



# TROPIC LIGHTNING

A HISTORY OF THE 25th INFANTRY DIVISION

## HERALDRY OF THE DIVISION PATCH

The shoulder patch of the 25th Infantry Division was adopted late in 1943 and is in the form of a taro leaf, in red with a gold border, and a bolt of lightning superimposed in gold. The taro leaf is reminiscent of the birth of the 25th from elements of the famous old Hawaiian Division which had originally adopted the taro leaf for its patch. It is also suggestive of the Pacific region where the division was born and where it has fought.

The taro plant has arrow-shaped leaves, often brilliantly colored, and is native to the Pacific Isles. The rootstock of the taro is a food, the flesh of which is similar to that of the potato. It is used in the preparation of Poi, a staple food product of Hawaii.

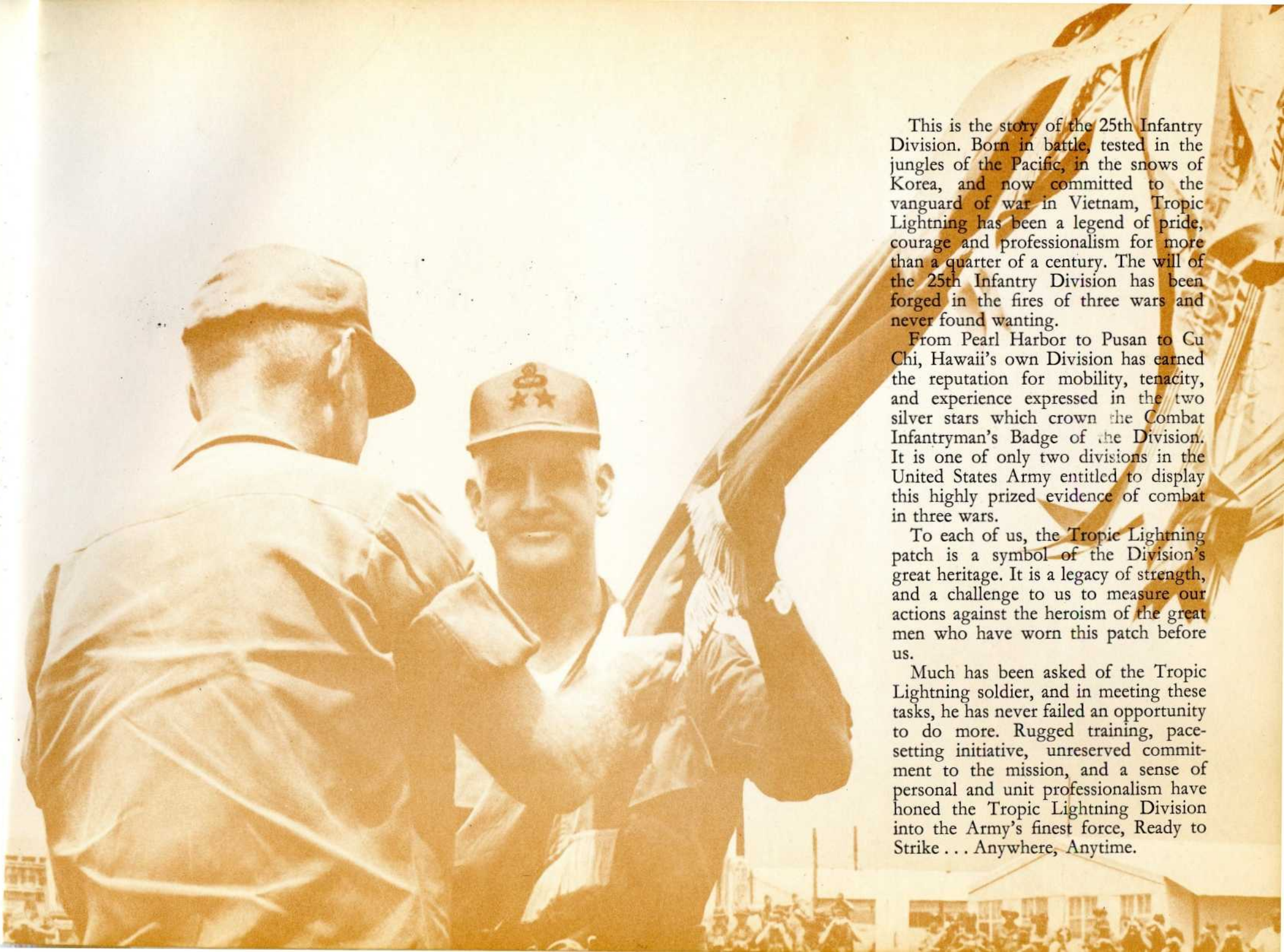
The slashing golden bolt of lightning symbolizes speed and aggressive spirit.

This celerity and aggressiveness was first demonstrated by the division in its drive across the islands of the Southwest Pacific against the Imperial Japanese aggressors, and then against the North Korean and Chinese Communist Forces in Korea. More recently the Viet Cong insurgents of South Vietnam and the North Vietnamese Army regulars invading the south have felt the wrath of Tropic Lightning.

*COVER: A Tropic Lightning infantryman assaults over a berm under cover from a blazing minigun.*

Information Office, 25th Infantry Division, APO San Francisco, 96225. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.





This is the story of the 25th Infantry Division. Born in battle, tested in the jungles of the Pacific, in the snows of Korea, and now committed to the vanguard of war in Vietnam, Tropic Lightning has been a legend of pride, courage and professionalism for more than a quarter of a century. The will of the 25th Infantry Division has been forged in the fires of three wars and never found wanting.

From Pearl Harbor to Pusan to Cu Chi, Hawaii's own Division has earned the reputation for mobility, tenacity, and experience expressed in the two silver stars which crown the Combat Infantryman's Badge of the Division. It is one of only two divisions in the United States Army entitled to display this highly prized evidence of combat in three wars.

To each of us, the Tropic Lightning patch is a symbol of the Division's great heritage. It is a legacy of strength, and a challenge to us to measure our actions against the heroism of the great men who have worn this patch before us.

Much has been asked of the Tropic Lightning soldier, and in meeting these tasks, he has never failed an opportunity to do more. Rugged training, pace-setting initiative, unreserved commitment to the mission, and a sense of personal and unit professionalism have honed the Tropic Lightning Division into the Army's finest force, Ready to Strike . . . Anywhere, Anytime.









# TROPIC LIGHTNING

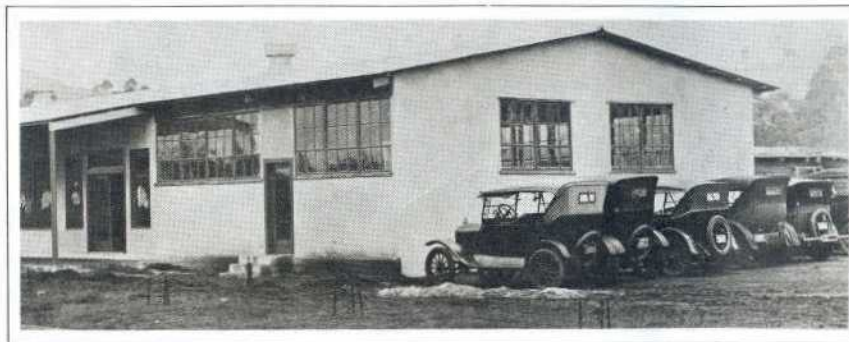
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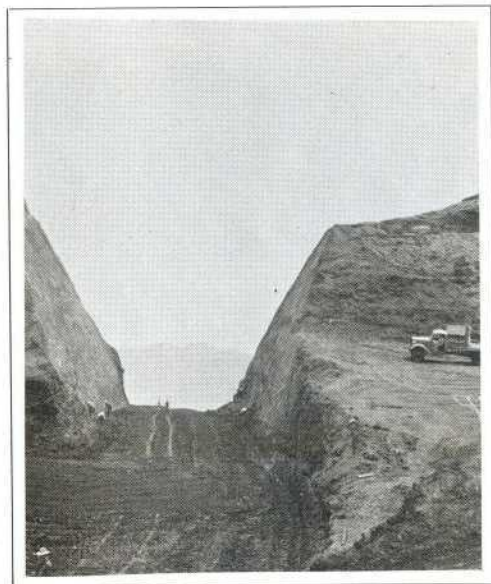
## A Home in the Pacific

Long before the annexation of Hawaii, the island of Oahu in the Central Pacific held supreme importance in the defense of North America. Its two fine harbors promised shelter for the American Navy and a haven for the Merchant Marine fleet in its passage to Asia. The Leilehua plateau seemed an ideal location for "a brigade of mobile troops." In 1908 Captain Joseph C. Castner was directed to take elements of the 4th Cavalry, MacKenzie's Raiders, and build a camp on the island to be known as Schofield Barracks.

In 1916 the wooden barracks were replaced by regimental quadrangles to house the men of the growing garrison. When World War I took most of the regular units to Europe, the Hawaiian National Guard took over to build one of the Army's finest training camps. Under the flag of the Hawaiian Division, Schofield Barracks grew to become a vital military installation, girding itself against the warlike sounds of Imperial Japan.









## Forming the 25th

“At the final stroke of twelve last night a fine old soldier passed away, but into his place stepped two lusty sons to carry on.”

With these words, *The Honolulu Advertiser* recorded, on October 1, 1941, the formation of two new Infantry Divisions in the U.S. Army.

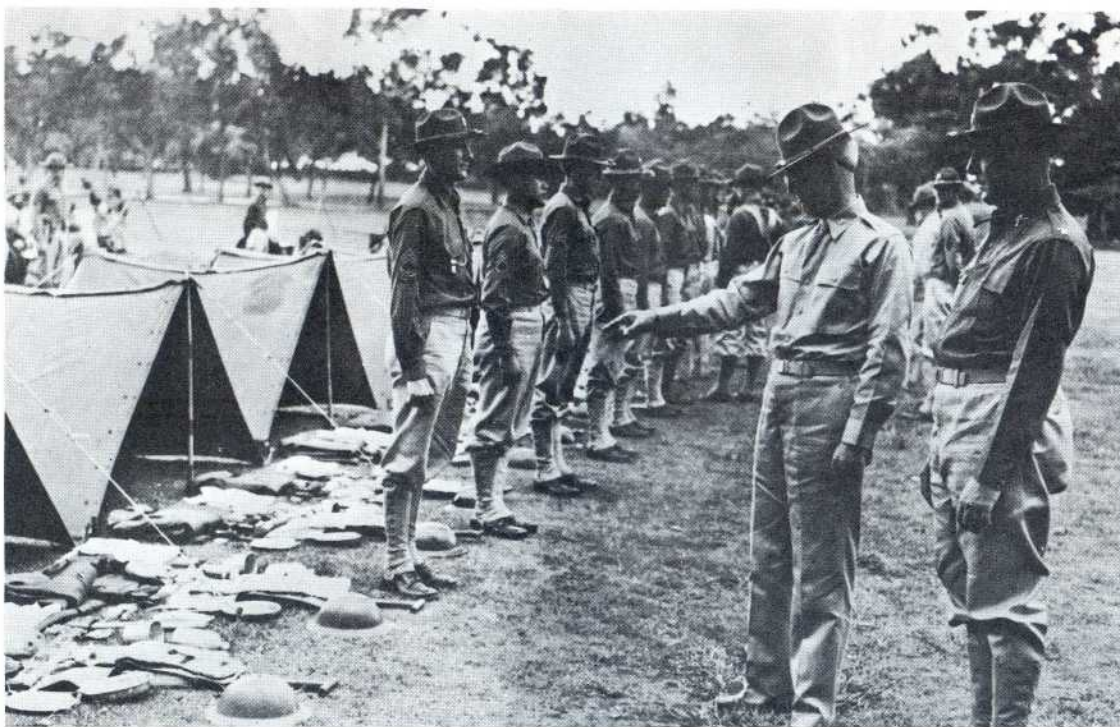
“The Hawaiian Division,” the editorial continued, “is no more. The proud organization that was stationed at Schofield Barracks has been inactivated. In its place this morning are two new ‘streamlined’ divisions, the Twenty-fourth and the Twenty-fifth.”

In those days “streamlined” meant the new triangular division. As the *Advertiser* put it, “the passing of the Hawaiian Division marks the end of . . . the Old Army.”

But in the days that followed, “streamlined” was destined to take on a new meaning in the Pacific. It would come to mean the swift move, the hard punch, and the professional strike force of the 25th Infantry Division.

Ten weeks later, on a slightly overcast Sunday, 353 Japanese planes screamed through Kolekole Pass in their bloody attack on Hawaii. “The Day of Infamy”: December 7, 1941. As the first bullets slammed into the headquarters building of the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry, men of the 25th Infantry Division took arms and returned the fire as best they could, becoming the first U.S. unit to engage the enemy.

To counteract the threat of invasion, the 25th Division moved to the beaches to set up defensive positions around Honolulu and the Ewa plains. Training for jungle warfare was paramount, the climate was tense.







## Guadalcanal

Word came on November 1, 1942. The 25th would fight west for the Philippines. As the men readied for departure, Major General Collins, Commanding General, received a message from Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet: "The 25th Division is fit and ready for offensive combat . . . we have high expectations . . ."

The Division moved swiftly to Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, to relieve the United States Marines. The initial Marine invasion of the island had forced the Japanese back into the hills. Little was known of their strength, but early fighting showed that resistance would probably continue until every single enemy soldier had been taken.

