to Tiger Town, the Korean hospital and from there medevaced to Phu Cat the next day where I got on an USAF C-141 that took me to Japan. I believe I can name some of the others flying that day because we had most of the gun platoon there. Lonnie Woodruff would have been there. LT Wyatt was probably in someone's front seat. Roger Lone had been shot down earlier because the reason I was there was because he was in the hospital in Saigon. Let me comment on the configuration of four or five Cobras with a C&C ship. We were still trying to figure out how to operate at this time. We knew we were going to find a lot of bad guys in this area and there were SA-7s around. So our habit was to go up there in force then fly low and very quick to get a look around to see what you could

see. Like I said earlier, the enemy would shot at you very readily. They were not hesitant about firing on aircraft at that point in time. But you just couldn't put a LOH down there. Even though we sometimes flew missions with Cobras from the 129th AHC or B Troop as our wingmen, all the Cobras on this mission were from C Troop.

CPT Jack Jordan recalls: I joined H/10th Cav in July 1972 even though I was in Infantry branch. I flew with the 361st AWC on my first tour from June 1968 to July 1969 at Pleiku. I remember flying a little with MAJ Brown before he left. I also remember CPT Sam Slaughter arriving to be the Troop Commander but he left suddenly after about two weeks. Then MAJ Sidney Lyons was our commander

On the 31st, the Eagle Bn Operations Journal state that CPT Kennedy of H/10th reported that the AH-1G they were to pick-up in Pleiku was in bad shape and had so many gigs on it that he was bringing his pilot back. They would send a maintenance officer to Pleiku to insure the aircraft was fixed.

The H/10th Cav ORLL states: In late July, H Troop began receiving the IR suppression kits for all aircraft and reverted to the utilization of AH-1G as high altitude cover for the LOH.

Because the history page of H/10th Cav's Yearbook mentions WO1 McCaslin as a KIA it is only logical to assume that the Yearbook was printed some time after that date. The information from that Yearbook, provided by WO Stephen C. Shepard, is summarized here. The history page reads as follows (spelling, capitalization, punctuation and paragraphing as in the original):

H Troop began its long and distinguished career 28 July 1866 at Ft Leavenworth Kansas. For the next 55 years H. Troop patrolled the western frontier. participating in 3 different campaigns of the Indian wars. From 1916-1917 H Troop took part in the Mexican Expedition, providing security and aggressively tracking down elements of the hostile force opposing them. After 55 years of outstanding service H Troop hung up its crossed sabers 1 Sept. 1921 at Ft. Huachuca Arizona. H Troop remained off the active rolls of army units until redesignated on 6 Dec. 1969 as H Troop 10th Cavalry assigned to 25th Infantry division and activated in Hawaii. After spending 28 months in Hawaii H Troop's colors were shipped to Viet Nam as part of the 1st Aviation Brigade.

Members of C Troop 7/17 Cav became H Troop 10th Cav and participated in the Kontum and Bihn Dihn offensives from Mid-April until the present time. In mid-April H Troop was deployed to Holloway Army Air Field in Pleiku. During the Kontum offensive the troop was a valuable asset to the defense of Kontum and Pleiku. H Troop in an air cavalry role pinpointed enemy locations, supply caches, and infiltration routes.

Some of the actions H Troop participated in were: Evacuation of Rocket Ridge, Seige of Ben Het, the defense of Kontum City itself and the battle for Kontum Pass. The price for victory at Kontum was a steep one. It was through the heroic actions of men like Cpt. Thomas Powell, Cpt. Fred Suttle, Lt. Robert Wilcoxson, Lt. Daryl Kunzler and SP4 Paul Pesces that Kontum was kept from the hands of its communist aggressors.

After the main threat to the Kontum area was over, H Troop returned to its home base of An Son. The tactical situation from LZ Crystal north was at a low ebb. The NVA forces were threatening to overrun Crystal when the cavalry arrived. H Troop played a major role in breaking up the seige of Crystal by seeking out and destroying the enemy. As the ground troops moved north into enemy held territory, the men of H Troop were always one step ahead locating the enemy for ARVN units.

The disruption of enemy lines of communications, the destruction of his supplies, and the casualties inflicted by H Troop was only a small part of their overall mission. Many hours were spent seeking intelligence on which the ground commanders based their tactical decisions. In the breaking of the seige of LZ Crystal and the recapture of the coastal area up to Tam Quan, H Troop once more paid

the bitter price for victory. Although the only Cavalryman killed in action was WO1 Harold McCaslin, many more of our comrades were wounded in action.

It is in this Cav tradition that the men of H Troop will carry on their mission. We dedicate this year book to our fallen comrades and their loved ones they left behind.

Editor's Notes concerning the history page: The VHPA copy of The Wall database lists SP4 Paul John Pesce (versus Pesces) in the history.

The following individuals are listed in the H/10th Cav's Yearbook. The list is presented alphabetical by last name.

Armstrong, SP4	Gwynn, CW2 Pilot	Pridgen, SP5
Asaby, SP5	Hapak, SP4	Ragnone, SP4
Ashton, CW2 Pilot	Harrison, SP5	Rains, SP4
Austin, 1LT Pilot	Heacock, SGT	Rich, SP4
Ballard, SP4	Helmich, Bruce CPT Pilot	Riley, Nathan E. 1SG First Sergeant
Barney, SP4	Hensley, PFC	Rivera, PFC
Blackwell, SP4	Hill, SP5	Robbins, SP5
Blazek, Pat 1LT Administrative Officer	Honeycut, SP4	Roberts, SP4
Bozin, John CPT AH-1G Pilot & XO	Hudson, Barry R. 'Dick' 1LT Pilot	Roberts, SSG
Bratcher, SP4	Hunter, SP6	Rocky, PFC
Bray, SP5	Johnson, SP4	Rosen, Bob WO1 Pilot
Brill, SP4	Johnson, SP5	Rudd, SP4
Brimley, WO1 Pilot	Jones, SFC	Russell, John WO1 OH-6A Pilot
Brown, SP4	Jones, SP5	Sample, SP6
Bruce, 1LT Pilot	Jordan, Jack CPT Operations Officer	Sanders, SP4
Burdette, SP5	Keiper, SP4	Scribner, Charles CPT Executive Officer
Butler, SFC	Kennedy, PFC	Scruggs, SP4
Butz, Tom CPT AH-1G Pilot	King, WO1 Pilot	Shepard, Steve WO1 Cobra Pilot
Caruso, 1LT OH-6A Pilot Mess Officer	Knowles, SP4	Sheppard, Rick WO1 Cobra Pilot
Causey, William CPT Assistant Operations Officer	Land, PV2	Shields, CPT Pilot
Clark, SP4	Lawson, SP4	Smith, SP4
Clark, WO1 Pilot	Leary, SP4	Somers, SP4
Clegg, SP5	Long, SP4 Cook	Sowers, SGT
Clophia, SP4	Lyons, Denny 1LT Pilot	Steinburg, SP4
Cok, SP4	Lyons, Sidney MAJ Commanding Officer	Stinson, Vernon CW2 Standardization Instructor Pilot
Collier, SP5	Macmillan, SP4	Stofko, PFC
Comes, SP4	Mangrum, SGT	Strickland, SSG
Conkilyn, SP5 Cook	Martinez, SP5	Strutz, PFC
Coolidge, 1LT Pilot	McKay, SP4	Stuart, Mark CW2 OH-6A Pilot & IP

Cornelins [Corenius], CPT OH-6A Pilot Scout Platoon Ldr	McPherson, Marvin WO1 Pilot	Sullins, SP4
Davila, SFC	Meadows, SP4	Sweeney, SSG
Davis, SP4	Mohamed, SP4	Thompson, SP4
Downen, SSG	Moreno, SP4	Trosper, SSG
Dunn, SP4	Morgan, SP4	Vernati, SGT
Elkinton, SP4	Mosley, SSG	Ward, SP4
Foster, SP4	Murray, SP4	Wasem, SP4
Fousek, SP5	Neubauer, SP4	Webster, 1LT Pilot
Franks, SGT	Newton, PFC Company Clerk	White, SP4
Freeburg, WO1 Pilot	Nocnaw, SP4	Williams, WO1 Pilot
Fromhertz, SSG	Ouelette, SP4	Willingham, WO1 Pilot
Frye, SP4	Palmer, SP4	Willits, SP5
Galloway, SP4	Paul, 1LT Pilot	Woodruff, 1LT Pilot
Garland, SP5	Petropulos, CPT Pilot	Woods, SP4
Gibson, CPT Pilot	Pinar, Richard CW2 OH-6A & Safety Officer	Wright, SP4
Goeltzenleuchter, CW2 Pilot	Pittman, SP5	Wright, WO1 Pilot
Grace, PFC Cook	Potts, SP4	Wyatt, SP4 Tech Supply Specialist
Grandprey, SP4	Poulakidas, WO1 Pilot	Wyatt, Wallace 1LT Pilot
Gray, SP5	Prater, SP4	Xander, SP4
Groves, 1LT Pilot	Preston, Mike SP4	Yates, PFC
		??, SP4 (white guy with glasses with crew wings)

1LT Barry R. 'Dick' Hudson recalls: After I finished regular flight school the Army delayed my travel date to Vietnam because my wife was very far along in her pregnancy. I went to the OH-58 transition course and ATC school because I was a Signal officer. My orders directed me to join MR II ACT II (the name for C Troop) at the time. I got there in early June 1972. These were still days when everything was in flux – lots of people coming and going. After a few weeks I was assigned as the Motor Pool Officer. MAJ Lyons explained to me that they had so many vehicles dead-lined due to lack of maintenance that they really needed someone to organize and prioritize the work. The motor pool had about six guys at that time. I have a special patch we made up for guys who worked in the motor pool. They were a neat bunch of guys. They had 'acquired' a jeep that belonged to the CG of one of the Korean Army divisions. They had dug a pit, buried the jeep, and were using it for parts. I thought the Motor Sergeant was great! I can't remember his name and I don't see him in my copy of the H/10th Cav yearbook. We made lots of trips to Qui Nhon. I did fly Hueys and used the call sign Ruthless 48. I remember flying a lot of convoy cover. I flew in the C&C and chase ships. On my first flight as a co-pilot we slingloaded a LOH back – that got my attention. Once I flew 9 hours in a Huey and then another 8 in the front seat of a Cobra. That was a long day. I think I slept for a day and a half after that day! I remember 1LT Denny Lyons was one of our maintenance officers. WO1 Harold McCaslin was my roommate. I had the sad duty of packing his things up after he was killed. This was his second tour in Vietnam. The first was on the ground. He was a fighter. I remember we had a SP5 Jones – everyone called him Jonesy. He was everyone's favorite crew chief! He was one of these 'can do' guys! He was always in a good mode and fun to be with. He wore a 101st ABN combat patch and, I think, a CIB in addition to his crew wings. Once we went in to snatch someone sort of on the spur of the moment. He jumped out of the helicopter with just his big knife to 'persuade' the dink to get in the helicopter. He really was a great soldier! I have a picture of two guys taken at LZ English. One is a white guy, tall and thin. The other looks to be

Hispanic. He has a gas mask strapped to his side. I remember that H Troop believed these guys were the last two EM infantrymen in Vietnam. They had dual MOS's 11B and 11F. The 11F kept them in Vietnam. I remember they didn't want to go back to the States and they joined the ARVNs whenever we inserted them. I can't pick them out of the H/10th Cav yearbook either. I remember them as good soldiers that wanted to fight the communists. They may have been attached to us during the big Binh Dinh counter offensive. We had ARVN infantry on stand-by for us most all the time.

