

Captain Praises Men After Vicious Attack

By SP4 ANDY RUST

Staff Writer

"I have never been so proud of a bunch of men," said Captain Charles O. Haines, commanding officer, C Battery, 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery. "Not one man left the guns despite the mortar rounds and rockets falling around the parapets."

Capt. Haines' praise for the men of C Battery came after they had successfully defended Landing Zone Colt in the Que Son area of Vietnam from a mortar, rocket and ground attack. (C Battery fires in support of the 1st Air Cavalry Division.)

Approximately 100 rounds of 82mm mortar and B-40 rockets hit the LZ during the three mortar attacks during the early morning hours. The attack was directed against the Headquarters of the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Air Cavalry Division.

"Jim Lonborg was pitching a no-hitter," said Fire Direction Officer Lieutenant George Kaleris, who was listening to the World Series when the attack started. "Then someone yelled 'incoming mortar' and things started exploding all around."

C Battery awoke to the 2:30 a.m. blackness and ran for their 105 mm howitzers. Using flashlights, which clearly marked their positions, the men had the guns firing defensive fires in a matter of seconds.

"Capt. Haines was tactical as hell," said First Sergeant Albert Calhoun. "He went from gun to gun directing firing with his shorts, T-shirt, boots and a .45."

the muzzle flashes from the mortars directed their attack at the 160mm guns.

"Mortar rounds fell within meters of the guns," said Capt. Haines. "We had just started building parapets and the guns offered very little protection."

In addition to the mortar, the

targets. The other two in the battery were out of action in the pressure of battle.

"There were NVA all over the LZ," said Kaleris. "When side man was killed on one gun and another wounded, men from FDC went to man the howitzer and hump the ammo."

he had shot the NVA that had wounded him in the legs. Despite his bad injuries, he stayed back there and protected us."

Staff Sergeant Jeffery Davis, the Section Chief, had been wounded in the legs, too," continued Flenniken, Flint, Michigan, "but he kept running

our hooch to get grenades. We reconced with the grenades."

The battery quickly expended the ammo that had been broken out for the night for harassment and interdiction firing. The men shuttled ammo from the inoperative guns until that source was also exhausted.

"When we ran out," said SSgt. John Hatchet, Kembridge, Va., "the Chief of Smoke and some of us others took a jeep down to the ammo point, and broke out more."

As dawn came, and the artillery from the nearby landing zones pounded the area surrounding LZ Colt, the pressure let up and the attack broke off. Nearly 700 rounds were fired in defending the LZ.

"It is hard to say enough for the men," Capt. Haines, Columbus, Ohio, said. "The medic, SP4 Richard Booth, was all over the LZ attending to the wounded. He never took cover during the attack. None of the men failed to expose themselves when the noise arose. We found at least a dozen grenades inside the parapets that hadn't exploded."

"The Black Hats of the 11th Aviation Group were especially commended for C Battery. They stood by the top of the rock with flashlights in their hands to direct the MEDEVAC and ARA ships that took casualties out. Charlie really opened up on them."

The battery was honored with two Silver Stars and four Bronze Stars with "V" during an impact awards ceremony.

The Silver Stars went to Capt. Charles O. Haines and First Sergeant Albert Calhoun. Bronze Stars with "V" device were presented to: Staff Sergeant Jeffery Davis, Sergeant First Class Cayetano Sanchez, Lieutenant George Kaleris and SP4 Loren Fritel (frontpage).



C BATTERY FIRES IN SUPPORT OF CAV'S 3rd BRIGADE IN QUE SON PROVINCE.

Photo By SP4 ANDY RUST

guns were receiving grenades and rifle fire. To see who was on the LZ, the battery started firing self-illumination.

"I had to run outside the Fire Direction Center to adjust the illumination," said Lt. Kaleris, Lowell, Mass. "Then I would run back in to give the data to the computers."

Two howitzers were firing il-

An NVA was killed while flinging grenades from a rock that the FDC used as the backside for their ammo box bunker. The tent top and boxes were riddled with bullets.

"When I got on the gun," said Specialist Four Larry Flenniken, an FDC computer "SP4 Harlan Cornett had just killed three more NVA right between

around as best he could, directing the gun crew."

Davis, Los Angeles, Calif., had narrowly missed being killed in the initial mortar barrage. He had just rolled from his tent when a mortar round shredded it.

"We heard movement in the brush around the parapet," Flenniken said, "so SSgt. Davis

*Cpl. Haines
SP4 Booth
(over)*