In the absence of maps, air reconnaissance was used to scout the terrain. The forking Matanikau River divided the rough and broken terrain into three main compartments. The Division's objective: break through the enemy's line; cut the compartments; envelop his southern flank; and reduce his strength on Mount Austen. With only one road into the area, and only a few of Mount Austen's foothills in American hands, the Division had a formidable task.

As the 27th Infantry Wolfhounds battled in the open, Division artillery pounded the crest from its position in the foothills. Twenty days later the men of the 25th had cut their way through to friendly lines and the occupation of Guadalcanal was over.

It was the unprecedented speed with which the Division completed this campaign that earned it the designation, Tropic Lightning.





## The Solomons

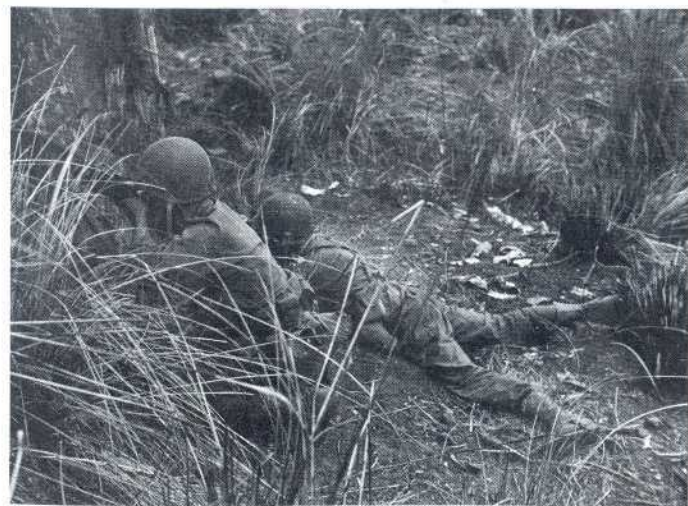
After only a brief respite, the 25th Division was ordered to combat again; this time in New Georgia. The Division's objective on the jungle-crowded island was the capture of Munda Airfield. Units of the Division were given a line of attack, but it took nine days of fighting through enemy-infested jungles to reach that line.

Then, in some of the bloodiest fighting in the war, Division units pushed through to the beach, securing the high ground and outflanking the airfield making its capture possible. Striking hard at several islands simultaneously, elements of the Division cleared Arundel Island, Kolombangara Island, and participated in the capture of Vella La Vella.

Until this moment in the war, American Forces had moved forward in the Pacific, taking one island after another. The attack on Vella La Vella represented a new strategy—one enemy-held island was by-passed to take another.

Jungle living and jungle combat had greatly reduced the Division's strength, and following the New Georgia campaign the Division was ordered first to New Zealand and then to New Caledonia for rest, replacement, and intensive training. During this period the Division underwent training for open combat, and rumors spread that Europe was next in line.

But Tropic Lightning had established a reputation for island fighting in the Pacific, and it was again in the Pacific that the enemy was to feel the power of the 25th.







## The Philippines

During the dark early days of the war, at the tragic departure from Bataan, General Douglas A. MacArthur made a private vow which was to become an angry nation's battle cry: "I shall return."

At the end of 1944, General MacArthur was ready to make good his promise. The Division was alerted: Tropic Lightning was needed to help in the liberation of the Philippines.

After landing on Luzon, the Division's first mission was to advance on Binalonan and secure the town. The Division struck.

Despite heavy enemy counterattacks from the rear with hidden armor and dug-in snipers, the Division's advance elements in Binalonan held.

Moving next against San Manuel and Asingan, the Division met some of its toughest resistance in the war. The enemy had thrown his 2nd Armored Division into the battle, but the weight of the armor could not halt Tropic Lightning.

Engaging Japanese with only infantry assault weapons, Division units captured and held both towns, with enemy losses at nearly two hundred tanks and more than two thousand dead.

Crumbling Japanese resistance staggered on for a few months, then collapsed. The Tropic Lightning Division remained on Luzon until June 30, engaged in mopping-up operations. During the Philippine liberation the Division had set a record of 165 consecutive days in combat.





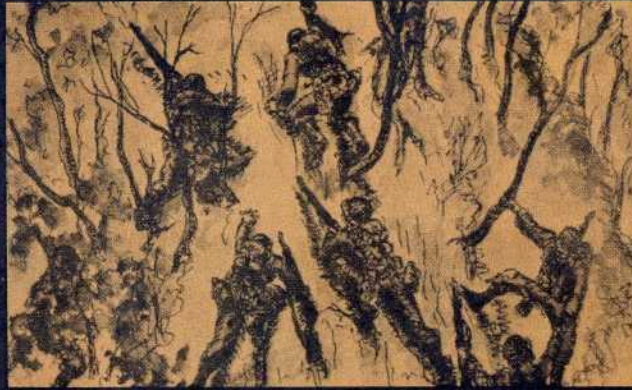
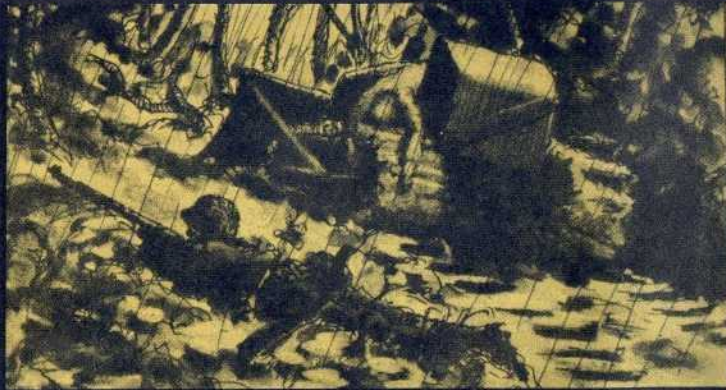
## Battle

I don't know anything about it. I only know what we see from our worm's-eye view, and our segment of the picture consists only of tired and dirty soldiers who are alive and don't want to die; of long darkened convoys in the middle of the night, of shocked, silent men wandering back down the hill from battle; of chow lines and atabrine tablets and fox-holes and burning tanks; of jeeps and smelly bedding rolls and C rations and blown bridges and hospital tents and shirt collars greasy black from months of wearing; and of laughter too, and anger and wine and lovely flowers and constant cussing. All these it is composed of; and of graves and graves and graves.

Ernie Pyle









## Japan

As the U.S. and her Allies celebrated victory in a global war, the Division buckled down to the grim task of occupying war-scarred Japan.

It had become characteristic of the men of the 25th that they went beyond what was expected of them. In peace, as in war, Tropic Lightning put its heart into the work.

Charged with the responsibility of processing the war's refugees and homeless, the men of the 27th Infantry Wolfhounds and the 8th Artillery Automatic Eighth founded an orphanage at Osaka for the war's forgotten children. The men have supported the orphanage since then, building it into one of the finest in the Orient. The story has been filmed, the Legislature of Hawaii has honored the men several times, the Freedoms Foundation has presented them with the George Washington Honor Medal, even the Emperor of Japan has commended them. But perhaps the greatest reward has been the love of the hundreds of children they have helped.





## Korea

June 25, 1950: without provocation, troops of the North Korean Peoples Army swarm across the 38th Parallel in an attack on the Republic of Korea.

The word was quick in coming, again the 25th Infantry Division was committed to war. In ten days the Tropic Lightning Division was fighting in Korea.

The Red columns were advancing steadily, meeting little resistance from the outnumbered, overwhelmed Republic of Korea troops. At this point the entire northern part of South Korea was in Communist hands.

Moving south, the North Korean troops hoped to cut off and capture the vital port of Pusan through which all United Nations troops and materiel were being shipped.

The 25th Division was assigned to the Sanju sector but, as the Division held its ground, word came that another large Red force was moving on Pusan from the west. The Division was ordered to move to the Chinju-Masan area, 150 miles from its position, to meet the oncoming force.

Leaving one unit behind to create a diversion, the entire Division moved overnight to its new position. The move stunned the Communist aggressors. At Sanju the Reds, who had faced a whole Division the night before, now refused to move forward fearing a trap. In Masan, surprised Red commanders were suddenly confronted by one of America's toughest divisions. Experts agree that this swift move and the follow-up battle for Masan were the keys to saving Korea from total Red domination. The 25th Infantry Division was awarded the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation.





## North to the Yalu

On August 7, 1950, Task Force Kean, named for the Division's Commanding General, Major General William B. Kean, began the first offensive action by U.S. troops in Korea. Despite heavy resistance, the operation succeeded in bringing the enemy offensive to a halt. The following month UN forces landed at Inchon and drove forward to Kunsan, with Tropic Lightning pushing forward from the south, trapping nearly 50,000 North Koreans.

As the UN Forces crossed the 38th Parallel and began driving deep into North Korea, the Communists realized that they were perilously near defeat. They called to Communist China. The Chinese responded by committing their entire military machine to the battle. Chinese poured across the Yalu River.

Once again, the 25th Division was committed to the front line of a UN offensive. In Operations Ripper, Dauntless, Detonate, and Piledriver, the Division tore through the Communist defenses, driving the enemy back toward the 38th Parallel.







## Seoul

For two more years the Division fought on. As the line positions began to stabilize, it was the Division's mission to maintain contact with the enemy, detect and destroy all forward movements. In May of 1953, the Division was ordered to guard Seoul. For more than a year there had been only limited fighting and the Chinese decided it was time to "surprise" the U.S. forces again. On May 28, the enemy began an all-out push on Seoul.

It was a bitter time . . . days that seemed like years spent in lice-infested fields sweating, or in foxholes freezing . . . waiting for another assault by this ruthless, savage enemy who fought with a fanaticism that Americans had never encountered before.

The Division held its ground and the assault was repulsed, the brunt of the attack being absorbed by the 14th Infantry Golden Dragons.

Successfully defending Seoul from continued enemy attack during the months May to July 1953 earned the Division its second Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation.



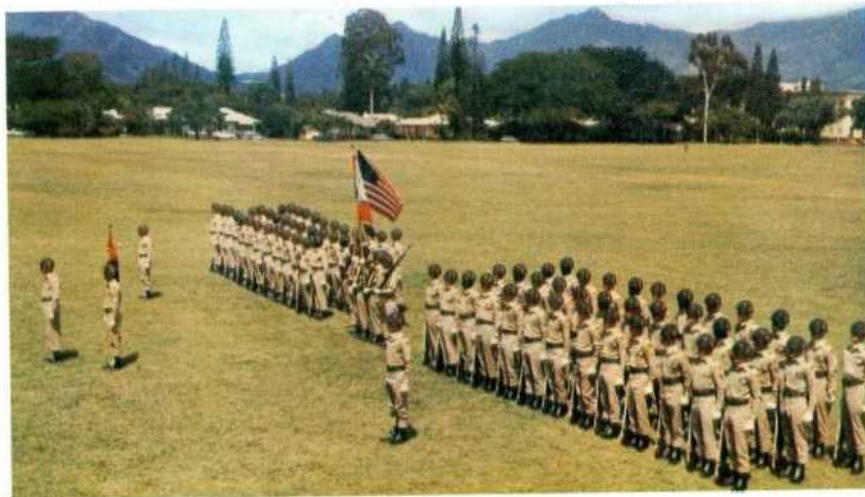
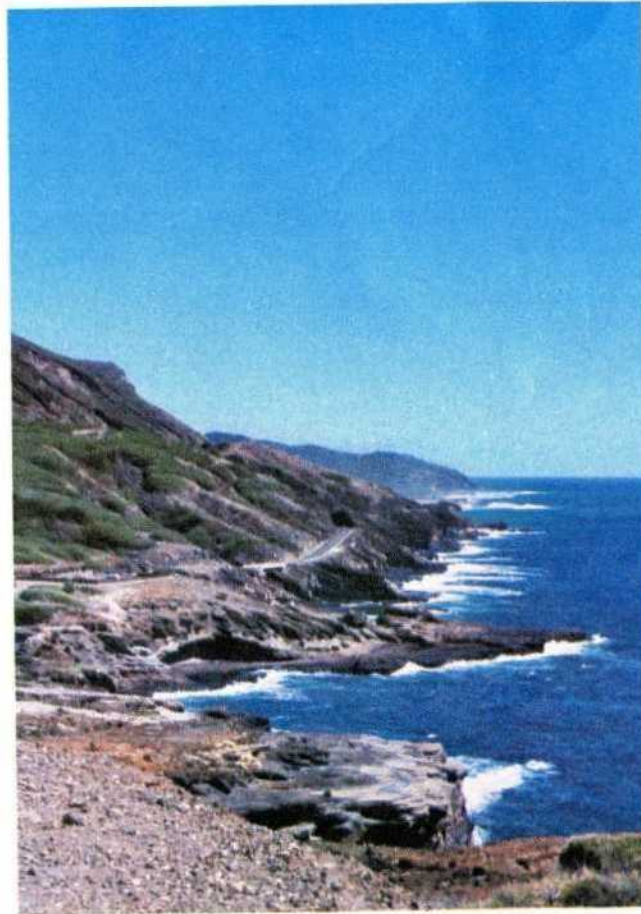


## Home to Hawaii

In August 1954, after twelve years of combat and occupation duty, the 25th Infantry Division went home again to Hawaii. It had spent more than 800 days in battle, earned 20 Congressional Medals of Honor, and been awarded three Division-wide Presidential Unit Citations.

As the troopships sailed into Honolulu Harbor which the Division had once fought to defend, Hawaii embraced her now-famous Tropic Lightning. Hawaiian wahines swayed to the hula and sang the word the men had waited twelve years to hear again—"Aloha."