SP4 Ron Blackwell provides: I joined C Troop in September 1971 and served in aircraft supply until I DEROSSED in August 1972.

August 1972

On the 14th, the VHPA Helicopter database has an accident record for H/17th Cav OH-6A #67-16274 flown by WO1 Charlie J. Bos as pilot and SP5 W.D. Coniner as observer. The Goldbook database indicates that this aircraft was recovered, turned into ARADMAC and sent to CONUS for repairs. The database indicates that it never flew again and was deleted from the Army's Inventory in late 1973. The accident summary reads: 'WO1 Charles J. Bos was assigned as scout pilot on a visual reconnaissance mission for H Troop (AIR) 17th Armed Cavalry Squadron. The unit was assigned the mission to develop combat intelligence near the Cambodian border area in Plieku Province, RVN. The area of operation was near Le Thanh District and concentrated visual reconnaissance flights were being flown by the team of aircraft in this area. The tactics employed by this team were for the single OH-6A to fly at approximately 5 feet above obstacles to gain detailed visual sightings and to develop the situation. Two AH-1G gunships covered the OH-6A from approximately 600 feet above ground level. These aircraft were followed by a command and control UH-1H which for the referenced mission was being piloted by the Troop Commander MAJ James 'Mike' Gibbs, and a UH-1H chase slick ship. This was the third flight of the day for WO1 Bos. His first flight departure was delayed until 0800 hours due to early morning fog and low ceilings. When the weather had improved to VFR conditions, WO1 Bos flew OH 6A, SN 67-16274I for 30 minutes in the local Plieky, Camp Holloway area, to get the feel of the aircraft since it had recently been assigned to his unit from another aviation unit within Vietnam. At this time he performed the Hits and DER checks and recorded the results in grease pencil on the overhead Plexiglas windscreen. Satisfied with the handling of the aircraft WO1 Bos returned to Camp Holloway to refuel and prepare for the first visual reconnaissance mission. The first mission was launched without incident at 1130 hours and worked the Le Thanh area returning at 1330 hours for a total mission time of two hours. The 14th of Aug turned out to be an excellent weather day in comparison with the preceding days of monsoon weather in the Plieku area. As a consequence it was decided to skip lunch and take advantage of the weather to develop the combat intelligence picture. The second visual reconnaissance mission or the third flight for WO1 Bos was launched at approximately 1515. The team of aircraft proceeded to the Le Thanh area once again. After approximately 30 minutes in the area WO1 Bos detected what sounded like a high pitched radio squeal. Mr. Bos reported this to the guns and asked for vectors to a clear area. About this time the chip detector light came on and the noise got louder. He was vectored to one area without difficulty and he then asked for a vector to a nearby road (QL19) since the aircraft continued to function normally. Mr. Bos arrived over the road approximately 1 1/2 minutes after the squealing noise was first noticed and turned the aircraft in an easterly direction. In the meantime he climbed the aircraft to approximately 100 feet above ground level and was flying at 80-90 knots airspeed. Approximately 10 seconds after lining up with the road the engine quit and Mr. Bos autorotated the aircraft straight ahead. Immediately after engine failure Mr. Bos bottomed the collective pitch and established an (80 knots) autorotative aircraft pitch attitude. At this time he noticed a decay of rotor RPM. Entering a cyclic deceleration he was able to stop the rotor decline at 390 RPM and build the rotor speed to the low green area (approximately 400 RPM). Approaching the road at about 30 feet a harder cyclic deceleration was

applied and initial collective pitch applied at approximately 10-15 feet. The aircraft struck the road with the right skid low, tore both skids from the aircraft and came to rest heading in the opposite direction of touchdown on the road. The board determined the elevation of the landing site to be 1500 feet by map analysis. The calculated density altitude was approximately 3500 feet and the wind was coming from an approximate heading and direction of 270 degrees and 15 knots.'

On the 16th, the VHPA Helicopter database contains a lost record for H/10th Cav AH-1G #68-15047. We believe this Cobra was flown by CPT Dean Priddy. WO Stephen C. Shepard recalls:

I was Priddy's wingman that day. He took hits and was shot down in the An Loa Valley but landed on a sand bar in the middle of the river. The crew was extracted by, I believe, the C&C ship. The Cobra was destroyed in place by rocket fire as recovery from that location was not an option.

On the 18th, the Eagle Battalion Operations Journal states that at 1430 hours H/10th Cav reported they had an aircraft take a hit that resulted in one injury, WO1 Shepard in AH-1G #67-15822. WO Stephen C. Shepard recalls:

I was in RVN from 29 Oct 71 through 21 Aug 72, on which date I was medevaced to Clark AFB after being seriously wounded by a 12.7mm. I was wounded on the 18th and spent a few days in the Pleiku hospital until going to Clark. At the time I was wounded, I was the aircraft commander in the lead Cobra gunship of a heavy pink team working in the An Lao River Valley, near Bong Son, not far from LZ English. 1LT Dave Wallace was flying my front seat. He had just come to our unit from a 1st Cav unit. We received some of their people and some of the ships. This was my first mission as AC in the lead Cobra and the mission was to do a DBA for an B-52 strike. After we lost the Cobra in the same area two days earlier, they promised us that we wouldn't have to go back in there. I guess they changed their minds. After I was hit, Dave joined up with the rest of the team and flew to LZ Crystal. The round had lodged on the right side in the linkage for the front controls so Dave was having a hard time making the landing. He complained that he couldn't flare the ship, so I took the controls and landed it near where our other ships were staging. I remember throwing the chicken plate and these guys came running up to pull me out. I yelled that they couldn't just pull me out since you had to climb out feet first. I finally was able to get my feet out and they helped me roll out. I remember knowing that this was a serious wound and that it would end my Army flight career – I really wanted to stay in and make the Army a flying career. My H/10th Cav call sign was WHITE (YELLOWSCARF) 26. Prior to joining C Troop, I had been a member of A Troop 7/17 Air Cav. This was my first assignment when arrived in-country. We were at Phan Rang. In A Troop my call sign was Knight (Checkmate) 23.

WO1 Stephen C. Shepard was awarded the DFC on 1 Oct 1972 via 1st Aviation Brigade GO number 2938 for actions on this date. An edited version of the citation reads as follows: WO Shepard distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions while serving as pilot in command of the lead Cobra gunship during an air cavalry reconnaissance mission near the village of An Truong, Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam. Flying at treetop level the light observation helicopter in the flight received intense automatic weapons fire. WO Shepard immediately turned his aircraft toward the enemy gunners and dove down from altitude toward the enemy position. His rocket fire killed the enemy gunners in this position. However, before the observation helicopter could reach a safe altitude it received deadly fire from another enemy position. Although commencing a pullout from his dive and at a very low altitude, WO Shepard immediately turned his aircraft to defend the helpless observation helicopter from this new threat. Still at a very low altitude and completely vulnerable to the enemy gunners, WO Shepard bore in on the enemy gunners and destroyed the position. His actions allows the observation helicopter time to climb to a safe altitude. As WO Shepard started a climb away from the contact area, another enemy position opened fire and one fifty one caliber projectile severely wounded him in both legs. Before losing consciousness he

informed the copilot that he was wounded and turned control of the aircraft over to him. Through his courage and selfless actions he saved the lives of the crew of the observation helicopter.

WO Rick Sheppard provided: There was always this joke in C Troop since WO Steve Shepard spelled his name with one 'p' and I spelled my name with two – the joke went something like this: 'Oh, Hi 1 p where is 2 p?' Both Steve and I had to live with this day after day. I was a Cobra pilot and started my tour in Vietnam with A/2/17th Cav in the 101st in late 1971. I was only with them for about four weeks. I joined C Troop in Jan 1972 and DEROSed in Nov 1972 from H/10th Cav. I flew some as a co-pilot in the C&C ship but most of my time was in a Cobra.

On the 30th, the VHPA Helicopter database has an accident record for H/17th Cav OH-6A #66-17787 flown by WO1 Jerry L. Gray as pilot and 1LT Carl F. Hylin as co-pilot. The accident summary reads: 'At approximately 1715 hours on 30 August 1972, OH-6A, SN 66-17787 was flown to the H Troop maintenance area by CPT Moss the H Troop Scout Platoon Leader. At this time WO-1 Gray was assigned to fly this aircraft on a last flight low level visual reconnaissance around Camp Holloway, Pleiku, RVN. WO-1 Gray went in and filed a flight plan (1080) with himself as the pilot and 1LT Hylin as the co-pilot/observer. WO-1 Gray went back to the aircraft and relieved CPT Moss at the controls with the aircraft still running. 1LT Hylin joined WO-1 Gray as the co-pilot/observer and they took off at approximately 1745 hours. WO-1 Gray made one circuit around the perimeter and then moved north east of Camp Holloway approximately one to two kilometers and began working low level around Camp Holloway from the northeast around to the southeast, and finally to the southwest. The aircraft crossed the road (QL 19) south of Camp Holloway and turned southwest. At this time they spotted some people in a field to the south and the pilot made a left turn to the southeast. The aircraft was heading east-south-east at an airspeed of approximately 20 to 25 knots with a right quartering tailwind when the pilot experienced an abrupt pitching of the aircraft to a right nose low attitude. At this time the pilot attempted to level or straighten the aircraft and discovered that he had run out of left pedal. Thinking that he was experiencing a tail rotor failure, the pilot immediately chopped the throttle and performed a hovering autorotation from 20 feet AGL to a small clearing on a terraced slope at approximately 1818 hours. The aircraft impacted hard and sustained major structural damage to the airframe, skid assembly and rotor blades. (See photo#1). Both pilots escaped the aircraft with no difficulty or injuries. The co-pilot returned to the aircraft, turned the radio on and called H Troop Operations and informed them of the situation. H Troop immediately dispatched a recovery helicopter to pick up the crew. The aircraft was removed from the crash site at approximately 1915 hours because of impending darkness and lack of security in the area.'

