

(From Pacific Stars & Stripes May 19, 1968, provided by Les Hines, americal.org)

DRAGON MOUNTAIN, Vietnam — The sighting of 1,000 to 1,200 feet of trenches by "Ruthless Rider" Aerial Scout Teams from the 7th Squadron 17th Air Cav. Regt. led to discovery of a newly built NVA stronghold wedged in the mountainous terrain about 30 miles northwest of Dais To in the Central Highlands. Enemy troop movement was detected along numerous trails leading to a complex of over 100 bunkers, five hootches and ten antiaircraft positions, each armed with three antiaircraft guns. Close reconnaissance revealed excavation debris and an assortment of construction equipment, indicating the complex had just been completed. The Ruthless Rider inspectors were received by a hot display of automatic and antiaircraft weapons fire. The Cavalry gunships and light observation helicopters returned the fire with a hail of minigun, grenade and rocket firepower. Air strikes were then made by Air Force jets. The jets' devastating, pinpoint bombardment also met with fire from the heavily entrenched NVA. The jets struck again and then the scout teams engaged the enemy in an air-to-ground fire fight. Still the NVA responded with an incessant volley of lead. The NVA guns were silenced in a final onslaught of tactical air strikes, augmented by artillery bombardment. Bad weather prevented 17th Combat Aviation Group helicopters from making an accurate damage assessment.