Back at Schofield Barracks, the Division went to work building an immediate reaction force for the United States Army. Tropic Lightning had come to hold a special meaning in the Pacific, a meaning which could not be allowed to wane: "Ready to Strike . . . Anywhere, Anytime."







## Jungle Training

The focal point of the Tropic Lightning soldier's existence at Schofield Barracks was well planned and intensive training. The 25th Infantry Division designed a jungle and counterinsurgency training program during those years which set the pace for the rest of the U.S. Army.

The 25th Division was training for a new kind of war, not the ground-gaining front line battle which had been characteristic of Europe in the past, but the much more difficult battle for the security and opportunity of small countries in Asia faced with the insidious threat of Communist insurgency. Civic action as well as survival, ingenuity as well as inspiration were qualities expected of the new Tropic Lightning soldier.

Civic action programs were field tested as part of an effort on the part of the U.S. Army to find effective ways to counter guerrilla activities in Asia. In March 1963 more than 6,000 Tropic Lightning soldiers moved to the hypothetical country of Kurlandia during Exercise Black Night. The exercise, ordered by the Commander-in-Chief, United States Army, Pacific, at the request of the U.S. Army Combat Developments Command, was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a new ROAD organizational concept. When it proved to be excellent, the 25th Division became the first to be organized along the new plan.

Operation Dusty Trail III, one of the many field exercises conducted in the Army's vast Pohakulas Training Area on Hawaii Island, was distinguished by the airlifting of an entire artillery battalion, a "first" in the history of the Army or the Air Force, and a precursor of the airmobile concept so important later in Vietnam.



## Move to Vietnam

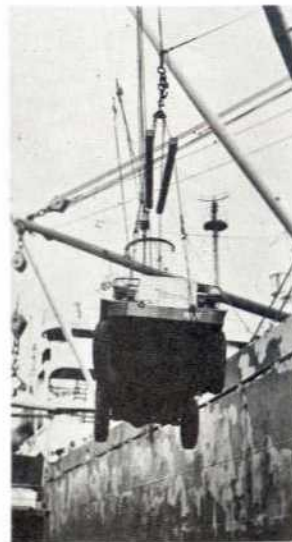
It was the fall of 1962 when the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, asked the Department of the Army for help in protecting the troop-carrying helicopters being used to fight the Viet Cong. By January 1963, the 25th Infantry Division had responded to the call and had sent the first group of 100 aerial door gunners to Southeast Asia.

Three years and 2,200 men later, the Tropic Lightning Division's highly regarded "Shotgun" program had compiled an enviable record of combat in a modern application of the stagecoach shotgunners of the Wild West days.

August 22, 1965: in a quiet, organized manner, 170 men of Charlie Company, 65th Engineer Battalion boarded the Military Sea Transportation Service transport, *General Edwin D. Patrick* and sailed out of sight. Destination: Southeast Asia. The Whiskey Fifth had gone to build Cam Ranh Bay, a former French resort now designated as the principal cargo point of entry for the growing conflict in Vietnam.

In December 1965, while the people of Honolulu were commemorating "Pearl Harbor Day," the 25th Infantry Division was making plans to move again into Asia. In Operation Blue Light, the largest single troop movement in history, the 25th Division moved 4,000 men and 9,000 tons of equipment in 25 days to the northwest sector of South Vietnam.

Tropic Lightning was at war again, this time in an effort to assist the Vietnamese people in their struggle against Communist aggressors.









## The Mission

Establish a secure base of operations in Pleiku in the Vietnamese highlands, establish another at Cu Chi northwest of Saigon. Clear the area of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese guerrilla troops and gain control over the terrain. Not an easy task—both areas lie against the Cambodian border and are being used as assembly, resupply and recreation areas by the enemy.

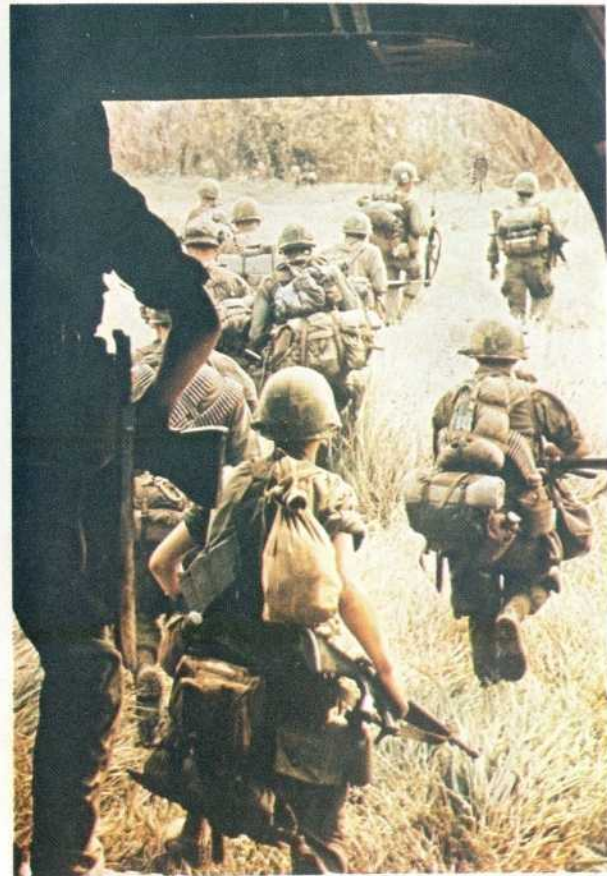
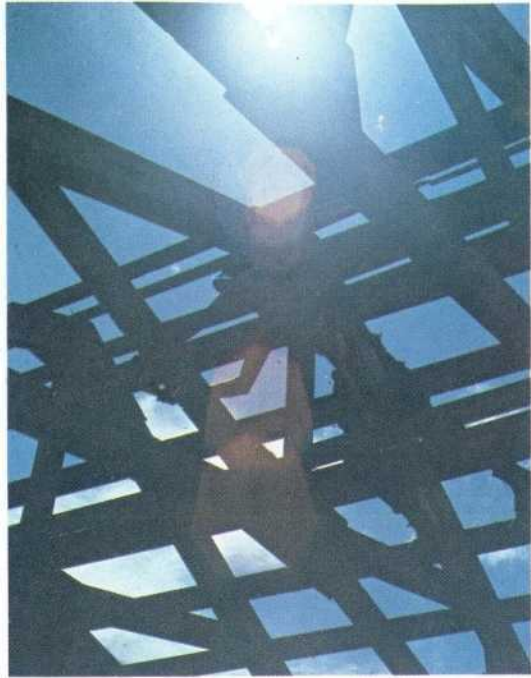
Search the land, ferret out the tunnels, comb the rivers and the river banks, spread out and find the enemy in the rice paddies or in the mountains, but find him and stop him.

Work with the people in the village, help them to build, encourage them to care again about their government, to pull themselves back up after years of terrorism.

The Headmaster of a small village school near Cu Chi is asked what he needs: pencils, paper, blackboards, books, what? He answers slowly. He needs concertina wire. He knows how to teach, and he can teach well enough with the materials available. But he cannot teach these children while the Viet Cong kill his family and blow up his school. The 25th Infantry Division has been sent to Vietnam to help this man; to protect a terrorized young government as it seeks the basic human freedoms for its people.









## Cu Chi

The base camp designated for the 2nd Brigade lay just outside the village of Cu Chi, an agricultural hamlet 20 miles northwest of Saigon and 18 miles from the Cambodian border. The land is flat and dry, used primarily for cattle and vegetable farming. Its strategic importance lies in the fact that it stands between the Viet Cong stronghold in the north and Saigon, the seat of the South Vietnamese government and prime object of attack.

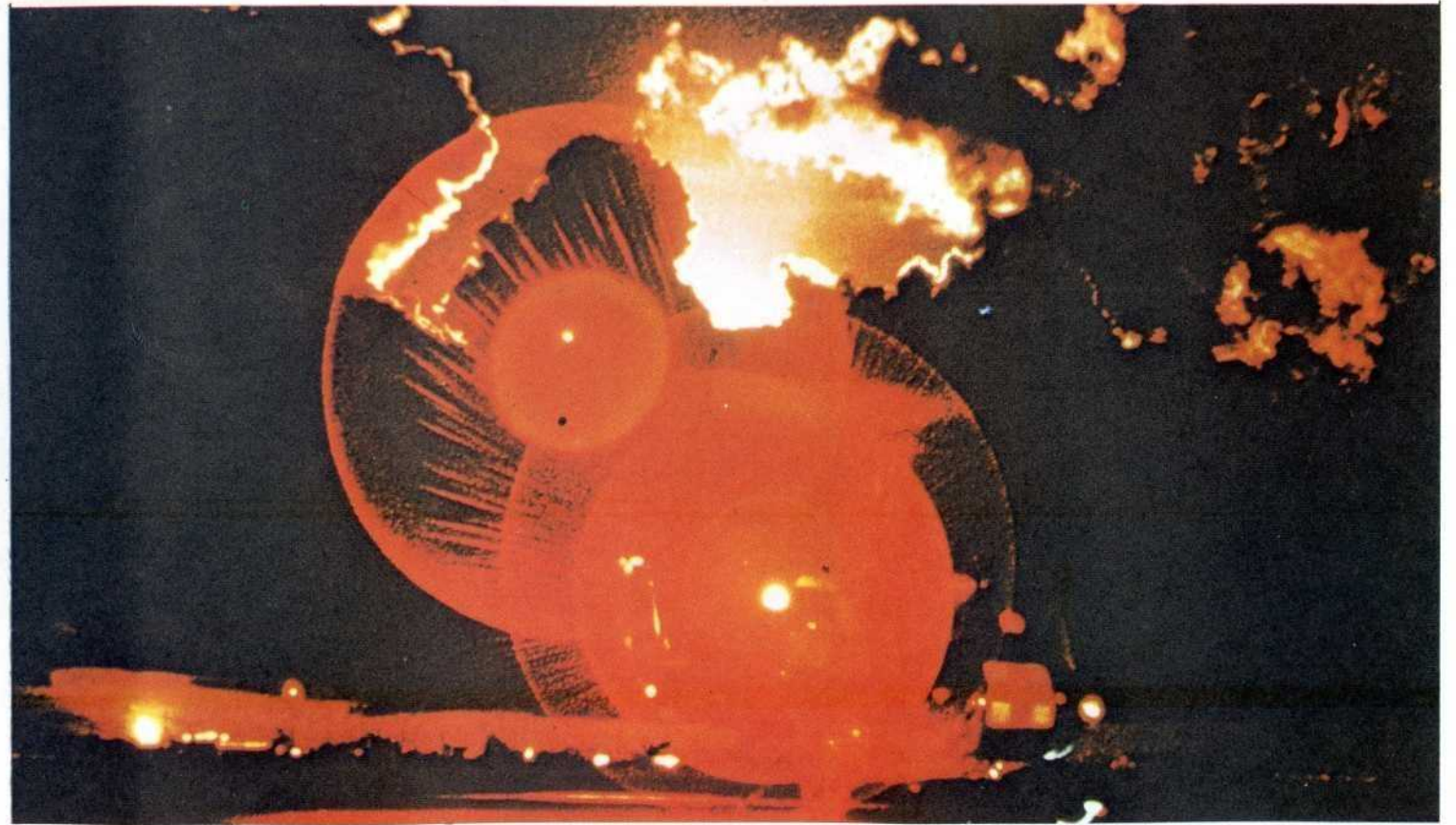
Directly northeast of the base camp stands the infamous Ho Bo Woods, a patch of heavy forest perennially used as an enemy hiding place. To the north lies War Zone C, a triple canopy jungle reported to be the Viet Cong command center for the whole country, and to the south of the base camp the Oriental River flows quietly, carrying infiltrated men, supplies and equipment between the Viet Cong bases.

In two months of heavy action, Tropic Lightning troops slashed their way through enemy emplacements and tunnel systems until they had firmly established a fortified enclave from which the Division could safely operate.

Two hundred and fifty miles north of Cu Chi, the 3rd Brigade Task Force at Pleiku was making history by opening the Viet Cong controlled Highway 19, allowing tons of vital supplies to flow through.









## Find Him . . .

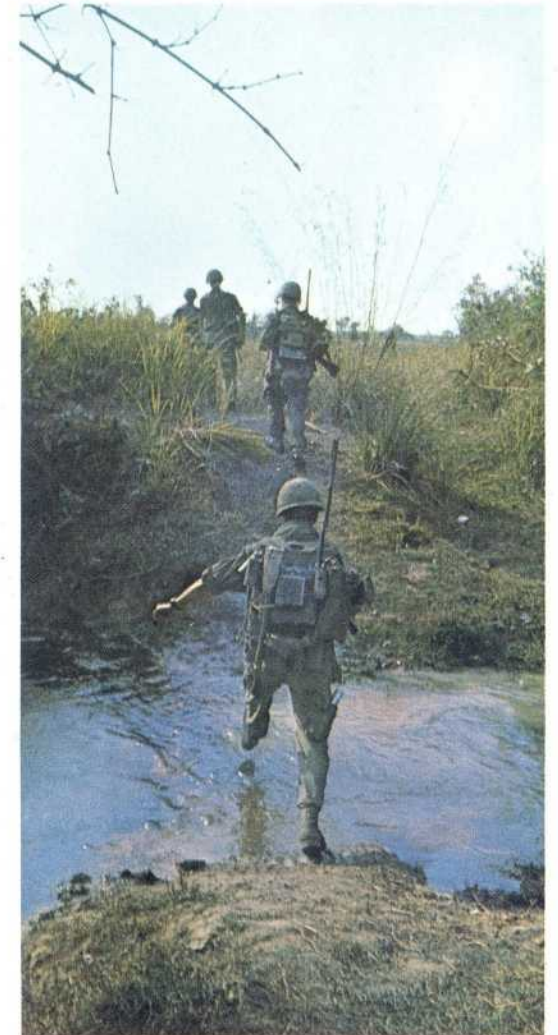
The chopper drops into the landing zone and you move out into the lush jungle scanning the tree tops, the sides of the tiny trail ahead of you, a depression in the ground, a strange hillock of grass. You are into it again, searching. Magic Charlie, now you see him, now you don't.