The 31st was the ending period for a second RVN Gallantry Cross with Palm Award for HHT. This was awarded despite the fact the HHT stood down on 18 Apr 1972. In 1974 via DA General Order #6, HHT was awarded its second RVN Gallantry Cross – this one for the period 1 Oct 1970 to 31 Aug 1972.

SP4 Jimmy Gibson provided: I served in the Scout Platoon of B Troop and then H/17th Cav from September 1971 until September 1972. I was the guy with blond hair and a red beard, so they called me 'Sunshine.' Jimmy provided a copy of the 1972 Camp Holloway Vietnam yearbook for H Troop (Air) 17th Cavalry. Most yearbooks contain a brief history page in the front; but this yearbook did not have a history. The following individuals are listed in the H/17th Cav's Yearbook. The list is presented alphabetical by last name.

Adams SP4	Grant SGT	Patterson SP4
Aldridge PFC	Griggs SP4	Peterman PFC
Anderson SP4	Hagman SP4	Peterson WO1, Asst A&D Officer
Antonowicz should be Antienowicz PFC	Hall SP4, Opns Clerk?	Pitt SSG

Artigliere CPT, Opns Officer	Harden PFC	Placencio SFC
Bailey CPT	Harper SP4	Plummer SP5
Barker, Wesley SP4	Harris SP4	Price SP4
Barker SP4	Heil SP4	Ramos 1SG
Barlie SFC	Heinze PFC	Rauh SP4
Barnes, Billy CW2	Hendricks SP4	Rayner SP4
Bearden CW2	Hernandez SP4	Reed CW2
Beltrame SP4	Hillsman SP4	Reveteriano SP4
Blackwood SP4	Hozey SP4	Richardson SP4
Blair CIV NHA	Humphreys SSG	Roberts CIV NHA
Bos, Charlie WO1	Hyatt SP4	Robinson SP4
Boudreau SGT	Hylin, Carl WO1	Robinson SSG
Bradley SP4	Ingram SP4	Rodriguez SP4
Brainard PFC	Izzo SP4	Rosales CW2
Brandt CPT	Jackson PFC	Rosas SP5
Brandt WO1	Jankoviak PFC	Sanders CIV NHA
Bristow, Robert CPT	Jarson SP4	Schrum SP4
Brocksmith SP5	Jones SP4	Simmons SP4
Brouillette PFC	Kelley SGT	Slaughter, Sam CPT, XO
Buchanan SP4	Kent SP4	Spencer CW2
Buchanan SP5	King SGT	Spivey PFC
Buckner PFC	Kirkland WO1	Staggs CW2
Burnette SFC	Kraay WO1	Stark SP4
Burns SP4	Kreps SP4	Stoffel SP4
Byrd SP6	Kuchnnhoff SP4	Strachan SP4
Cambridge, Michael G. 1LT	Lamer SP4	Swircsynski SP4
Canon SP5	Landers SP4	Taylor, G. SP4
Castaneda SP5	Larson SP4	Taylor, G. SP4
Cebula SGT	Laudie PFC	Teeples WO1
Clayton SP4	Leatherman SP4	Todman PFC
Collins SP4	Leonard SP4	Tony CIV NHA
Cook SP4	Lopez SP4	Trancoso SP4
Cosgrove SP4	Luzetsky PV2	Twyford SP4
Craig, Ed 1LT	Lynch, Mike SP4	Vasquez SSG
Crossett 1LT	Massagia CPT	Velasquez SSG, Opns NCO
Davis SP4	McCorick SP4	Voight SGT
Deleon SP4	McCormick PFC	Walker SGT
Dobnick CIV NHA	McDonald WO1	Walker SP4
Dragutinovic, Milun SP4	McG CW2	Wallace SP4
Dunn SP4	McNew SP5	Washington SP4
Duxbury SSG	Midkiff PFC	West SP4
Eady, Maxwell 1LT	Miller CIV NHA	Whip SP4
Elliot 1LT, A&D Officer	Moore SP4	Whitman SGT
Erb CPT	Morris SP4	Wilgus SP4
Escalera SSG	Mowery SP4	Williams SP4
Evers SP4	Munn SP4	Williams SP4
Fincher SP4	Nagy WO1	Wilson SP4
Gerischer CPT, Admin Officer	Neil SP4	Wilson 1SG
Getchel, Richard 'Red' SP5	Nesbitt MSG	Zadoka SP4
Gibbs MAJ, CO	Norman SP4	

Gibson SP4
Globe SP4
Goliath SP4
Gower 1LT

Ogilvie SP4
Paine SP4
Parker CPT
Parker SP4

September 1972

An H/10th Cav ORLL document states ‘during the months of September and early October as the enemy activity in Binh Dinh Province intensified, LRRP teams were inserted deep into enemy held areas that had not been penetrated by U.S. or allied forces for several years. These LRRP teams along with H Troop’s VR missions gained vital intelligence as to the movement and strength of enemy forces.’

On the 3rd, the VHPA Helicopter database contains a lost record for H/17th Cav UH-1H #69-15665 at grid ZA199310. We believe the crew of this aircraft was: CPT Barry P. Gerischer, AC, 1LT Maxwell Eady, pilot, SGT Voight, CE, and PFC Vic Antienowicz, gunner. SP4 Mike Lynch, who joined H Troop in late August 1972, was the CE on UH-1H #69-15384 and records the following on his outstanding website. [Editor’s note: Mike says ‘I think’ the downed Huey was 006, but as we read from Vic Antienowicz who was on that Huey, the correct number is 665. Therefore, we have replaced 006 in Mike’s narrative with 665.]

H Troop worked areas to the north around Kontum, Firebase November, Dak to, to the west along QL19 out to Du Co, Plei Djerenge, a place we called the Big Road, the Tea Plantation, and Sugarloaf, and to the south along QL14 and east to the An Khe Pass. Most missions involved working with a Cav Team, Cobra's, a LOH and a Slick. But we occasionally flew single aircraft recon missions. The Tea Plantation, also known as Catecka, was located just southwest of Pleiku. It was a regular view when we were returning from areas around Du Co or Plei Djerenge to the west of Pleiku. We usually flew through the area pretty low as we lined up on the approach to Holloway. It was apparently abandoned but still something to look at on the long flight home. After an uneventful day of working areas around Du Co, both teams bunched together for the flight home with the little birds taking the lead, we got right behind the other slick, I think it was 665, and the four Cobras were behind us. Passing the south side of the tea plantation we turned north rounding the hill and a stream of tracers passes both slicks. Looking forward another stream of tracers goes right through 665 and a bright ball of orange appears on the left side right about where the crewchief sits. The left side fuel cells were apparently on fire and 665 was going down. The Cobras immediately went to work on the side of the hill where the fire had come from as we followed 665 down. It looked like the pilot was trying for the road but ended up on the north side of it in the elephant grass. Maybe twenty feet off the ground I could see a piece of smoking debris falling off the aircraft. Later we learned this was the crewchief, SGT Voight, who had jumped from the burning aircraft. The Huey went in fast and slid to a stop in the tall grass. We set down just off to the right side of 665 and I had a clear view of the tree line across the road, my primary concern. As three of the crew from 665 boarded my Huey, 384, there was some confusion as to what had happened to their crewchief. He was not on the aircraft. 665 continued to burn and I remembered the smoking debris that I had seen. The crewchief had jumped out, he was somewhere behind us in the grass. Before we could lift off 665 exploded and the aerial drop CS canister they were carrying ignited sending gas everywhere. I could feel the gas stinging my eyes as we hovered back to where we found SGT Voight. We got him onboard, burnt from the fire and hurt from the fall but he was alive. We lifted off and headed straight for the evac hospital where we left him in good hands. We lost a crewchief, 665, and the 50-cal that day. We also never flew low through the Tea Plantation again. Although I can’t remember the names of all involved, it was still a day to remember. The pictures on this page were taken a few days after the incident when we came back to work the area.

The little bird drew some fire from a tower in the Plantation and the guns put rockets into the tower, quickly ending the dispute.

SP4 Victor "Chuck" Antienowicz, the doorgunner on UH-1H 665, recalls: This was my second day in the unit. I was flying as the doorgunner on the C&C ship even though I had never fired the weapon yet. My MOS was 45M20, aircraft weapons specialist. Earlier I had landed in Saigon, flown to Nha Trang and my first Huey ride was from Nha Trang to Pleiku. I loved it so much. That day I was introduced to the weapons platoon sergeant and asked him if there was anyway I could fly. He said he was good friends with SSG Steuart who was in charge of doorgunners and CEs. His attitude was that if I wanted to fly, I could. The weather was not good for conducting operations that day but the CPT Gerischer wanted to conduct the mission so the troop went to Duc Co (I later learned the name of the place). About noon the weather prevented us from working, so we were returning to base. The situation Mike Lynch described is what I remember but let me add some details about my aircraft, 665. As the C&C ship, we had two passengers plus some extra equipment. CPT Sam Granett (a West Point 1969 classmate of CPT Artigliere) who was a MACV Advisor sat in the jump seat near the radio console just behind the pilots. Then CPT Granett had his Vietnamese interpreter. CPT Barry P. Gerischer was the AC and 1LT Maxwell Eady the pilot. SGT Voight, our platoon sergeant, was the CE. He was a 'hard stripe' SGT E-5 – the only one I'd ever seen in the Army. I believe he was on his third tour in Vietnam. I remember him telling me that he had received all kinds of medals but not a Purple Heart. I had a million questions for him since I was so new on the job. As we flew over the Tea Plantation, CPT Gerischer saw some NVA getting into holes and started to circle the area. He wanted to shoot them right away but CPT Granett said No that he needed to check for friendlies in the area. He started making radio calls. A few seconds later SGT Voight said something like in a few minutes we aren't going to be able to see them because they were putting camouflage over their holes. So CPT Gerischer said, drop a smoke to mark the spot. As soon as the smoke went out of the ship, the NVA opened fire with a 51-cal. Later CPT Artigliere, who was flying a Cobra, said that there were several NVA machineguns firing and each Cobra tried to engage a different target. We were only 800 feet AGL (CPT Gerischer told me to tell anyone who asked that we were at 3,000 feet, but we all lived because we caught fire at only 800 feet – more on this later). I heard SGT Voight yell 'Taking Fire' and then he started firing his minigun (H Troop mounted a minigun on the left side of the C&C side and a 50-cal on the right side). I could feel the rounds hitting the aircraft and coming through to my side. I could see the traces moving away from my ship. I turned to look inside but it was already on fire. CPT Gerischer called 'Mayday Mayday Embalmer 665 going down on fire.' Later he told me that he looked back into compartment but it was full of flames. There was a large tear gas canister under CPT Granett's seat which ignited while we were still in the air and the cargo compartment was just full of fire. I remember seeing the end piece from the canister fly out of the Huey. The Vietnamese interpreter jumped out onto the skids to try to escape the fire. I saw this and tried to do the same but I couldn't get free (my seat belt was still buckled but I didn't know that at the time). The Huey crashed on its right side which collapsed the skid on my side. At that point, I sat back in my seat knowing that I was going to die because I couldn't get out. As I relaxed for a second, I just unbuckled my seat belt and got out. Now the main rotor blades were still turning and were coming close to the ground because of the collapsed right skid. I didn't see them and just ran straight out. CPT Gerischer tells the story to this day that when he saw me running, he turned his back to me because he didn't want to see my head get cut off by the blade. It didn't happen. I ran outside the blade arc and turned to look back at the Huey. It was then that I saw CPT Granett's arms waving from beneath the Huey. To this day, I don't know how he got under the Huey but he was in a terrible position with all the fire and burning fuel. Maybe he had moved inside the aircraft when the tea gas canister exploded – I don't know. Anyway, I ran back to the helicopter (coming in from the front this time) and grabbing his arms. I pulled him out and carried him under his arms to the LOH that had just landed. The interpreter was already in the LOH.

I remember CPT Granett giving me a thumbs up as they lifted off. His injuries healed quickly because we were flying with him again in a few weeks. Strangely, we never talked about this day again. Now I have lots of questions I want to talk over with him. About that time, Mike Lynch's Huey landed. They were one of the two Huey chase ships for this mission. CPT Gerisher and 1LT Eddy and I ran to that Huey. We started asking about the CE but couldn't see him. We jumped out and ran toward the CE's position on 665, but we couldn't get near it. Then we noticed something behind the tail boom of 665. We could see a leg sticking up, so we ran over there. When I first saw SGT Voight, I just knew he was dead. His body was twisted terribly. One leg was underneath him, the other in the air. We later learned that a 51-cal had glanced off the minigun mount and hit him in the leg. For whatever reason, he had jumped from the Huey while it was still in the air. This is the burning debris that Mike Lynch saw fall from the aircraft. When he landed, his chicken plate broke both his legs, his hip and a wrist. That explains why his body was so twisted when we found him. I just knew he was dead and said so. But CPT Gerisher reached down, found a pulse and said that he was just in shock. While this was going on, the pilot of 384 had moved it nearer us and the gunner (name later) jumped out to help. The four of us picked up SGT Voight, he was a big man, and carried him to 384. We lifted off and took him to the Pleiku hospital. A couple of days later we were back in the area and Mike has a picture of what was left of 665 on the website. Anyway, as we were flying back home, the pilot turned to me and yelled that as soon as we landed I was to go straight to see the old man. I was a PFC. I had never talked to a Major or the commander before. I didn't know what was going on. When I walked into the room, the clerk announced that PFC Antienowicz was here. MAJ Gibbs came out of his office and started asking questions like how high were you guys flying? I honestly told him that I didn't know because this was my first operational mission. He said you're a PFC? I said yes. He told the clerk to make me a SP4 and to make certain I got a ribbon for saving CPT Granett. Later CPT Gerisher told me that he submitted the award for a Silver Star but I received an Air Medal with 'V.' That is the story of my first day flying for H Troop.

On the 5th or 6th, H/17th Cav returned to Catecka where UH-1H #69-15665 had been lost. SP4 Mike Lynch has pictures from this mission on his website. SP4 Victor "Chuck" Antienowicz adds a post-script to his account of the 3rd.

I still had a lot to learn about the Army in combat, especially combat losses. During the next few days I was amazed at all the equipment that had been on that Huey when it crashed and burned! No wonder we crashed – it was badly overgrossed! I remember visiting SGT Voight who was in a full body cast and could not speak. He was badly injured. I was glad that CPT Sam Granett recovered from his injuries and was flying with us again in a couple of weeks.

On the 6th, the VHPA Helicopter database contains a lost record for H/17th Cav OH-6A #68-17300 at grid ZA143249. The record contains no other details. Anyone having addition information about this event is encouraged to contact Mike Law.

On the 10th, the VHPA Helicopter database has a accident record for H/10th Cav OH-6A #68-17268 flown by WO1 EB Williams as pilot and SP4 ME Preston as Observer. The Goldbook database indicates that the aircraft was recovered, turned over to the 604th TC Company and hence to ARADMAC for repair in CONUS. An edited version of the Accident Summary follows:

On 10 September 1972, a flight of three aircraft, an OH-6A, #68-17268 crewed by WO1 Eric B. Williams, and SP4 Michael E. Preston; an AH-1G flown by CPT Butz and 1LT LoFranco and a C&C ship commanded by CPT Jordan departed Camp Holloway to work a visual reconnaissance mission northwest of Pleiku. After flying for approximately thirty (30) minutes, the crew of the OH-6A heard a bang which appeared to come from the engine housing area. The pilot stated that the rotor RPM had dropped out of the green arc, so he immediately lowered the collective and attempted to gain the RPM back. The rotor RPM was restored and an area was selected for

touchdown. Upon realizing the touchdown area was attained, the pilot stated he started his flare at approximately 50 to 75 feet, pulled initial pitch at 10 feet and leveled at 5 feet. At this time, the cyclic became uncontrollable. The aircraft yawed left and impacted the ground on the left skid, which collapsed; however, the aircraft remained upright. There was no accident or post-accident fire. The crew exited the aircraft unassisted and were picked up by the C&C ship and returned to Camp Holloway.

CPT Jack Jordan, after reading the above account, says: I was not flying on this mission. I believe either CPT Bill Causey or CPT Gibson. I believe it was CPT Gibson.

The 10th was the starting period for H Troop 10th Cav's Valorous Unit Award (VUA). In 1979 via DA General Order #9, H Troop was awarded the VUA the period 10 Sep 1972 to 28 Jan 1973.

On the 10th, **PFC Alan Paul Ahlfield** of H Troop 17th Cav died. The VHPA copy of The Wall database lists PFC Ahlfield's tour start date as 4 May 1972 and his MOC as 11C10. MAJ Mike Gibbs has a copy of the Memorial Service program conducted at the Camp Holloway Chapel. The only other names on the program are Chaplain CPT Jack L. Thomas (from the battalion) and SP4 Wesley S. Barker from H Troop who gave the Memorial Tribute. MAJ Gibbs believes that Wesley was also in the Mortar Section. MAJ Gibbs wrote the following on his program: "Murdered by suspect robber while I was in Bangkok. He was caught and will stand trail. Needless loss of life – for nothing and another one ruined, surely by prison."

On the 12th, the VHPA Helicopter database contains an accident record for H/17th Cav OH-6A #67-16333 flown by WO1 Tom J. Waldron somewhere near Pleiku. The accident summary reads:

"The aircraft had just made a passenger drop off and was returning to base camp. On takeoff the aircraft struck a wire with the main rotor mast. The pilot was unable to see the wire due to the darkness. The wire was not marked in any way." This is the last H/17th Cav OH-6A record in the database. The aircraft was repaired and continued to serve with H/17th Cav.

SP4 Bart Burns was medevaced during September. Need details.

For H Troop, 17th Cav, CPT John Parker remembers: I joined H/17th Cav in August 1972 after the 1st Cav went home. Like Walt Moss, I was also right out of Chinook school when I returned to Vietnam for this tour, but they really needed Cobra pilots so I never flew a Hook again. As I recall we never had Blues and the ARVN support was getting worse and worse. I spent many hours supporting Ben Het when they were under attack and under siege during both of my tours, but the day I saw it fall I knew it was all but over. The ARVN's were overrun, then left the compound and ran down the road towards Kontum. The bad guys turned the ARVN's own weapons around and were firing at the ARVN's running down the road. This, of course, happened after they had pulled the last of the American advisors out. We had minimal support at this point and the number of pilots was shrinking as they had stopped sending replacement. It was tough to keep birds flying and pilots legal to fly them. It was strange but we got one or two guys right before the cease fire, I remember one LT right out of flight school and it seems like there were two of them that reported in during January. I had met the LT in Saigon when I was returning from leave and a few days later he reported in to H Trp. Another great story is the day we burned up the POL point at Kontum.

For H Troop, 10th Cav, CPT Dave Cornelius remembers: I joined H/10th Cav in August 1972 after the 1st Cav went home. I'd guess there were about 10 of us that came from the Task Force Garry Owen gang.

According to the intelligence section of an H/10th Cav ORLL prepared by Lawrence R. Jackson, a Department of the Army Civilian with the duties of Binh Dinh Province Officer in Charge, 'during September 1972 most enemy activities were concentrated in Northern Binh Dinh Province. Aside from three VC battalions D8, D50, and D56 around An Nhon, Phu Cat and Binh Khe, the 2nd NVA Division

was stationed northwest of LZ English. The 12th/18th NVA Regiment was active in the An Tu District trying to disrupt traffic along QL-19. This unit continued to harass government forces and supply columns throughout the remaining months of 1972.'