The enemy's mobility in Vietnam is derived from hidden trails and massive tunnel networks such as the one found by the 4th of the 23rd Infantry in January 1968. Suspected to be the main infiltration route through the Iron Triangle, the tunnel network stretched out over thirty square miles and led the Division to several supply points containing nearly half a million pounds of food, ammunition and equipment. Such networks are visible only as dark openings in the underbrush. Find these supply lines and destroy them, take his food, take his ammunition, cut into his mobility and stop him.

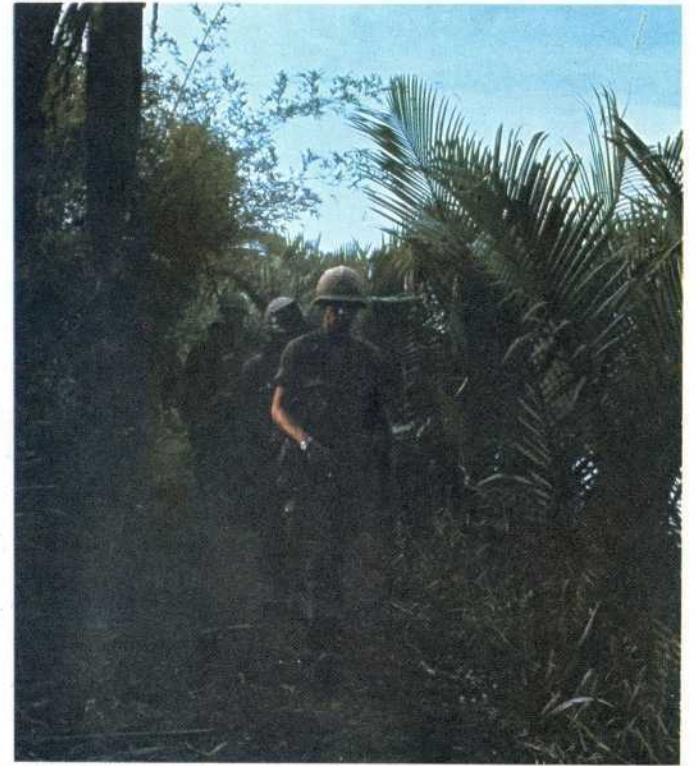
Nor is the enemy restricted to tunnels and jungle enclaves. The Viet Cong Infrastructure, which sends militant Cadre into the villages to terrorize the people into mute collusion with roving guerrilla squads, has made even the hamlet a home for battle. Battered from years of war, the Vietnamese people yearn for peace. But at gunpoint in the night, they have been forced to allow the enemy to store supplies in tunnels under the village and to put a squad among them to keep them silent.

Again and again, the men of the 25th Division have gone into these villages searching for signs of this insidious form of capture. Increasingly, the Division has seen the villagers heroically refuse to live with the VC knife at their throats.

In the Tropic Lightning area of operation, the VC soldier has learned that he is not safe in his tunnel anymore. There is no place left to hide.









## The Base Camp

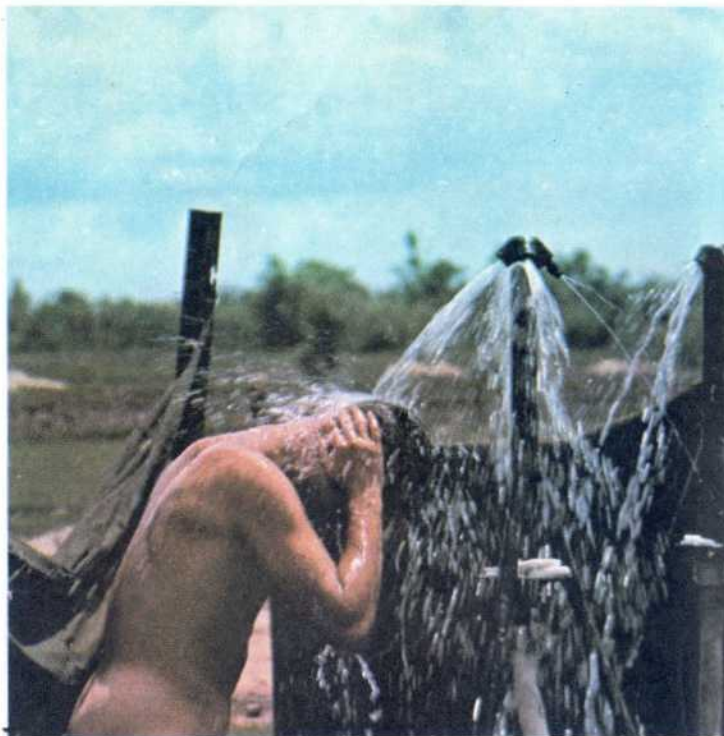
To a bone-weary "grunt" a base camp is home, whether it's a bunker at Fire Support Base Bragg, the 1st Brigade's base camp at Tay Ninh, the 3rd Brigade's camp in Dau Tieng or the main base camp in Cu Chi. It's where he hangs his steel pot.

During the first few months of action in Vietnam, the area where the base camp was to be constructed was leveled from a seemingly impenetrable jungle to something comparable to a very dusty golf course. A disorganized array of tents was thrown up. Soon the tents were replaced by wooden barracks and in some cases quonset huts and air conditioned corrugated steel buildings.

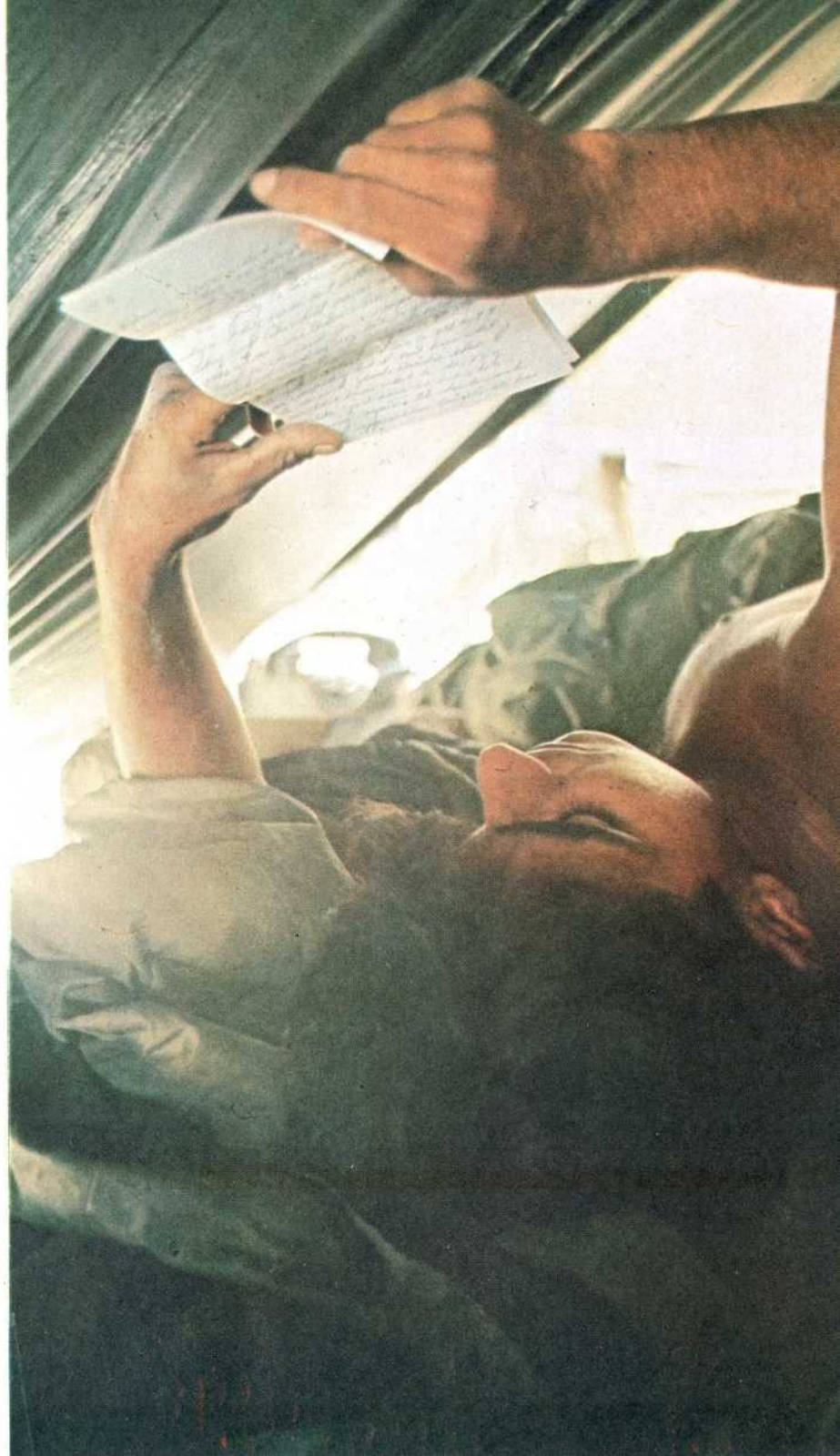
Nearly every military operation added something to the base camp area when the troops returned. Entire battalions have developed their own "beautification" programs, planting palm trees, rubber plants and flowers.

In Dau Tieng, the 3rd Brigade moved into old French stucco houses on the edge of the Michelin Rubber Plantation and took advantage of an existing swimming pool and a cooler climate. The 1st Brigade built a base camp, now larger than the one at Cu Chi, near the city of Tay Ninh, the seat of the Cao Dai religion and an ancient center of commerce.

Every day there is some small but ingenious improvement made in these base camps. It is a well known trait of the GI to continue to improve his living and working area, and the 25th Division is no exception. There is talk of building a jeep drive-in theater and a zoo; and it is possible.







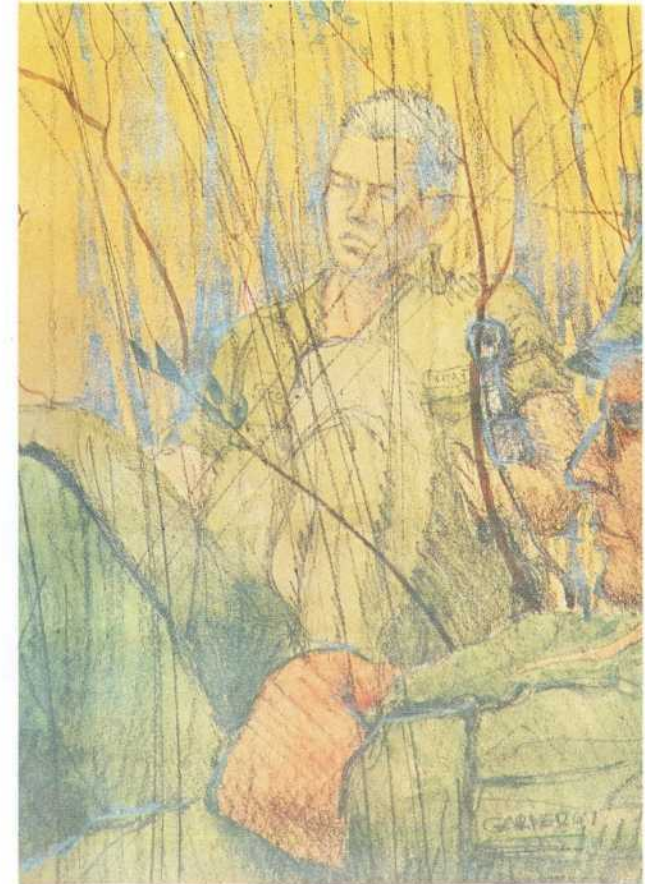


# Tet

In January-February 1968, during a truce which had been agreed upon in honor of the Vietnamese New Year, a desperate enemy launched his all out offensive in a dramatic attempt to regain the ground and influence that the operations of the Tropic Lightning Division and other allied forces had denied him. Moving rapidly into the path of the main force units which the enemy had assembled for his major attack, Tropic Lightning soldiers absorbed the full force of the enemy blows and then counterattacked viciously to smash the offensive and destroy many of the enemy's crack units.

In the aftermath of the historic Tet battles, the Tropic Lightning Division pursued the mauled enemy back into his redoubts and sanctuaries. The Division's alert maneuvering continually frustrated all enemy efforts to mount another mass offensive that might achieve a psychologically significant military victory to influence the peace talks which by then were under way.

In the second phase offensive, the Division maneuvered the full might of its forces into blocking positions immediately west of Saigon to meet the threat against the capital city. In a pitched battle that raged for ten days, the effectiveness of three enemy divisions was totally destroyed and the enemy was forced to withdraw far short of his objective.









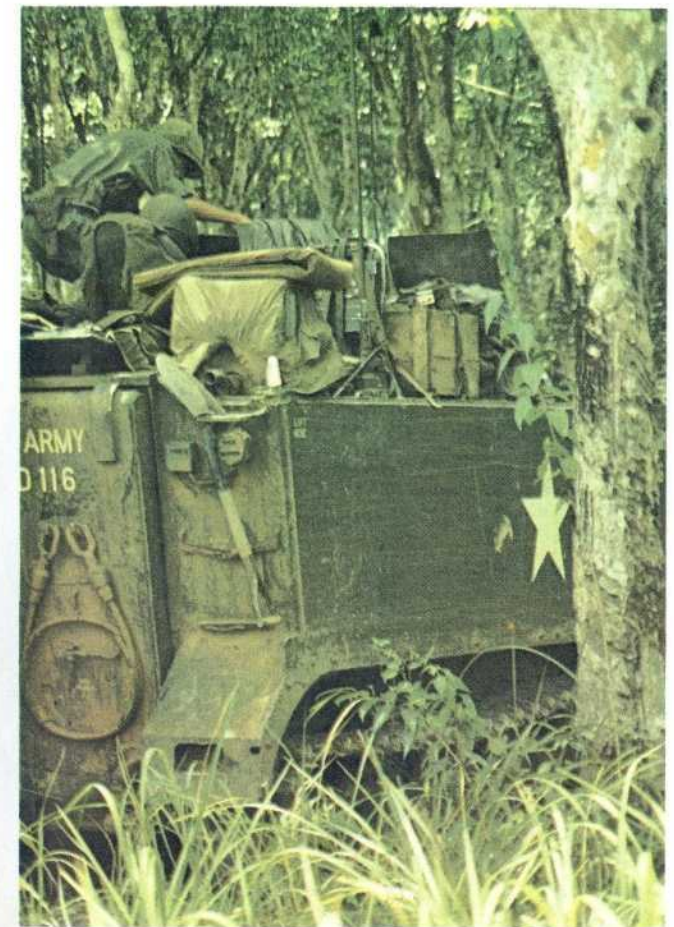
## The Battle of Tay Ninh

Through the summer of 1968, the mauled enemy withdrew across the Cambodian border and into the triple canopy jungle north of Tay Ninh City. His so-called "Tet Offensive" had turned into a bloody rout and like a whipped and bitter dog he crawled back to lick his gaping wounds. Intelligence reports showed that he was massing again for another attack. But when, and where?

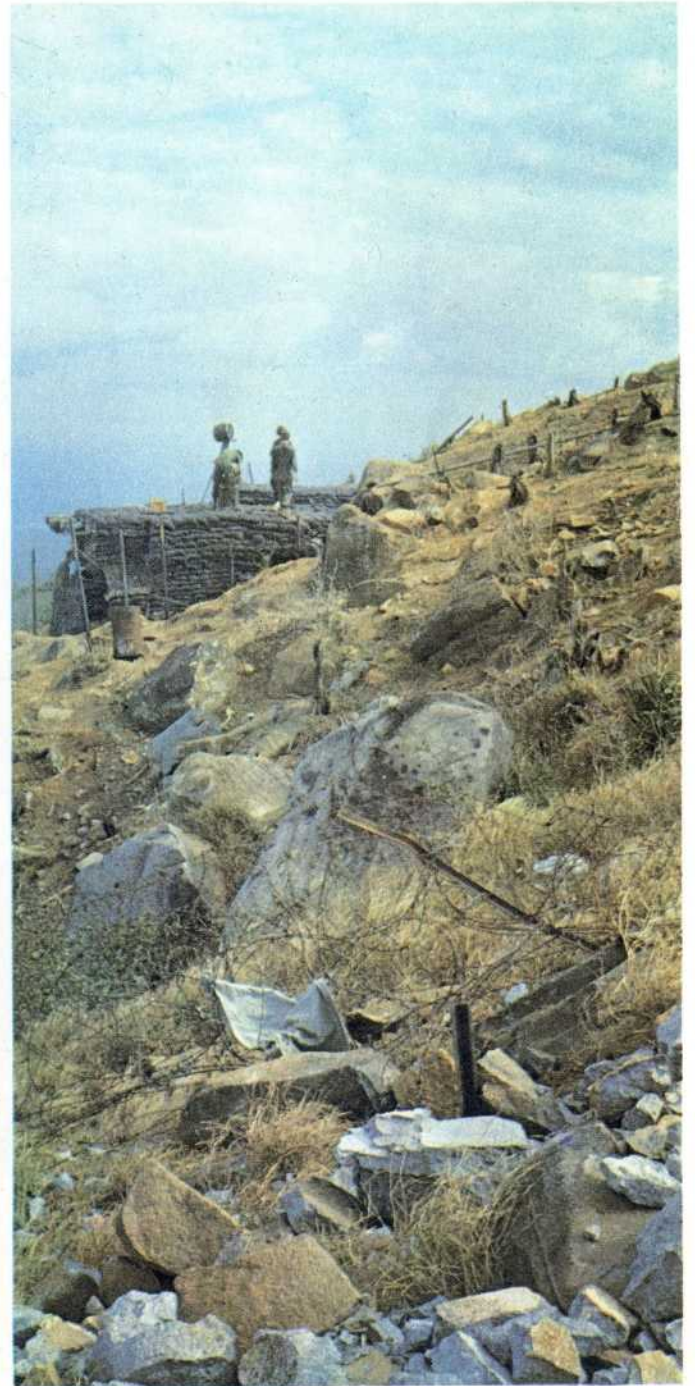
August 18; Tay Ninh Base Camp came under thunderous rocket and mortar barrage. At the direction of Major General Ellis W. Williamson, who had taken command of the Division days before, the forces of Tropic Lightning had been cunningly prepared for retaliation. The Division's First Brigade smashed down on the enemy force, at Tay Ninh, at Fire Support Base Buell, in the Ben Cui Rubber Plantation and on the summit of the lonely, fogbound, Nui Ba Den, skillfully anticipating the enemy's moves and countering with massive firepower.

The North Vietnamese Army had fallen back to ruthlessly hurling its well-trained, well-equipped soldiers into the teeth of a resolute brigade. Again and again in the Ben Cui near Dau Tieng NVA soldiers were decimated by a finely tuned strike force. A fierce ground assault on Fire Support Base Buell was repelled at point-blank range on four nights of grim battle. And Tay Ninh Base Camp remained on guard and invincible.

On September 20, the devastated remains of eight NVA regiments staggered back from the line of contact, leaving more than 2,200 dead behind. Tay Ninh and Dau Tieng belonged to Tropic Lightning.















## Professionalism

“You walk for mile on endless mile alongside the tired, dust-caked infantryman, and still you never understand what it is that keeps him going long after the ordinary human being would have dropped. Perhaps the simple answer is that the soldier is no ordinary human being. But neither is he a machine. He is a finely honed instrument who, at the moment of complete exhaustion or fear, can be rekindled to commit great acts of endurance or personal courage.

It’s all explained in acts like the 25th Infantry Division medic who patched up his own bullet hole in his side, and then went back into the field of fire to tend to other wounded men.

Nobody ever gave the 25th Division men a piece of land free in combat, neither in World War II, Korea, or Vietnam. They fought to own the real estate they came to live on. In return all they asked was an occasional good night’s sleep, a creek in which to wash off the grime and a letter from home.

Good men from Hawaii’s own Division have fallen in Vietnam, but good men carry on in their footsteps.”

Bob Jones  
*The Honolulu Advertiser*



## Support Command

In an age when the Army goes into battle with tanks, armored personnel carriers, aircraft, sophisticated communications equipment, computers and massive land clearing vehicles, the capability of a strike force depends increasingly upon the man behind the man behind the gun.

The daily supply of food and ammunition must continue to move in a war that has no front, and therefore requires constant security. The quality of battle and the changing requirements of strategy demand imaginative modifications of equipment and new methods of maintenance from the men who have been traditionally the unsung heroes of war. Yet the Tropic Lightning Division has been able to call upon a vast arsenal of skills, ingenuity, and persistence in the battalions of the Division Support Command.

The men who manage the logistics, who ride the convoys that link far flung base camps, who work around the clock to maintain, repair, and improve the complicated machinery of modern war have given the Tropic Lightning Division the power and mobility to accomplish its mission.

In the long task of providing backbone and muscle to the 25th Infantry Division strike force, these men have labored to maintain the single most critical element in battle. swift and reliable support, support which has become known as the finest in Vietnam.







## Second Tet

For months prior to the Vietnamese Tet holiday of 1969, captured enemy documents spoke of an offensive to be mounted against the newly stable government of the Republic of Vietnam. The principal object of the attack would be to destroy the defensive forces which Tropic Lightning had deployed across the northwest flank of Saigon, and then to crash through to the capitol. Calls to battle from the North Vietnamese Army headquarters proclaimed a devastating attack from the west to be followed by a general "uprising of the people".

In one of the most stunning defeats dealt to the enemy by the Tropic Lightning Division the supplies which the NVA had smuggled into the country were captured; platoons, companies, even battalions sent into the area in advance of the planned offensive were routed and destroyed, and efforts by the North Vietnamese Army to position troops in strategic locations were frustrated and ultimately denied. Maneuvering swiftly, the Division pre-empted the enemy's plans, captured and destroyed the enemy staging area in the Citadel northwest of Cu Chi, and continually drove the enemy out of the ground and back to his redoubts in War Zone C.

Viet Cong activity was drastically reduced as years of civic action began to pay dividends. Far from engendering a general uprising, the the NVA efforts produced a new wave of sympathy and cooperation for the allied cause.

At Diamond, Mahone and Frontier City, Tropic Lightning blocked and destroyed the last efforts of the spring offensive, absorbing the full thrust of the North Vietnamese Army and delivering the final crushing blow to a stunned and frustrated enemy.



## Civic Action

All of this massive expense of equipment and time and lives would amount to very little if we were not, with equal dedication, trying to help the Vietnamese people. Victory in Vietnam, in any enduring sense, will be achieved not in the rice paddies or the bunkers but in the schools and marketplaces where people gather to speak freely and live without fear. To this end, the 25th Division continues to commit all available resources to "The Other War."

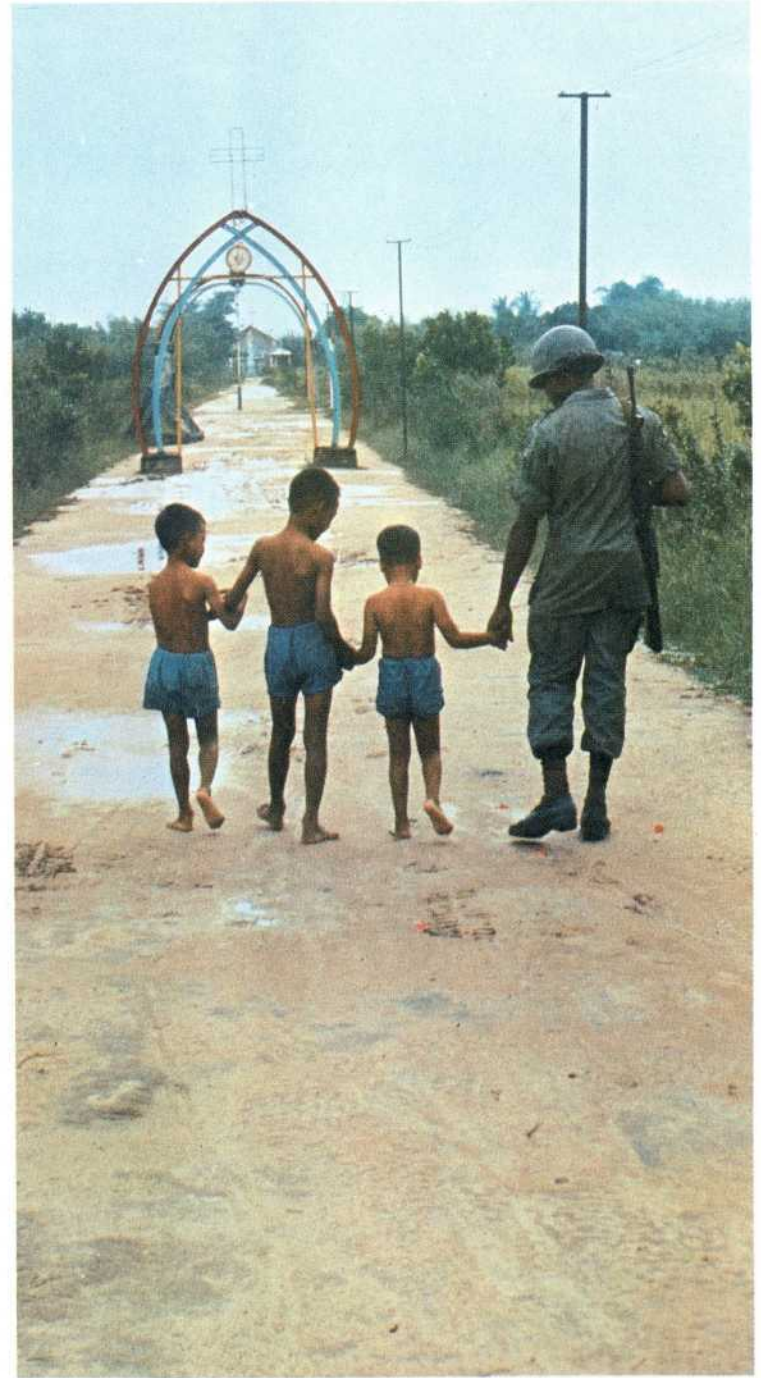
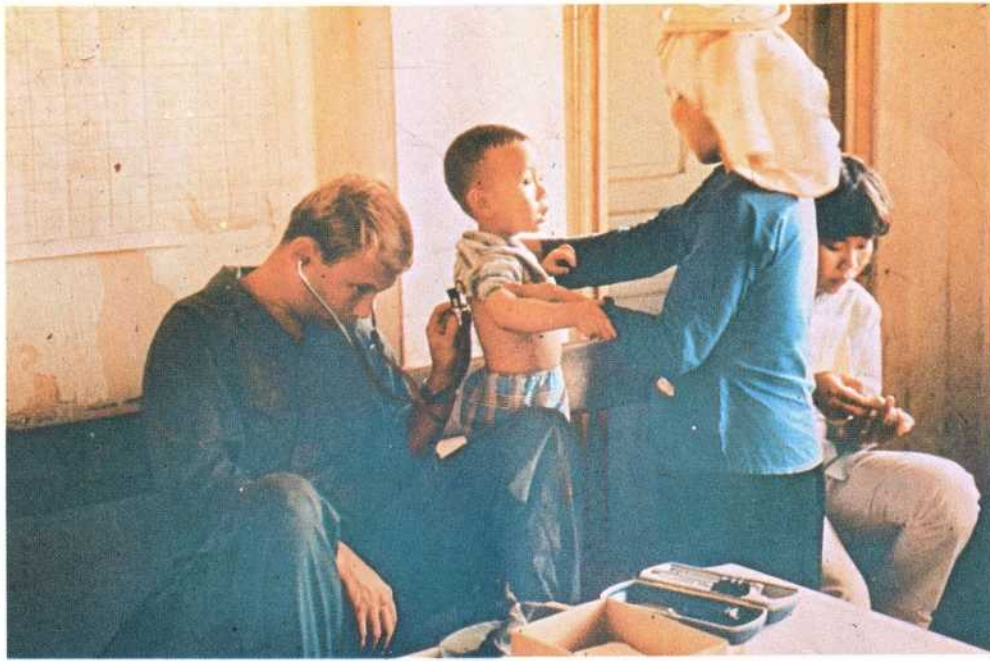
The 25th Infantry Division came to Vietnam with more than equipment. They came carrying the generous gifts and sincere concern of the Hawaiian people for the people of this country. Operation Helping Hand brought hundreds of tons of clothing and food from the Hawaiian Islands to the war torn provinces around Cu Chi.