1LT John Caruso served as a Scout pilot and the Mess Officer in H/10th Cav. He provides the following: I eventually retired from the Army as a LTC in the Adjutant General branch but I started out with an ROTC commission in Infantry branch. After the Basic Officer Course and jump school, I went to flight school in class 71-46, th Tan hats. I was the social chairman, so I arranged all the parties. Our Class Sponsor at Ft Rucker (CPT Norm Otto) wrote in my letter of commendation words to the effect, "If the class had wanted to arrange a snowball fight in Alabama in the middle of July, I am certain LT Caruso could get that done!" While my class was at Rucker, a tornado went through the area on 11 Jan 1972. My wife and I had just gotten married in September. The tornado picked us up and slammed us around. I believe there were five people killed. I was promoted to 1LT in the hospital and they pinned my new bars on my PJs. This delayed my graduation from flight school. I was set back and finished with class 72-8, the Green Hats. After OH-6A transition training, I left for Vietnam on July 4th 1972, arrived into Camp Alpha in Saigon with 1LT Doug Coolidge from class 71-46. We ended up at the Eagle Combat Aviation Battalion at Lane. The S-1, Tyler Tugwell, said, "Well you both completed OH-6A transitions in the States – I need one of you to go to the Cav and the other to the 129th AHC." I said I wanted to fly 6s with the Cav and Doug said he would rather fly Hueys. So on approximately 10 July, 1972, I joined the Scout Platoon of H/10th Cav. I believe CPT Stan Broussard was the platoon leader at the time. Later, CPT Dave Cornelius transferred in and was made the Scout Platoon Leader. My roommate was CW2 Rick Pinar. I recall that Rick had told me that he got shot down twice in one day and actually took a third bird up! He was a good guy. We were roommates the entire time and got along well together. I think 'Stewball' (CW2 Mark Stuart) was the OH-6A IP and he gave me my initial check ride. I was given the additional duty of Mess Officer with the warning that the Mess Hall was terrible. That job and being of Italian ancestry would get me my nickname of Spaghetti6. I got along well with our new CO, MAJ Sid Lyons. I think the fact that I personally liked administration helped me to get along with both MAJ Lyons and the second 1SG, Nathan Riley. The 1SG before him was a tall, lanky man with a big handlebar mustache – I can't think of his name. When he left we got an infantry guy by the name of Nathan Riley. He was a gung-ho, straight leg, Infantry guy. Since I was an Infantry officer, he sort of took me under his wing. He showed me things like Morning Reports and the paperwork that got things done. Because I was involved in the admin and mess stuff, I don't think I got as much flying time as some of the other pilots. I'd guess I got about 6-700 hours for my 8-month tour. The Officers' Club was a community club for all officers at Lane. The 180th Chinook (Big Windy), the 129th AHC, and the CAV all had 'our assigned area' around the stage. We also had our Troop mess hall and other units at Lane had their own mess halls. However, after I got my feet on the ground with the mess hall, we had our own Officers' Club (called The Bunker) for the Troop up the hill in one of the hooches. It had a big stone bar that we heard an Engineer Company had set up before the CAV was repositioned at Lane. No one had used it for some time. About two months after I arrived in the Troop, I got it fixed up, acquired a pizza oven, and arranged for someone Qui Nhon to delivery pizza shells a couple of times per week. I was able to get some supplies from the mess hall and my wife would mail me ingredients like pepperoni and anchovies. She also sent decorations for Halloween and Christmas. Usually when you finished flying for the day (post-flight checks, de-briefing, paperwork, etc., the mess hall was already closed (not that you'd want to eat in it initially) and the guys didn't have anywhere else to go except the Officers' Club that didn't have a lot to offer in the way of food. I've got several pictures of the pilots relaxing there after a hard day in the AO. One of the guys, I think it was WO1 John Russell, was playing around with one of those inflatable dolls. Others were playing cards or pool. The officers lived in three hooches in a horseshoe shape at the very top of the hill. These buildings were ringed by sand-

filled 55-gal drums and sandbags with a couple of rows of sandbags on the top. We had metal roofs. There were a spattering of air conditioners here or there. Usually when someone left, you could buy their frig and air conditioner. H Troop's mess hall was staffed with a Mess sergeant - SSG Palmer (I think, I'm not 100% sure) plus a few cooks: SP5 Conklin, SP4 Long, and PFC Grace (I think); and about five Vietnamese women and men. The local nationals mainly did the cleaning, trash removal, and some KP work. Of course you really had to watch them because they'd put leftover and good food under their clothing when they left for the evening. I kind of made the Mess Sergeant responsible for checking them out before they left the base. We didn't have a baker but I recall that SP4 Long would come in about 4 a.m. and start preparing breakfast. When I first went to the mess, I wasn't impressed with the sanitation and it certainly didn't look like a place you would want to eat at, if you had a choice. We moved some tables around, picked up some furniture and decorations from Qui Nhon, and applied fresh paint to brighten the place up. Also, we improved the sanitary conditions around the food prep area. We established a procedure where if a flight called in that they'd be late, we'd save chow for them. Eventually the food got good enough that troopers actually want to eat there! I'd guess the mess hall fed about a hundred people each day. Only a few times do I remember flying two LOHs and two Cobras in the AO. Most of the time we took two LOHs out to the advanced base. One would work the AO with two Cobras and the other would wait for the call that they were heading back for fuel and/or ammo. During one such mission, I had just finished my turn in the AO and was going to refuel back at Lane so I could pick up the hot chow for our guys at the advanced base. Instead of having the troops eat Cs out there, we'd try to bring out hot chow, usually in marmite cans, whenever it made sense. So one day I came back to refuel at Lane and pick up the chow. After refueling, I waited and waited but nobody show up with the food. I needed to get back for my turn in the AO. So I called the tower and they checked with the mess hall. Seems like there was no transportation readily available to bring the chow to me. So I told the tower that I was going to "reposition" and they said, "You're going to reposition where?" I said, "I need to stop by the mess hall." They said, "You can't do that in a LOH!" I said, "Well I have to be out in the AO soon and there is a transportation problem, so I'm solving it." I picked up the "little bird", flew over to the mess hall, and landed with care to avoid the wires. My cooks loaded on the food and I left. The tower kept yelling at me - "You're not authorized to land there!" or words to that effect. Anyway, as I was returned to the staging area I passed MAJ Lyons who was flying back to Lane. I think he was in a Cobra that day. He asked what took me so long? I told him, "I think I got in some trouble." He asked, "What happened?" I told him and he laughed. Then he said, "We'll talk about it later." So I pulled my turn in the AO and didn't think too much about it. When I returned to Lane at the end of the day there was a jeep waiting to take me to see LTC Giese, the Eagle Battalion CO. I reported into LTC Giese and he chews on me pretty hard. Then he concluded with, "Major Lyons will talk to you some more." After I got back to our area and reported to MAJ Lyons, he said that I shouldn't worry about it and that he thought it was pretty funny. Another time flying in the AO, the Mess Hall had sent us a hot meal - I think it was spaghetti. Besides the mermite cans with food, we usually had a box with plates, napkins, etc. Well this time - no plates. So we ended up eating the spaghetti on bread! I told them, "Guys at least it is warm food!"

October 1972

On the 1st according to the 17th CAG Pleiku S3 log, H/17th Cav launched at 0905. At 1017 they reported OH-6A #68-17263 flown by an unnamed crew received SA fire at YA807372. The pilot and observer were wounded when an enemy round hit a 'willie pete' grenade. The aircraft was flow back to Holloway. The log also notes that tropical storm Lorna would hit Chu Lai on the afternoon of Oct 2nd.

On the 2nd according to the 17th CAG Pleiku S3 log, H/17th Cav launched at 1200. At 1615 they reported an OH-6A down near Contour Mountain with control difficulties. (Inspection revealed that a

machine-gun link had partially jammed the cyclic control. The aircraft was flown to Holloway without further incident.)

On the 6th according to the 17th CAG Pleiku S3 log, H/17th Cav launched at 0820. The log states that at 1120 they received a report from MAJ Wise (SRAC Operations) that an aircraft north of Kontum had experienced mechanical difficulties. (Further information: AH-1G #67-15724 flown by WO Kiekland [his correct name is Kenneth W. Kirland] and WO Knag of H/17th Cav crashed at ZA176942 due to power or control failure. Crew suffered some injuries to include possible back strain and abrasions. Crash occurred at 1110 hrs, aircraft was recovered at 1708 hrs.) For this date, the VHPA Helicopter database contains an accident with crew injuries record for H/17th Cav AH-1G #67-15724 flown by WO1 KM Kirland [his correct name is Kenneth W. Kirland] as AC and WO1 KJ Knage [his correct name is Kenneth J. Knag] as pilot. The Goldbook database indicates this aircraft was recovered and given to ARADMAC to return to CONUS for repairs. This database suggests that this aircraft never flew again and was deleted from the Army's Inventory in late 1973. The accident summary reads: "Army aircraft, AH-1G, SN 67-15724, with W1 Kirkland as pilot and W1 Knag as co-pilot was assigned an authorized mission on 6 October 1972. At approximately 0630 hours W1 Kirkland arrived at the aircraft and began his pre-flight inspection. At the same time, W1 Knag went to H Troop Operations and filed a local flight plan (DA Form 1080) and then proceeded to the aircraft and assisted W1 Kirland in completing the pre-flight. The aircraft was determined to be in a flyable condition during the pre-flight and there were no obvious defects evident which would prevent the aircraft from completing its assigned mission. The aircraft took off from Camp Holloway, RVN at approximately one hour prior to landing at Kontum Airfield, RVN. The aircraft was refueled and shut down for approximately one hour. During this period, W1 Kirkland and W1 Knag performed another inspection of the rotor system and flight controls. This inspection was because of a remark by CW2 Reed, who flew the aircraft the day prior, to the effect that the aircraft had a weird vibration. Finding nothing obviously wrong with the aircraft, both pilots decided that it was still airworthy and mission ready. At approximately 1000 hours, the aircraft was launched as part of a five aircraft team and was to proceed to an operational area northwest of Kontum. The aircraft took off to the east and turned a left crosswind with no difficulty. As the aircraft turned west and began his climbing departure from traffic at 80 knots and 500 RPM, both pilots heard a thump in the aircraft. This thump was best described as that type of noise heard when performing a hydraulics check during run-up and the hydraulic system is turned back on with the controls slightly displaced. The pilot checked all of his instruments and flight controls as functioning normally and continued his climb to the west northwest. As the aircraft reached approximately 4,000 feet MSL, the pilot moved the cyclic forward to increase the airspeed to 100 knots for cruise flight. Upon application of forward cyclic, the pilot experienced severe feedback in the fore and aft cyclic and the aircraft began a slight dive. The pilot called over the radio for the co-pilot to 'get on the cyclic' to assist him in controlling the aircraft. At approximately the same time the pilot made a Mayday call and instructed the co-pilot to do the same. The pilot continued to receive severe feedback in the cyclic and was using both hands on the cyclic at this time with the co-pilot controlling the collective and assisting on the cyclic. According to the pilot's witness statement, all other controls were functioning normally and the engine was normal with rotor and engine RPM in the green. The pilot was able to force the cyclic aft and placed the aircraft in a slight decelerating attitude and began a descent to an open field directly to his front. The pilot noticed that the aircraft was decelerating too rapidly and attempted to apply forward cyclic. The severe feedback and forces prevented him from doing so, and the aircraft lost all of its forward airspeed approximately 100 meters short of the intended landing site at approximately 100 feet of altitude. At this time the aircraft began falling through in a slightly tail low attitude and crashed into the trees. The aircraft impacted with approximately a 10 to 15 degree nose high attitude with the skids level with the horizon. Because of the extreme vertical forces encountered upon impact, the landing skid cross-tube assembly failed and the aircraft rolled to the left with the main rotor still turning. The roll to the left and subsequent stoppage of the rotor system