The men of the Division have joined in a wide ranging medical aid program known as MEDCAP, bringing basic preventive medicine, corrective medicine and dentistry and sanitation aids to the people.

But the greatest of these aid programs has been the unorganized, wholly spontaneous chemistry of a Tropic Lightning soldier and a Vietnamese child. Tentative at first, and then communicating in smiles and games which transcend the language barrier, the rapport which has built up between the soldiers in the Division and the children of the hamlets stands as both an inspiration and a reward in the long task which the 25th Infantry Division has been sent to do.











## Pass In Review...

On January 28, 1969, the 25th Infantry Division was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, a tribute by the Government of Vietnam to the extraordinary service of the Division.

"Your sacrifice, your dedication to duty and your sense of responsibility have helped safeguard freedom and democracy in this part of the world."

The tribute was made not only to Tropic Lightning but also to the men and units who wear the Lightning patch.

Today, more than a hundred company and battery sized units combine their skills and energies to put the 25th Infantry Division on the front line... Ready to Strike, Anywhere, Anytime.



## 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry

The 14th Infantry traces its history back to the time when Abraham Lincoln ordered an increase of the Regular Army early in 1861. Members of the 14th have served from Antietam in the Civil War to Manila in the Spanish American War, the Rhineland in World War II, and near the 38th Parallel in the Korean War.

In January 1945, the 14th Dragons sailed for France to fight in World War II as part of the 71st Division. After the war, the 14th moved to Germany for occupation duty until 1951, when it was called to join the 25th Division in Korea. The 14th moved to Schofield Barracks in 1954 and trained itself for the jungle warfare which was to come. In April 1966, with the 1st Brigade, the Golden Dragons stormed the beaches of Vung Tau, Vietnam. By nightfall the following day the Battalion was setting up base camp in Cu Chi.

## 25th Aviation Battalion

Main elements of the 25th Aviation Battalion arrived in Cu Chi on April 2, 1966, and were ready to perform their mission immediately upon arrival. Within hours, the UH-1D helicopters supported by UH-1B gunships were airlifting 25th Infantry Division troops from the dusty Cu Chi airfield into combat areas in support of operations.

The 25th Aviation Battalion was formed as a company in 1957 and redesignated as a battalion under the ROAD plan in 1963. Since its recent formation, it has grown swiftly to keep pace with the increasing need for critical air mobility. The youngest unit in the Tropic Lightning Division, the 25th Aviation Battalion may well be the most important to the operation in Vietnam.

As the Tropic Lightning was the first infantry division to be lifted off the ground, so it continues to rely on the heroism and dedication of the Army Aviators.



## 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry

During the early part of December 1965, the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, was in Alaska preparing for its annual winter maneuvers to be conducted in January 1966 in the temperature of 50 degrees below zero.

In the midst of these temperatures, some "hot" news kindled the interior of the base camp. The Manchus were being assigned to the famed jungle trained Tropic Lightning Division in Hawaii. The Battalion of combat infantrymen arrived in Hawaii on January 30, 1966. Eight arduous weeks followed of jungle training in a tropic environment as the Battalion readied for deployment to Vietnam.

The 4th of the 9th Manchu Battalion was organized at Fort Monroe, Virginia, on March 17, 1855. It has participated in 45 campaigns during the Indian Wars, the Spanish American War, the China Relief Expedition, the Philippine Insurrection, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. It has earned 11 battle streamers from World Wars I and II and the Korean War.

Among the first troops to arrive in Vietnam, the Manchus secured the landing area at Vung Tau for a few days, then joined the 1st Brigade at Cu Chi on the 1st of May, 1966.

## 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry

In the war of 1812 the 22nd Infantry Regiment, commanded by General Winfield Scott, attacked with such obvious discipline and perseverance that the opposing British Commander exclaimed, "Those are regulars, by God." The phrase was remembered by the men of the 22nd and is today the nickname of the Battalion.

From 1868 until the turn of the century the Regulars participated in four Indian Campaigns, including the Battle of the Little Big Horn. In the war with Spain, the Regulars received a campaign streamer for the battle of Santiago, and during the Philippine Insurrection they received six more.

On January 16, 1944, the 22nd Regiment was an integral part of the 4th Infantry Division and shipped from New York to England for tough physical conditioning and special training in preparation for the landing on Utah Beach, June 6, 1944. There, the Regulars fought their way across France into Germany.

The Regulars returned to the United States in October 1945 and remained until 1951 when it returned to Europe. In 1956 the 22nd came home again until September 1966 when it was called to join the Tropic Lightning Division in Vietnam.



## 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry

The 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry White Warriors were organized on October 20, 1861 at Fort Hamilton, New York. "Led by Love of Country," the Battalion fought in the Civil War, the Indian Wars, the War with Spain, the Philippine Insurrection and World War II, joining the 25th Infantry Division in August, 1967.





### 1st and 2nd Battalions, 27th Infantry

Prior to the arrival of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 27th Infantry Wolfhounds in Vietnam, the Viet Cong had totally dominated the Cu Chi District.

As late as August 1965, the Viet Cong units staged victory parades down Highway 1 through the center of Tan An Hoi. The Catholic church in the hamlet of Bac Ha, closest settlement to the proposed base camp, was used twice weekly for meetings of the Viet Cong.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions, 27th Infantry waded ashore on January 18, 1966, and were assigned to the immediate task of pioneering the new 25th Division homeland. The Viet Cong fought from the maze of tunnels honeycombing the Cu Chi complex, from the trees flanking the perimeter, and from the nearby water supply points.

The Wolfhounds, one of the Army's fightingest units, was created in 1901 at Fort McPherson, Georgia. Its canine nickname was added late in World War I, when the White Russians likened the unit's fighting ferocity to that of a wolfhound. Later, the unit's first mascot—a Russian Wolfhound—was named Kol-

chak for the admiral who commanded the White Russians.

On December 7, 1941, the Wolfhounds fired the first shots at the Japanese during the bombing of Pearl Harbor. They went with the 25th into battle at Guadalcanal, the Northern Solomons, New Georgia, and Kolombangara.

With the Tropic Lightning Division during the occupation of Japan, the Wolfhounds' Master Sergeant Hugh O'Reilly visited the Osaka Orphanage at Christmas, 1949, and found the children in need of financial assistance. He returned to begin a monthly collection which has continued through to the present time.

The Wolfhounds earned the Distinguished Unit Citation in the Korean Conflict for their actions at Sangyong-Ni. They participated in the defense of Taegu, fought at the Nam River and Chinju, met the Chinese Communists when they crossed the Yalu River and were the last American troops to withdraw across the Han River after Seoul had fallen. When delegations to discuss a truce were formed, the Wolfhounds were chosen to serve as honor guard.

### 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 22nd Infantry

The motto "Deeds not Words" has inspired the men of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry throughout their long and colorful history. As they made their way through two thousand meters of jungle to relieve American forces at the Battle of Suoi Tre, a commander of one of the companies they assisted was prompted to say: "They are the most beautiful sight in the world."

The Triple Deuce was formed on September 21, 1866, when the 13th Infantry Regiment was redesignated. From 1868 until 1898 the Triple Deuce fought in several major Indian Wars including the Little Big Horn. In 1898, with the outbreak of the Spanish American War, the 2nd Battalion lead the way to become the first American troops on Cuban soil. In 1899, the 22nd Infantry departed for the Philippine Insurrection and remained there until the end of the hostilities, taking part in five major campaigns.

In World War II, the Triple Deuce received campaign streamers for the battles of Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe.

On September 21, 1966, advance elements of the Triple Deuce arrived in the Republic of Vietnam. By the 13th of October the entire Battalion had landed. From that time, the Battalion has been involved in several major operations.



### 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry

When the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry arrived at Cu Chi base camp, they found a large open field about three kilometers square. It was a hot dusty area with sparse vegetation. Ringing the field were groves of rubber trees, bamboo hedgerows, patches of woods and thicket and an occasional rice paddy. To the north, in front of the position assigned to the Bobcats, lay the Phu Hoa Dong plantation, gateway to the Ho Bo Woods.

During the first days after the arrival of the 5th Mech, several hundred tunnels were discovered, searched, cleared and destroyed by Bobcat tunnel runners. After forty hours of occupation at the Cu Chi complex, the Bobcats were involved in the battle for Cu Chi.

The 5th Mech is the third oldest regiment in the United States Army, descending from a unit constituted April 12, 1808. During more than a century and a half, the 5th Infantry has served in Canada, Mexico, Cuba, the Philippines, Germany and Korea.

In 1898, the Bobcats served in the occupation of Cuba and took part in the Philippine Insurrection during 1900 and 1901. Later they were ordered to guard the Panama Canal during World War I. The 5th Mech crossed the Rhine River with the 71st Infantry Division and participated in all ten campaigns of the Korean War.





### 65th Engineer Battalion

The 65th Engineer Battalion had the distinction of sending the first complete unit of the Tropic Lightning Division to Vietnam when C Company departed Hawaii in August 1965; another testimony to the motto of the Whiskey Fifth: "First In, Last Out."

The Battalion was activated at Schofield Barracks as a component of the Tropic Lightning Division on October 1, 1941, and has served with the Division in every campaign since.

During the initial days at Cu Chi the weather was the biggest obstacle; rain and muddy ground hampered the work of the bulldozers, while hot humid temperatures impeded the work of the men. Yet the work was completed in a minimum amount of time.

The usual engineer combat tasks awaited the Battalion after it completed the preliminary base camp work: road maintenance, airstrip construction, and bridge and culvert construction. The critical operation in Vietnam, however, was the massive clearing operation required to eliminate the jungles and tunnel systems which harbored the enemy. With their gargantuan Rome Plows, the men of the Whiskey Fifth tore through Viet Cong hideouts in their continuing search for "Trees: Dead or Alive."

### 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor

The 34th Armor was activated on October 1, 1941, at Fort Knox, Kentucky. After extensive training in Kentucky, California, and New York, the Regiment moved overseas to the Wiltshire area in England where it continued preparations for D-Day and the landing on the French coast as part of General Patton's army.

Spearheading the 5th Armor Division throughout the drive across Europe, the 34th Armor added Normandy, Belgium, Luxemburg, Faleise, the Seigfried Line, Hurtgin Forest and the Rhor River to its history. On September 11, 1944, the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Dreadnaughts became the first unit to dispatch word to higher headquarters that American troops were fighting on German soil.

In these campaigns the Dreadnaughts were awarded five campaign streamers for actions in Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe. In addition the Battalion was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation and the Croix de Guerre.

Recalled to battle in August 1966, the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor was deployed for combat in the Republic of Vietnam. The Dreadnaughts arrived in September, 1966. In October 1966 they moved out on their first operation and the name Dreadnaughts became part of the history of the war.



### 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry

When the 4th U. S. Cavalry was organized as the 1st Cavalry Regiment at Jefferson Barracks, March 3, 1855, the horse was the ultimate in mobility and troopers were armed with sabers and pistols.

Today's 4th Cavalry lacks horses, but has mobility and firepower undreamed of by such original members as Lieutenant Colonel Joseph E. Johnston, Captain George B. McClellan, Second Lieutenant Jeb Stuart or even the Regiment's second commander, Colonel Robert E. Lee. Through the Indian Wars in Kansas in 1857-1860, 20 campaign in the Civil War, eight Indian Wars, 10 campaigns in the Philippines, eight major campaigns of World War II, including Normandy and Central Europe, and 10 campaigns in Korea, the Three-quarter Horsemen have proven the original concept of a mobile strike force.

Army statisticians have had reason to raise their eyebrows when looking over the record of the 4th Cavalry, especially the roster of Medal of Honor recipients. This is the outfit in which 26 men received

27 Medals of Honor. Then there is Colonel Ronald Slidell MacKenzie who commanded the unit for an unprecedented 12 years beginning in 1870 and whose name became the unit's moniker: "MacKenzie's Raiders."

On the wall of the Squadron's headquarters is a framed statement undoubtedly uttered by a cavalryman: "The role of the Cavalry in war is to lend tone to what would otherwise be a vulgar brawl."

### 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23rd Infantry

On the 8th of July, 1861, at Fort Trumbull, Connecticut, two new Infantry units were formed to bolster the Union Army; the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry (now mechanized) and the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry.

The 4th of the 23rd Tomahawks have fought in every American war since their founding, a total of 42 campaigns. Arriving in Hawaii on January 30, 1966, from Fort Richardson, Alaska, the men of the 23rd, along with the 4th of the 9th, filled the gap left when plans to organize 4th and 5th Battalions in the 21st Infantry were scrapped.





### 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery

The 11th Field Artillery dates back to 1917 at Camp Harry J. Jones, Douglas, Arizona, with the transfer of 200 men from the 6th Field Artillery. Originally armed with 4.7 inch horse-drawn howitzers, the "On Time" Battalion served in World War I with the 6th Division. On November 1918, "Calamity Jane", the number two piece of E Battery, fired the last shot of World War I.

On December 1, 1941, the Battalion manned its field positions after the attack on Oahu. July 1943 found the "On Time" Battalion embarked for Australia. With the knowledge acquired through jungle training in Australia, they were sent to Dutch New Guinea, from there to Leyte Island in the Philippines and later to Lapaz, Luzon, and Parag Harbor on the Island of Mindanao.

During July, 1950, the Battalion was alerted for immediate deployment to Korea. Returning from Korea, the 11th was assigned to the Tropic Lightning Division at Schofield Barracks, April 1, 1960.

### 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery

From Fort Bliss, Texas, where it was first organized in 1916, to the Philippines and Korea, and back to Hawaii, the 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery, has always adhered to its motto "Daring and Tenacious." In World War I, it fought through the hedgerows of France with the 7th Infantry Division, and in World War II through the island hopping campaigns of the 25th Tropic Lightning.

In Korea, the Automatic Eighth fired nearly half a million rounds of 105mm ammunition, earned two Distinguished Unit Citations and won the nickname. A group of Prisoners of War, passing through the Battalion's firing positions stopped and watched the howitzers firing. The guards asked the interpreter what the POW's were talking about. "They wanted to see the new automatic artillery that had been shooting at them."

The Automatic Eighth was alerted for movement to Southeast Asia in December 1965. After two weeks of intensive training and preparation, the Battalion sailed as part of the 2nd Brigade Task Force on January 5, 1966. On January 23, C Battery fired the Eighth's first round in the war from a position near Bien Hoa in support of the Republic of Vietnam Forces operating in War Zone D. The Battalion has participated in 14 campaigns since World War I.



### 3rd Battalion, 13th Artillery

With three 155mm howitzer batteries and one 8-inch howitzer battery, the 3rd Battalion, 13th Artillery, a general support unit, has the heaviest fire power in the Tropic Lightning Division.

B Battery fired the Clan's first in-country round on April 4, 1966, as the 13th reinforced the fires of direct support artillery.

A direct descendant of C Battery, 3rd Battalion, 13th Artillery, the Clan was organized on June 1, 1917, at Camp Stewart, El Paso, Texas. The Clan moved as a battery of horse drawn 4.7 inch howitzers to join the 4th Infantry Division at Camp Greene, Charlotte, North Carolina, on December 10, 1917.

The 13th Field Artillery Regiment participated in five major campaigns of World War I and in the occupation of Germany following the Armistice. The Regiment, which is now the Clan, arrived at Schofield Barracks in October 1920 to spend 21 peacetime years in Hawaii.

C Battery, 13th Field Artillery, was assigned to the 24th Infantry Division in 1941 and participated with that division in four major campaigns in World War II and in the occupation of Japan for five years after the war. After the Korean War, the Battalion was redesignated the 3rd Howitzer Battalion, 13th Artillery and assigned to the Tropic Lightning Division under the new ROAD concept.



### 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery

The 77th Artillery dates back to the horse-drawn caissons of pre-World War I. Constituted on June 3, 1916, in the Regular Army as the 19th Cavalry, it was formally organized on May 23, 1917, at Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont. On the first day of November that year the name 77th Artillery was permanently recorded in the annals of military history when the unit was converted, reorganized and redesignated.

The 77th Field Artillery, as units were designated to distinguish them from Coastal Artillery, went to World War I with the 4th Division. In the Aisne-Marne Campaign they were the first to test and prove their mettle. On to St. Mihiel, they met the enemy again in the fierce battle of the Meuse-Argonne Campaign.

The 77th was called again to fight in Europe during World War II, and in that conflict they added ten battle streamers to the five they had won in World War I.

From its re-activation in October, 1966 until March, 1967, the Battalion conducted extensive training. On May 1, the main body departed Fort Irwin, California for Vung Tau Vietnam, where it was given the mission of general support for the Tropic Lightning.

The batteries continued to operate over widely scattered terrain, independently moving by land and air to participate in operations Sabre Thrust VII, Kwela II and Shelton I.



### 25th Medical Battalion

The history of the 25th Medical Battalion is as colorful as that of the Tropic Lightning Division itself. From the days at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, through World War II, Korea and Vietnam, the 25th Medical Battalion has lived up to its motto: "Medical Excellence." Main elements of the Battalion arrived in Vietnam on March 31, 1966, and became operational with a clearing station and later with a Division Dental Clinic.

The Battalion boasts a staff of highly trained Medical, Dental, and Medical Service Corps officers and enlisted personnel capable of providing the utmost in medical and dental care.

Activated on October 1, 1941, at Schofield Barracks, it joined the Tropic Lightning Division in combat on Guadalcanal in January 1944. The Battalion participated in all ten campaigns of the Korean War and was awarded the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation when all Division units were used as combat troops in a successful effort to block the Red assault on the port city of Pusan.



### 25th Supply and Transportation Battalion

The 25th Supply and Transportation Battalion is concerned primarily with supplying rations and transportation to the Tropic Lightning Division. Supply and Transportation furnishes field facilities and limited aerial resupply using Division aircraft. The motor transport company transports supplies and assists in troop movements.

The Division Supply Office handles requisitions for all technical services through its quartermaster, ordnance, engineer, signal, transportation, chemical and food service sections.

The 25th Supply and Transportation Battalion was organized on July 1, 1963 from elements of the 25th Quartermaster Company and the 33rd Transportation Battalion. The two earlier units had been with the Tropic Lightning Division since its forming in 1941 and had earned six battle streamers from 14 campaigns in World War II and Korea.

### 125th Signal Battalion

The 125th Signal Battalion, organic to the Tropic Lightning Division since its forming in 1941, operates the communications systems which are the nerves of the Tropic Lightning. With nearly thirty remote radio relay stations situated throughout the Division area of operations, the Battalion maintains the reins of command control, artillery response, maintenance and supply information, medical dustoff data and the millions of critical areas of communications which link the base camp to its units.

The Battalion also provides cable and wire communications within the base camps, the highly critical fire support network, special communications systems and a division historical photography section.



### 25th Military Police Company

Formed as an organic company in the 25th Infantry Division on October 1, 1941, the Military Police have operated with the Division in three wars.

The 25th Military Police Company is responsible not only for the jobs with which they are usually associated—security patrols, accident investigation and security of base camp gates—but also for a variety of combat tasks.

The MPs support the brigades by providing escorts for convoys departing for the field and then work hand-in-hand with the units themselves, setting up roadblocks in villages nearby.

In combat, the military policemen provide the general security of the Division command post and the maintenance, security and detention of prisoners at the POW detention point.

### 25th Administration Company

Perhaps the most unheralded of any combat unit in the Division is the 25th Administration Company. It remains obscure while others receive their rightful acclamation, yet without this modest outfit the Division could hardly function.

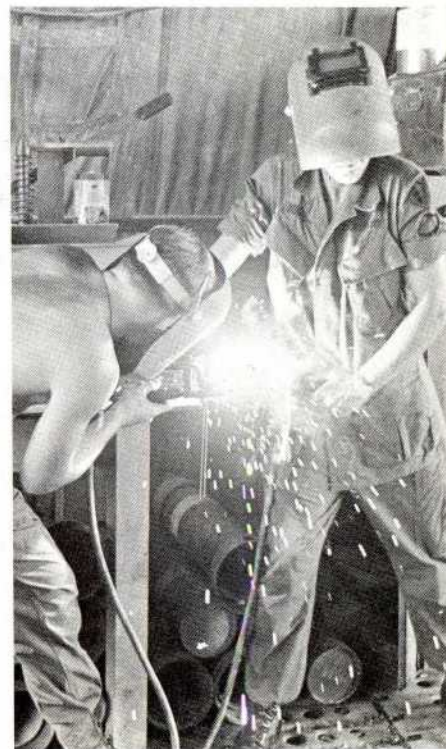
The company provides a military pay branch, computer operations branch, adjutant general branch, inspector general, staff judge advocate, finance, chaplain, information, postal, special services and classified sections.

### 725th Maintenance Battalion

One-stop service is the goal of the 725th Maintenance Battalion. Its mission is to see that equipment—from rifles to tanks to aircraft—is operational at all times. During combat operations, a direct support company travels with each of the Division's brigades. These companies are 100 percent mobile and carry a 30 day supply of fast moving parts and equipment.

The "Service to the Line" Battalion was activated with the Tropic Lightning Division on October 1, 1941, in Hawaii. During World War II, the Battalion was awarded four campaign streamers and presented the Presidential Unit Citation.

Redesignated as a Regular Army unit in June, 1949, the Battalion entered the Korean War and was awarded ten campaign streamers and two Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations.







# Chronology



October 1, 1941

The 25th Infantry Division is formed from the 27th and 35th Infantry Regiments of the old Hawaiian Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.



December 7, 1941

“Day of Infamy” First to engage the enemy in World War II, the 25th takes the attacking Japanese war planes under fire and moves to the beaches to defend Honolulu and the Ewa Plains.



November 25, 1942

The Division moves to Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, to relieve the United States Marines; participates in the seizure of Kokumbona and the reduction of the Mt. Austen pocket on Guadalcanal. Captures Vella La Vella.

August 25, 1943

The Division moves to the Solomons capturing Zieta, Bairoko Harbor, New Georgia, Arundel Island and Kolombangara, earning the nickname “Tropic Lightning.”

January 11, 1945

D-Day for the Division in the Philippines: Tropic Lightning strikes across the Central Plains of Luzon taking the enemy at Binalonan and capturing Digdig, Putland, and Kapintalan.

June 30, 1945

The Division leaves Luzon after a record 165 consecutive days of combat. It is awarded the Philippines Presidential Unit Citation.



September 20, 1945	The men of the 25th Infantry Division arrive to occupy and aid in the reconstruction of Japan.	September 21, 1954	The 25th Infantry Division comes home to Hawaii after more than 12 years absence. Bands, hula girls, and 25,000 orchids attest to the admiration of Hawaii for her famous Division.
June 25, 1950	The North Korean Peoples Army crosses the 38th parallel in an unprovoked attack on the Republic of Korea. Within 10 days the 25th Division is in Korea as part of the United Nations Command, and at war again in Asia.	February 1957	The 25th Infantry Division becomes the first Infantry division to reorganize under the pentomic structure.
August 11, 1950	The Division has successfully and swiftly blocked the approaches to the port city of Pusan and receives the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation.	August 26, 1963	The Division organization is honed again under the new Army ROAD concept to become the Army's principal guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency strike force. Participating in an extensive new training program, Tropic Lightning sets the pace in Operation Dusty Trail III by lifting the Army off the ground, a prelude to the new airmobile concept.
September 16, 1950	The Division goes on the offensive trapping more than 50,000 North Koreans and driving them back to the Kum River.	December 1964	Combat troops from the 25th Division volunteer for the Republic of Vietnam to relieve the overworked door gunners.
November 3, 1950	The Chinese Communist Forces intervene and mass across the Yalu River pushing the UN Forces back all along the front.	August 22, 1965	170 men of Charlie Company, 65th Engineer leave Schofield Barracks for the Republic of Vietnam.
January 15, 1951	Tropic Lightning participates in a new UN offensive and in five hard-driving operations pushes the enemy north across the Han River securing the Iron Triangle. It is awarded a second Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation.	January 1, 1966	Operation Blue Light: In the largest single troop movement in history, the 25th Infantry Division moves to Vietnam to carve an area of operation out of the Viet Cong stronghold northwest of Saigon.
January 31, 1953	The 25th Infantry Division becomes the IX Corps reserve force during the UN-Communist negotiations; described by General Jenkins, IX Corps Commander: "Today the 25th Division is like a razor's edge."	February 1968	A desperate enemy launches his all-out "Tet Offensive" and is smashed against the anvil of land which the Tropic Lightning has cleared. The mauled enemy is pursued back into his redoubt with much of his combat capability destroyed.
May 5, 1953	The Division assumes the responsibility for guarding Seoul.	January 28, 1969	The 25th Infantry Division is awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm for spearheading 62 major combat operations in its area.
July 27, 1953	Korean Armistice. 25th Division stabilizes the main battle position and remains on guard.		