severed all control linkage and caused extensive damage to the airframe and transmission mount area as the transmission was torn completely out of its mounts. Both of the pilots were dazed by the initial impact forces and were assisted in their escape from the aircraft by the crewchief and gunner of a UH-1H who observed the emergency and followed the AH-1G to the ground. The pilot was able to escape through the normal exit with the help of the crewchief; however the co-pilot's canopy had to be busted open in order for him to escape. The pilot received a severe back strain and the co-pilot received a small cut on his chin and elbow due to impact. In addition, the co-pilot had a partial memory loss as a result of the accident which lasted approximately three days. Both pilots were immediately evacuated to a hospital in Pleiku. Recovery operations began shortly thereafter and the aircraft was returned to Camp Holloway the same day without further incident."

For his actions on the 7th, 1LT John Caruso of H/10th Cav received the Air Medal with "V" Device via HQ 1st Avn Bde General Order 3772 dated 11 Dec 1972. An edited version of the citation reads: 1LT Caruso distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions while serving as pilot of a C&C helicopter on a VR mission ten miles southwest of LZ English. After two cobra gunships had received AW fire, 1LT Caruso plotted exact coordinates, radioed for tactical air strikes, and adjust artillery fire. While the crew refueled his aircraft, 1LT Caruso briefed the 22nd Vietnamese Division advisory team and kept them informed of all enemy movement and locations. Returning to the AO, 1LT Caruso's aircraft came under large caliber AA fire. He adjusted cobra gunship's rocket fire, suppressing the enemy AA guns and assisted in calling air strikes and artillery fire, destroying the sites.

On the 8th according to the 17th CAG Pleiku S3 log, at 1320 SP4 Michael Stark, H/17th Cav, observer in OH-6A 67-16918 was wounded in the left hand and face by small arms round at ZA054735. He was taken to 67th Evac hospital. [Editor's note: 67-16918 is not listed in the VHPA helicopter database but OH-6A #66-07918 did serve with H/17th Cav in late 1972.] Item 4 in the S3 log assigns the mission priority to the Eagle Battalion at An Son as follows: VIP, CRID [Korean division], 22nd [ARVN division], WHRID [Korean White Horse division]. The last line for this item reads: 'Guns carry PRC 25 for ground monitor.' Item 5 in the S3 log at 1950 hours states that Eagle Battalion informed them that they will be short three MR [assumed to be mission ready] AH-1Gs for the next day. It then lists the number of MR AH-1Gs as follows: 60th AHC - 3, 129th AHC - 4, H/10th Cav - 2. The next line for this items reads: 'No guns available for 22nd Div but can use H/10th for TIC.

On the 15th according to the 17th CAG Pleiku S3 log, H/17th Cav launched at 1030. At 1345 they reported an AH-1G down on precautionary landing outside Holloway perimeter. The aircraft was subsequently flown back to Holloway at 1432. Item 6 at 1527 reads: CTOC reported an OH-6A shot down at Binh Ding (Subsequent information: A/C 67-16668 was on VR when shot down by small arms and automatic weapons. Began burning and was ultimately destroyed. Crew recovered. Pilot WO1 Williams received possible back injury, observer was not injured. Location CR096426. [Editor's note: the GOLDBOOK and VHPA Helicopter databases indicate this was not an H/10th Cav LOH.]

Also on the 15th according to an H/10th Cav ORLL 'a LRRP team discovered an extremely heavy troop concentration and as they attempted to return to the pickup point, came under heavy fire. Four of the members were killed and the remaining two took refuge in a tall tree. Being completely surrounded, there was no way of getting to the extraction point. Realizing the desperate situation and without regard to their own safety, the Cav team moved in to make the hazardous pickup. The Cobra gunships laid down continuous, suppressive fire as the LOH pilot expertly and valorously hovered at the tree top to retrieve the stranded LRRP members; all the while taking intense ground fire. Again while conducting a further VR of the area the LOH involved in the low reconnaissance took fire and was forced to the ground. The aircraft was totally destroyed but the crew miraculously escaped injury. The covering Cobra gunship that was closest to the downed crew members unhesitantly descended to the crash site spraying the enemy infested terrain with the turret weapons and valiantly evacuated the LOH

crew on the ammo bay doors of the circumscribed aircraft. After transferring the LOH crew to a UH-1H, the Cobra then returned and put heavy volumes of fire on the enemy.'

Beginning on the 16th and continuing for several day, the 17th CAG Pleiku S3 log reports details of the continuing deterioration of the ARVN's hold on the area in and around Kontum and Dak To. The 57th AHC reported Kontum airfield receiving incoming fire. Several US dead remained at FSB 43 (AR854145) that could not be extracted but several wounded US (including a crew from the 57th were evacuated). The log indicates the general conclusion of the various commanders is that the ARVN will soon abandon FSB 43. As darkness approaches Warlord 6, the 17th CAG CO, calls off attempts to extract the bodies from FSB 43 and has his Operations report this to the 1st Avn Bde HQ. Item 12 in the log at 2310 reads: 'LTC MacManus alerted [H/17th] Cav to launch at 0630H 17 Oct 72.'

On the 17th according to the 17th CAG Pleiku S3 log, at 0600 H/17th Cav reported that they would be ready to launch after all aircraft refueled. (Ground fog eventually delayed the Cav pack[age] from launch until after 0730. Item 5 at 1025 reads: 'H/17th reported that lack of comms with VNAF Black Cat over FSB 43, resulting in near misses with TAC Air and ordnance; caused abort of attempts to recover US KIA of 16 Oct. (Attempt resumed at 1615, but one incoming round plus the nearness of friendly troop with a US Advisor indicated that the recovery should not be attempted again until the situation stabilizes.)' Item 6 at 1450 reads: 'G-2 Air reported that villages at AR810330 were evacuating to Camp Enari; due to presence of NVA Bn with tracks.' And the action taken reads: 'H/17th diverted by SRAC to area, Cav reports neg sightings.'

On the 20th according to the 17th CAG Pleiku S3 log, Pleiku airbase received an ABF [attack by fire] of approximately 15 107mm rockets. The log notes the airbase was subsequently closed. Item 6 at 0830 reads: H/17 launched to western rocket box. Found 1 possible launch site. Item 7 at 0921 reads: CTOC directed that 57th guns be pulled from PKU TAC CP to provide support for H/17 cross border OPN. Item 8 at 0941 reads: CTOC directed that Cougars be sent back to support PKU TAC CP. Item 9 at 0945 reads: H/17 launched (someplace). Item 10 at 1010 reads: TAC-E declared at PKU TAC CP. Item 12 at 1915 reads: Informed by CPT Carlson that TAC-E over at 1900. Item 13 at 2030 reads: G2 Air req following be passed to H/10: Recon QL19 from BaGi to PKU, CPT Stampede G3 (KTM prov); 1330 P/U backseater at II CORPS lower reaction force at Le Trung Dist HQs.

On the 21st according to the 17th CAG Pleiku S3 log, H/17 reported Cav off at 0900H. Item 5 at 1550 reads: CTOC reported that H/10 did not pick up backseater at 1330H as required.

On the 23rd according to the 17th CAG Pleiku S3 log, item 3 at 1127 states that CTOC reported that bodies of US KIA from 16 Oct were recovered. Item 4 at 1201 reads: CTOC rpts an OH-6 down at approx 1130 hrs BR337444 from mechanic problems. A/C not recoverable. Crew: WO1 Kenneth Clark lost 5 teeth, chin lacerations, possible broken bones. OBS: SP5 Steven Nickerson: rib contusions, possible broken bones. Crew admitted to 67th Evac. Item 5 at 1930 reads: ECAB rpts that there will be no guns for 22nd Div tomorrow. 129th has five, H/10 has two. Item 6 at 2215 reads: H/17 req that POL point be operational at 0615. They have 0630 T/O.

Also on the 23rd according to an H/10th Cav ORLL 'while on a reconnaissance mission in the area of two reported Viet Cong training camps, the LOH was forced down into dense vegetation. The pilot incurred head injuries and the aerial observer was thrown from the aircraft and unconscious. The recovery aircraft disregarding the closing enemy, hovered over the downed LOH and lowered the jungle penetrator to the injured personnel. Although in severe pain, the pilot dragged the observer to the rescue device and with miraculous strength held on until they both were safe aboard the recovery aircraft. After the evacuation, the recovery aircraft rejoined the Cav team as it continued the mission that resulted in the important confirmation of the presence of the training camps. The Cobras then accurately and decisively engaged the sites causing heavy damage.'