# Recipients of the Medal of Honor

## 25th Infantry Division

### World War II

Staff Sergeant Raymond H. Cooley  
Company B  
27th Infantry Regiment  
Richard City, Tennessee

Captain Charles W. Davis  
2nd Battalion  
27th Infantry Regiment  
Montgomery, Alabama

Sergeant William G. Fournier  
Company M  
35th Infantry Regiment  
Winterport, Maine

T/5 Lewis Hall  
Company M  
35th Infantry Regiment  
Columbus, Ohio

Master Sergeant Charles L. McGaha  
Company G  
35th Infantry Regiment  
Crosby, Tennessee

T/4 Laverne Parrish  
Medical Detachment  
161st Infantry Regiment  
Ronan, Montana

### Korean War

Sergeant Cornelius H. Charlton  
Company C  
24th Infantry Regiment  
Bronx, New York

Corporal John W. Collier  
Company C  
27th Infantry Regiment  
Worthington, Kentucky

Captain Reginald B. Desiderio  
Company E  
27th Infantry Regiment  
El Monte, California

Master Sergeant Melvin O. Handrich  
5th Infantry Regiment

Sergeant William R. Jecelin  
Company C  
35th Infantry Regiment  
Baltimore, Maryland

Private Billy G. Kanell  
Company I  
35th Infantry Regiment  
Poplar Bluff, Missouri

Corporal Benito Martinez  
Company A  
27th Infantry Regiment  
Fort Hancock, Texas

Captain Lewis L. Millet  
Company E  
27th Infantry Regiment  
So. Dartmouth, Massachusetts



Sergeant First Class Donald R. Moyer  
Company E  
35th Infantry Regiment  
Keego Harbor, Michigan

Second Lieutenant Jerome Sudut  
Company B  
27th Infantry Regiment  
Wausau, Wisconsin

Private First Class William Thompson  
Company M  
24th Infantry Regiment  
Brooklyn, New York

Private First Class Bryant H. Wombck  
Medical Company  
14th Infantry Regiment  
Rutherfordton, North Carolina

Sergeant Don Porter  
Company G  
14th Infantry Regiment  
Ruxton Maryland

Private First Class Ernest E. West  
Company L  
14th Infantry Regiment  
Wurtland, Kentucky

### Republic of Vietnam

Staff Sergeant Kenneth E. Stumpf  
Company C, 1st Battalion  
35th Infantry

Specialist 4 Donald W. Evans, Jr.  
Company A, 2nd Battalion  
12th Infantry

Captain Robert F. Foley  
Company A, 2nd Battalion  
27th Infantry

Sergeant John F. Baker, Jr.  
Company A, 2nd Battalion  
27th Infantry

Specialist 4 Daniel Fernandez  
Company C, 1st Battalion  
5th Infantry

Captain Joseph X. Grant  
Company A, 1st Battalion  
14th Infantry

First Lieutenant Stephen Karopczyc  
Company A, 2nd Battalion  
35th Infantry

Captain Riley Pitts  
Company A, 2nd Battalion  
27th Infantry

First Sergeant Macomo Yabes  
Company A, 4th Battalion  
9th Infantry

Sergeant Ted Belcher  
Company C, 1st Battalion  
14th Infantry



# TROPIC LIGHTNING COMMANDING GENERALS



Major General Maxwell Murray  
October 1941  
of 1941



Major General James L. Collins  
May 1942



Major General Charles L. Mullins  
December 1943



Brigadier General Everett E. Brown  
May 1948



Major General William B. Kean  
August 1948



Major General Joseph S. Bradley  
February 1951



Major General Ira P. Swift  
July 1951



Major General Samuel T. Williams  
July 1952



Major General Halley G. Maddox  
August 1953



Major General Leslie D. Carter  
May 1954



Major General Herbert B. Powell  
November 1954



Major General Edwin J. Messinger  
December 1955



Major General Archibald W. Stuart  
September 1957



Major General John E. Theimer  
October 1958



Major General J. O. Seaman  
June 1960



Major General James L. Richardson  
September 1960



Major General E. F. Easterbrook  
April 1962



Major General Andrew J. Boyle  
March 1963



Major General Fred C. Weyand  
August 1964



Major General F. K. Mearns  
August 1967



Major General Ellis W. Williamson  
August 1968

Major General Ellis W. Williamson was born in Reaford, North Carolina on June 2, 1918. Upon graduation from Atlantic Christian College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1940, he entered the United States Army with the 120th Infantry Regiment. Following his commissioning in 1941, he served as commander at the platoon, company, battalion levels and, at the age of 27, assumed command of the 120th Infantry Regiment. He graduated from the Command and General Staff College in 1950 and became the Operations Officer, X Corps, Korea.

After attending the Armed Forces Staff College he was assigned to duty in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He is a graduate of the National War College, Harvard University Graduate School of Business (1962), and George Washington University School for International Affairs (MS, 1963).

Major General Williamson commanded the 173rd Airborne Brigade in May, 1965, when it became the first U.S. Army ground combat unit to enter the conflict in Vietnam. After twenty two months as commander of the U.S. Army Training Center, Fort Polk Louisiana, Major General Williamson assumed command of the 25th Infantry Division on August 3, 1968.

Major General Williamson's U.S. and foreign decorations include the Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Silver Star with five Oak Leaf Clusters, the Legion of Merit with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medal with seventeen Oak Leaf Clusters, the British Distinguished Service Order, the French Croix de Guerre with Silver Star, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, the Vietnamese Army Distinguished Service Medal, and the First Class Vietnamese Service Medal.





In compiling this brief history of the Tropic Lightning Division, we have drawn heavily on the remarkable work of combat artists, photographers and correspondents whose task it has been to record the soldier in battle.

Like the oil sketch on this page, which was done on a scrap of board at the Division's outpost on Nui Ba Den, the impressions gathered here have been made in the midst of the fire fight, in the night at an embattled fire support base, on the long, hot and interminable search and clear missions, and in those brief interludes of quiet.

In 1964, in an abandoned prospector's shack in California, a book of sketches by William de Jarnette Rutherford was found. The sketches, some of which we have reproduced to illustrate "Battle", are an extraordinary record of the 165 days of consecutive battle which the 25th Division encountered in World War II. Included in the sketch book was a note which speaks for all who attempt this kind of history.

"Having got permission from my commander, I took advantage of the opportunities afforded by the Luzon Campaign to follow our doughboys to the battlefield and record their lives there.

"My desire to do this came from the fact that I have seen reproductions of a large number of "war pictures" which were done by competent artists but which lacked an intimate understanding of their principle subject, war.

"I have dug latrines and cleaned them, pulled KP and helped build roads through bottomless jungles . . . At times I have wished I were dead, only to snap out of it a little later and be filled with the joy of living.

"Many of my sketches were actually done under fire, while some had to be done from memory because of such things as rain, darkness, and the violence of sudden unexpected actions. I hate a lie and therefore, if anything of importance has been left out of my story it is because I did not see it."

It is not possible to credit the individuals who contributed to the contents of this history, but certain groups deserve recognition. The Department of the Army Special Photo Team which seeks to make a professional pictorial record of the United States Army's efforts throughout the world, has made many of its fine photographs available to us for this work. The combat artist group of the 18th Military History Detachment assigned to the 25th Division has allowed us to select freely from their sketches and paintings in order to add that more subjective dimension to the picture. And to the gentlemen of Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd., Tokyo, we owe special gratitude for their skill in reviving many old photographs and for their dedication to the overall production.

The vast majority of this work, however, has been compiled from the photographs and records of the individuals of the Tropic Lightning Information Office who, for 27 years, have taken personal and professional pride in recording the history of a mighty Division and the lives of gallant men.

We present this book to the men of the Tropic Lightning Division and to our friends. If anything of importance has been left out, it is because we did not see it.

Lt. John C. Burns  
Sp/5 William F. Berger



## DIVISION UNITS

**3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry (MacKenzie's Raiders).** The 4th Cavalry was organized June 17, 1855. Its motto is "Paratus et Fideles." It has earned 55 battle streamers from the Indian Wars to the Korean War.



**1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry (Bobcats).** The 5th Infantry was organized April 12, 1808. Its motto is "I'll Try, Sir." The 5th Infantry has earned 38 battle streamers from the War of 1812 to the Korean War.



**1st Battalion, 8th Artillery (Automatic Eighth).** The 8th Artillery was organized on July 7, 1916. Its motto is "Audacieux et Tenace." It has earned 21 battle streamers from World War I to the Korean War.



**4th Battalion, 9th Infantry (Manchu).** The 9th Infantry was organized on March 17, 1855. Its motto is "Keep up the Fire." It has earned 45 battle streamers from combat in the Indian Wars to the Korean War.

**7th Battalion, 11th Artillery (On Time).** The 11th Artillery was organized on June 1, 1917. Its motto is "On Time." The 11th Artillery has 14 battle streamers earned from World War I to Korea.



**2d Battalion, 12th Infantry (White Warriors).** The 12th Infantry was organized on October 20, 1861. Its Motto is "Led by Love of Country." The 12th Infantry has been awarded 24 battle streamers for combat from the Civil War to World War II.

**3d Battalion, 13th Artillery (The Clan).** The 13th Artillery was organized June 1, 1917. Its motto is "Without Fear, Favor or Hope of Reward." The 13th Artillery has earned 18 battle streamers in World War I, World War II, and Korea.



**2d Battalion, 14th Infantry (Golden Dragons).** The 14th Infantry was organized July 8, 1861. Its motto is "Take the Right of the Line." The 2d Battalion has been awarded 31 battle streamers for action from the Civil War to the Korean War.



**22d Infantry (The Regulars).** The 22d Infantry was organized on 21 September, 1866. Its motto is "Deeds not Words."

The 2d Battalion has earned 17 battle streamers for combat in the Indian Wars to World War II.

The 3d Battalion has earned 18 battle streamers for action in the Indian War to War II.

**4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (Tomahawks).** The 23d Infantry was organized on July 8, 1861. Its Motto is "We Serve." The 23d Infantry has been Awarded 42 battle streamers from the Civil War to the Korean War.



**27th Infantry (Wolfhounds).** The 27th Infantry was organized February 19, 1901. Its motto is "Nec Aspera Terrant."

The 1st and 2nd Battalions have each earned 24 battle streamers in the Philippine Insurrection, World War I, World War II, and Korea.

**2d Battalion, 34th Armor (Dreadnaughts).** The 34th Armor was organized on October 1, 1941. Its Motto is "Dread Naught." The 34th received five battle streamers for combat in World War II.



**2d Battalion, 77th Artillery** was organized on June 11, 1917. Its motto is "On Guard." It has 15 battle streamers earned during World War I and World War II.

**25th Aviation Battalion.** This unit was organized on August 12, 1963. Its motto is "Lele Makou No Na Puali" (We Fly for the Troops). The 25th Aviation Battalion is the Division's youngest unit.



**25th Medical Battalion** was organized August 26, 1941. Its motto is "Conserving the Fighting Strength." It has 14 battle streamers from World War II and the Korean War.

**25th Supply and Transportation Battalion.** This unit was organized on August 26, 1941. Its motto is "Without Delay." It has earned 20 battle streamers from World War II and the Korean War.



**65th Engineer Battalion (Whiskey Fifth).** The 65th Engineer Battalion was organized on October 18, 1927. Its motto is "First In, Last Out." It has 14 battle streamers earned in World War II and the Korean War.

**125th Signal Battalion** was organized August 26, 1941. Its motto is "Leokani Okauwila" (Voice of Lightning.) It has 14 battle streamers earned during World War II and the Korean War.



**725th Maintenance Battalion** was organized August 26, 1941. Its motto is "Service to the Line." The Maintenance Battalion has earned 14 battle streamers from World War II and the Korean War.

**25th Division Support Command** was organized October 12, 1943. The Support Command has five battle streamers earned during World War II and the Korean War.



**Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 25th Infantry Division.** Organized October 1, 1941, it has 17 battle streamers awarded during World War II and the Korean War.



**25th Administration Company** was organized October 12, 1943. It has seven battle streamers earned from World War II and the Korean War.



**25th Military Police Company** was organized in 1941. Its motto is "Of the Troops. . . For the Troops." It has 14 battle streamers earned in World War II and the Korean War.



**25th Military Intelligence Detachment.** This unit was organized July 12, 1950. Its motto is "Veritas Vigilantia Victoria." The unit earned a meritorious commendation during the Korean War.







Non-color Units



3d Sqdn, 4th Cav



1st Bn (M), 5th Inf



1st Bn, 8th Arty



4th Bn, 9th Inf



2d Bn, 34th Armor



7th Bn, 11th Arty



3d Bn, 13th Arty



725th Maint Bn



2d Bn, 14th Inf



125th Sig Bn



2d Bn, 12th Inf



25th S & T Bn



25th Med Bn



25th Avn Bn



2d Bn, 77th Arty



65th Engr Bn



2d Bn (M) & 3d Bn,  
22d Inf



1st & 2d Bn, 27th Inf



4th Bn (M), 23d Inf