Also on the 23rd, the VHPA Helicopter database has an accident and loss record for H/10th Cav OH-6A #65-12944 flown by WO1 K.N. Clark and SP5 S.E. Nickerson who sustained injuries. The decoded details of the record state that at approximately 2230 hours on the 22nd of Oct 72, a visual reconnaissance mission of the area east of the Mang Giang Pass was assigned to H Troop Operations. WO1 Kenneth N. Clark and SP5 Stephen E. Nickerson were assigned as the pilot and observer of the OH-6A, SN 65-12944, which would be utilized on the mission along with one AH-1G for cover and one UH-1H used for command and control/chase. At approximately 0700 hours on the morning of 23 Oct 72, the three aircraft took off from Lane AHB, An Son RVN, on their assigned mission. The mission was conducted normally and without incident until 1145 hours local. At this time the pilot was hovering the aircraft approximately 40 feet above the tree tops looking for signs of enemy activity. The nose of the aircraft started a slow turn to the right. The pilot increased collective pitch to maintain altitude and tried to correct the spin by using anti-torque pedals. The spin increased in velocity and the pilot rolled the throttle off and allowed the aircraft to settle into the trees. Upon impact with the trees the main rotor blade and tail boom separated from the aircraft. The main fuselage then fell to the ground (a distance of approximately 50 feet). Both pilot and observer received minor injuries and were rescued shortly thereafter. The aircraft was totally destroyed.

On the 25th, the VHPA Helicopter database has an accident record for H/10th Cav OH-6A #69-16019 flown by CPT S.A. Broussard as pilot and WO1 M.D. McPherson as co-pilot. The Goldbook database indicates the aircraft was repaired and continued to fly with the unit until the end of the year when it was turned over to ARADMAC and returned to CONUS. The accident reports reads: While conducting a low level recon, the pilot's attention was diverted outside the aircraft to such an extent that he allowed the aircraft to fly into the top of a tree resulting in damage to the aircraft.

On the 26th, the VHPA database lists **1LT Carlos Alberto Pedrosa** of H/17th Cav as being killed from an enemy rocket attack while the troop was staging just off the runway at Kontum. The Wall database gives his tour start date as 14 Aug 1972 and his MOS as 01981. SP4 Larry Neal, a UH-1H doorgunner, was WIA and evaced on this date.

SP4 Victor "Chuck" Antienowicz recalls: LT Pedrosa was a Lift pilot who joined H Troop in late August. He always flew on the right side. He was a friendly guy and spent a lot of time with the EM. I remember him sharing his letters with me while I was cleaning the guns on my Huey. He had grown up in a rough section of Queens in New York City. He had a habit of walking out toward the flight line and giving a thumbs-up sign to each team left for the OA. I'd say we had become lax when we staged at Kontum because we didn't use the old revetments that were still there. We just parked out in the open. My Huey was lifting off. We were only about 20 feet in the air. LT Pedrosa walked out in front of his Huey to give us a thumbs-up. I remember seeing his Cav hat on the front of the Huey. You could hear the swish of the in-coming rocket. He must have heard this as well because I watched as he turned to get his hat and start moving for cover then BANG. I literally watched body parts fly. I yelled at my pilots to land back to help with the wounded, but we continued with this mission. The Huey was blown over on its left side. Mike Lynch took a photo of the Huey which is on his website. After Vietnam I spoke to my AC that day, CPT Gerischer, and I asked why we didn't land and help. He told me that the rocket that got them was so close to us that he could feel it and at that point he did not care about the mission, the only thing on his mind was us because the next rocket could easily have gotten us. Now, I did not want anyone to think that CPT Gerischer was an uncaring pilot - he was just the opposite I always had the highest regards for his C&C command and him. Back to the rocket attack, I know SP4 Larry Neal was wounded in the same blast and was later evaced to the States because of these wounds. I seem to remember that some others were wounded in this incident but I can't recall their names. I also didn't recall the tail number of this Huey. To this day, whenever I think of LT Pedrosa I always think - if he just hadn't walked out to the flight line to give us a thumbs-up, maybe he'd be alive today. But there is a bright

side to this sad story. Several years ago I left a note at The Wall mentioning him. To my great surprise, an official from Carlos' school in the Queens contacted me. He said that the school had plans to erect a plaque to commemorate him for getting an education, getting out of the 'rough neighbor' and becoming an officer in the Army and a pilot. However, they had no details about what sort of a person he was and how he died. Naturally, I was honored to help.

WO James T. (Jet) Jackson recalls: I was the Gun Team Lead sitting on the ground in Kontum the day LT Pedrosa got killed by the rocket. He was flying chase for our team that day if I recall the events right. Hell of a nice guy, what a shame he had to get it like that. I was also in on the extraction of the 57th crew down south at the overrun firebase. The pilot that survived and had his foot blown-off was my roommate in flight school at Ft. Rucker. A guy name Onefry from St. Louis. Prior to joining H Troop, I flew Cobras for F/79th ARA at An Loc during the main part of the Easter Offensive of '72. We kicked some serious NVA butt down there. Completely destroyed four NVA Divisions. It was the first time that Cobras scored kills against Russian-built Main Battle Tanks (T-54's & T-55's). Several guys in my unit got to be tank aces. I was the 'new guy' peter-pilot in those days so I spent most of my time in the front seat working the turret guns. Got to see all the action I needed though. Eight pilots were killed, four more wounded and sent home and a couple more had nervous breakdowns and couldn't continue. Out of 32 pilots total in our unit the percentages weren't in our favor. The SA-7 "Strella" heat-seeking missile was especially affective. We had one Cobra blown completely in two, yet both pilots walked away unharmed. They fell from 4,500 ft. into a big tree that broke their fall. What luck they had. Of the 13 Cobras we had in our unit, 10 were destroyed beyond repair. I also got to crash in one during that time, but we both survived without injuries. By comparison, my time at H Troop at Pleiku was almost like a holiday. The bad guys didn't seem quite as gung-ho, out-to-kill-us-all. Thank God they didn't shoot any of those missiles either! When they started shooting those things down south we had to fly on the deck where every Tom, Dick or Ho who had an AK-47 or SKS could shoot at us. Never got used to that.

Sometime during the month of October, H/17th Cav AH-1G #68-17067 sustained damage from an unknown source that required it to be turned into ARAMAC for extensive maintenance. Anyone with further information about this matter is encouraged to contact Mike Law.

November 1972

On the 1st according to an H/10th Cav ORLL 'upon completion of a VR mission in the Nui Ba mountains where two NVA base camps with large enemy forces estimated at between 200 to 300 men and antiaircraft weapons were spotted, H Troop was summoned for an emergency extraction of three wounded LRRPs that were surrounded by NVA forces. During the valorous extraction under heavy ground fire, one of the LOH pilots was seriously wounded, but with courage and skill of the highest order was able to return to the fire base where he was evacuated. The results of the invaluable intelligence gathered on the VR mission and extraction led to two arclights which induced heavy enemy casualties.' The H/10th Cav AAR: Pre-X-Day states: During the first two weeks of Nov, H Troop was stationed at Lane conducting daily reconnaissance missions for the 22nd ARVN Division in Binh Dinh Province. On the 1st while conducting a VR ten miles west of LZ English, a LOH piloted by WO1 King was hit by enemy fire, wounding Mr. King. No significant enemy activity was noted during this period and flying time was kept to a minimum due to adverse weather conditions.

On the 13th, the National Archives has an aircraft hit report for H/10th Cav OH-6A #67-16538 flown by 1LT John Caruso as pilot and CPT Dave Cornelius as co-pilot. The report states the aircraft took fire at BR792821 wounding 1LT Caruso. The report states the wounded pilot flew the LOH back to LZ Crystal and landed. The CP then brought the LOH back to the Dispensary at Lane. Also for the 13th, the H/10th Cav AAR: Pre-X-Day states: While conducting a VR ten miles southwest of LZ English, an OH-6A received intense ground fire, slightly wounding the pilot, CPT Cornelius. However, CPT

Cornelius was able to fly the crippled aircraft back to LZ Crystal where it was slingloaded back to Lane.

1LT John Caruso recalls: This was my scariest time in the AO – I was flying with CPT David Cornelius as my Observer. Maybe this was a check ride situation or a mission. David had an M-60 on a bungee cord on the left side. We were flying nap of the earth and this VC (I don't think it was NVA) popped up out of the spider hole. He put some rounds into us. One went through my foot pedal and hit my flight helmet. Dave received a flesh wound on his face that bled a lot. We popped smoke and quickly got out of harm's way. When we got back to base, Dave said, "Man, that was close!" I said, "Dave, you're bleeding!" He said, "Me – what about you?" I asked what he was talking about and he told me to take off my flight helmet. A small caliber round had entered the front of my helmet just above my eye, passed through the Styrofoam inside the helmet, and exited out the top of it. I didn't know I'd been hit! I remember something hitting my helmet but I just thought it was a spent cartridge from the M-60. Then I got scared. At the first VHPA Reunion I attended (in Orlando in 2003), the H Troopers asked if I'd brought my flight helmet! I did bring it and I still have it. I never crashed a LOH. I recall being shot up in the AO. Like most scouts, my bird took bullets in the blades, through the console and even through the aft fuel cell. Most of the time I could fly to Lane and the maintenance section would do their magic and have the bird flying in no time. Sometimes I would have to land at a place where they could sling load the LOH back to maintenance. I remember on at least one occasion doing a forced landing in a not so safe place. I think CPT Tom Butz was flying cover in a Cobra. The guns were putting fleshette rockets in the nearby tree lines. They were able to recover the LOH. I remember we used to have several radio frequencies written in grease pencil on the Plexiglas. As I left the LOH, I simply wiped those numbers off with my glove and changed the frequency settings on the radios. I remember flying with a gunner named Nick or Nickerson from Maine. I used to give him a little stick time now and then in case I got hit. Some ships had a cyclic stick on the left side and some didn't. I don't recall that if had a shortage of OH-6As in our unit. We did get a few shot up but usually when we turned them in, we got a replacement. I'd say at times, we had more flyable LOHs than pilots. I don't remember any discussion about "saving blade time." We seemed to fly whenever we needed to fly. I saw a few OH-58s on Lane and at Nha Trang with the VIP Aviation Company but I don't remember they ever flew as a Scout bird in the AO with H Troop. I remember flying a LOH through the Mang Yang Pass and seeing all those French graves. We didn't fly high, so that was a little un-nerving to me! Just about every day the "little birds" (LOHs) would fly first light and last light VR missions around the base. I remember taking 1SG Riley up on a few last light missions. He enjoyed it. One evening, I was on a last light mission and I noticed these two guys carrying a tube along a rice paddy near Lane. I reported this and a set of Guns launched. The Guns directed me back for another look. As it turned out the men were farmers working on their irrigation system. Everyone was all smiles and we flew back to base. As I remember, we never really had an abundance of Scout pilots. I remember several times flying everyday for six to ten days in a row. Sometimes it would be a combat mission; other times, an ash & trash mission like picking up supplies and parts or taking someone to another location. I wasn't that knowledgeable in the Operations side of the Troop but I do recall that at times the Troop was split up and that we would be sending sets of teams to two different areas. I remember going to Camp Holloway at Pleiku and the tower would tell us to land the OH-6As at "The Bait Box." I also remember spending some nights away from Lane. In most cases, the temporary hooches that we slept in were terrible and usually damp. I'd say I wasn't gone on these relocations missions longer than three to five days.

CPT Dave Cornelius recalls: Naturally, I remember this day rather well. I think this was the last time I flew with John because he was cleared to fly in the AO solo. What John has forgotten is that we had come upon a couple of 51-cal pits that were, unfortunately, occupied by some bad buys that wanted to be shot at our helicopter.

For their actions on 13 Nov, CPT Dave Cornelius (2nd OLC) and 1LT John Caruso of H/10th Cav received the Distinguished Flying Cross via HQ 1st Avn Bde General Order 767 dated 31 Jan 1973. An edited version of the citation reads: These men distinguished themselves by exceptionally valorous actions while serving as crew of a LOH performing a VR mission NE of LZ Crystal. After descending from altitude, they began their reconnaissance of the area and immediately found a large bunker and housing complex. Relaying the information to the C&C aircraft, they started systematically burning the buildings. As they were about to leave the area, they found a small trail leading toward the north. They followed it to a village which had several NVA flays flying overhead. As they began marking the individual quarters, the aircraft came under AW fire. 1LT Caruso maneuvered the aircraft to enable CPT Cornelius to return the fire and drop a red smoke grenade. As they flew from the contact area, the aircraft was caught in a cross-fire, which wounded CPT Cornelius and damaged the aircraft. 1LT Caruso simultaneously marked the enemy positions with smoke grenades, called in the cobra gunships and adjusted their fire. With fuel streaming from the aircraft and smoke pouring from the engine compartment, they made an emergency landing at LZ Crystal with no further damage.

According to an H/10th Cav ORLL 'the purpose of the reconnaissance operations from 21-27 November in Binh Dinh Province was to locate the main shipping routes from the North. On the 27th one of these roads was located. A few enemy troops were observed so the Cav team swooped down and dropped CS gas throughout the area. A minimum of 35 Viet Cong were forced out of hiding. The Cobra gunships promptly laid down devastating fire and although the smoke and gas was extremely thick, several secondary explosions and ten confirmed KBAs with many more probables were noted. Further intensive reconnaissance revealed a well camouflaged R&R and training center. H Troop guns and TAC air bombarded this area and dealt the enemy lethal and demoralizing blows. Without the keen eyes and tactical cunning of this unit the mission would have have been as effective.'

The H/10th Cav AAR: Pre-X-Day states: In the last week of Nov H Troop assumed the mission of the 60th AHC at Ninh Hoa for a period of three days because all aircraft HHHHHHHHHHHH

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On the 1st according to an H/10th Cav ORLL, 'throughout the weeks to follow [previous item mentions 21-27 Nov] H/10th Cav incessantly uncovered vital and inestimable intelligence. While conducting a VR of suspected VC locations, a LOH sighted a Viet Cong bivouac area. There were visable signs of recent activity, but no movement could be detected. The Cobra gunships laid down sporadic fire to cover the LOH which in complete disregard of obvious dangers, landed and captured equipment containing documents that produced invaluable information as to new unitsnot previously known to exist in Binh Dinh Province.'

On the 11th, the VHPA Helicopter database has a loss record for H/10 Cav OH-6A #67-16089 at BR961273 but does not provide the names of the crew or other details. In spite of the loss record, the Goldbook database shows this aircraft was given to ARADMAC and returned to CONUS.

1LT Denny Lyons of H/10th Cav remembers: I was flying front seat in the #2 gun. I normally worked in the Maintenance area. CPT Tom Butz was flying the lead gun. CPT Dave Cornelius (we called him Corny) was flying the LOH. The mission departed early and it was a recon north of Plei Djereng and east southeast of Kontum. Corny was flying up a blue line with rising terrain on his right (east) side when he started taking fire. CPT Butz told him "break right, break right," rolled in hot, and put eleven pair of rockets on target. I distinctly remember Corny saying "TAKING FIRE, TAKING FI" and that's all. Corny broke and turned directly for where we had taken off from earlier (as straight a line as could be drawn on a map!). After CPT Butz's run we started inbound and nothing came out, no rockets, no nothing! I could hear the bullets whizzing by the cockpit (at least that's what I thought those noises were!), while trying to get as small as possible behind my chicken

plate. I looked into the rear view mirror and mouthed "what the f#@\$, over!" and got a shoulder shrug in reply. We raced to catch up to the LOH and other gunship and slick in our flight. As we approached, I could see that the LOH was having some difficulty with rotor RPM. Corny put the LOH down on a sandbar and was quickly picked up by the slick and taken to Pleiku (main) hospital. I have photos of the LOH's upper left windshield and of the slick on the hospital pad at Pleiku. We returned to Camp Holloway. About an hour later Corny called from the hospital looking for a ride back to Holloway. Someone went after him and when we returned all he wanted to do was to go into the "vile." It was barely 9 a.m. CPT Cornelius had suffered a small shrapnel wound to the thigh. The hat that had been under his seat had taken a hit right through the bill. The reason the Cobra I had been a passenger (for all that I did) in had not fired a shot was because the guy in back had not pushed in the AC Weapons Sight circuit breaker thus rendering the Cobra simply a very expensive two seat air conditioned (sometimes) taxi!! I also had the wonderful experience of going out to recover the LOH and returning it to Holloway.

On the 11th, the VHPA Helicopter database contains an accident record for H/17th Cav OH-6A #66-14411 flown by WO1 M.D. McPherson and SP4 M.E. Preston. The accident summary reads as follows:

Army aircraft, OH-6A, SN 66-14411, with WO1 McPherson as pilot and SP4 Preston as observer was assigned an authorized mission on 11 December 1972. At approximately 0630 WO1 McPherson arrived at the aircraft and began his preflight. Upon completion of the preflight inspection WO1 McPherson went to H Troop, 17th ACS Operations to file his flight plan (DA Form 1080) and to obtain the morning briefing which contained the mission, enemy situation, and the forecast weather for the day. The aircraft was determined to be in a flyable condition during the preflight and there were no obvious defects evident which would prevent the aircraft from completing its assigned mission. The aircraft took off at approximately 0800 hours from Camp Holloway, RVN and flew to Kontum Airfield, RVN. The aircraft was refueled and shutdown. Later that morning the aircraft took off and was flown in the area of operations. The aircraft was flown back to Kontum and refueled. It was then flown back to Camp Holloway and shutdown with a flight of 30 minutes logged in the flight log book. At approximately 1400 hours the aircraft was run-up and departed to an area near Duc Co, RVN. Up until this time all instruments were normal. After flying the aircraft for about two hours the pilot was returning to Camp Holloway for fuel. The pilot noted his fuel quantity gauge fluctuating. He also stated that his temperature gauge fluctuating. The fuel quantity gauge was going from 0 to 400 pounds. WO1 McPherson then decided to make a precautionary landing at Thanh An, RVN. He landed, got out and looked in the fuel tank. He stated that there was fuel in the tank. When he got back in the aircraft he noted the engine instruments had stabilized. He then radioed his flight leader that he would try to fly back to Camp Holloway. He decided to fly low-level down QL 19 toward Holloway. Approximately 5 minutes later the engine failed. The aircraft was heading 045 degrees at 100 feet AGL and at 90 knots indicated airspeed. The pilot immediately flared to avoid a truck on the road. Upon ground contact in which the heels of the skid hit first, the aircraft hit hard with forward movement and severed the tailboom. The aircraft spun to the left and stopped heading 250 degrees. Both the pilot and observer exited the aircraft unassisted and were immediately picked up by the UH-1H that was following them down the road. Recovery operations began immediately afterwards and the aircraft was removed to Camp Holloway that day without further incident. The pilot and observer were evacuated to the Camp Holloway Dispensary, examined, and released.

On the 28th, the Eagle Battalion Operations Journal mentions SSG Dowan in H/10th Operations section. The log states that H Troop's Cav Pac didn't launch until 0930 hours due to weather. It mentions three different vehicle convoys departing Lane or Qui Nhon. Each had an assigned gunship escort. At 1700

hours it states H/10th operations reports they will have only two guns possibly three for tomorrow's missions.

According to the intelligence section of an H/10th Cav ORLL prepared by Lawrence R. Jackson, a Department of the Army Civilian with the duties of Binh Dinh Province Officer in Charge, //insert the remaining material from this source here.//

Concerning the way H/10th Cav celebrated the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Eve holidays at Lane, 1LT John Caruso recalls:

We had a traditional Thanksgiving meal and many of the officers took turns serving the troops on those days. I even have a picture with MAJ Lyons, CPT Bozin (XO), CPT Causey (Operations Officer) and CW2 Pinar (Safety Officer) wearing chef's hats behind the serving line. For Christmas and New Years' evenings, I was asked to coordinate parties for the entire Troop. The only places large enough to have all the enlisted and officers together were the local bordellos just outside the perimeter. So 1SG Riley and I get into a jeep and make a deal with the managers of those "establishments." We would supply the food and the locals would supply the drinks and suitable "family-style" entertainment. I remember see a Chaplain (the LOH pilots were usually tasked to fly the Chaplain around on Saturdays or Sundays went he made his rounds to the various bases, so I knew him). I said to him, "Why is it that lately every time I see you, you're inside a whorehouse?" He must have heard that line before because he quickly quipped, "Well, I have to go where the sinners are!"

Year End Summary - After four and a half years, the Squadron officially left Vietnam and was stationed back to Fort Knox. The HQ and HHT personnel had been functioning more like an Aviation Battalion or even a Group than an ACS during its last few months in Vietnam. Alpha Troop stood down with most of its personnel going to Fort Bragg and some of its equipment going with the colors to Fort Hood. Bravo and Charlie Troops remained in Vietnam but were reflag H/17th Cav and H/10th Cav respectively. Delta Troop stood down. Most of the troop departed Vietnam on the same airplane. It is not known what happened to the unit once they landed in CONUS.