

...No sacrifice too great. Duty first.

Overall, the sacrifice of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division in Vietnam 1965-1970 was little different from that of World Wars I and II. But the rate of combat casualties was distinctly different. In World War I, in 7 months of combat, the division lost 22,320 killed and wounded, over 3000 per month. In World War II, in some 24 months of combat, it lost 20,770, over 800 per month. In Vietnam, in nearly 60 months of combat, it lost 20, 659, 300 or so per month.

The operations were, of course, distinctly different: In Vietnam the division fought over an area 100 times larger than the battlefields of World War I, and 10 times larger than the division's zones during World War II. What made it possible for the Big Red One to perform its duty in Vietnam was the HU-1 series of helicopters, known to us all as "Hueys." The Huey utility bird enabled swift maneuver and assured resupply throughout the Division's vast area of responsibility. The Huey ambulance, the Dust-off birds, dramatically speeded evacuation of the wounded from the battlefield, making it possible for most wounded to reach a fully staffed medical facility within one hour of being hit.

The gunship version of the Huey escorted both the utility and the Dust-off birds, ready to provide covering fire around their landing zones. Both most of us remember best its close support for embattled infantry. Rebel gunships were one way we could achieve fire superiority, and while mortars, artillery, and Air Force strikes played a role, the Rebels were often first on the scene, and were able to engage enemy a few yards in front of our troops. I know of instances, as do many here, when the arrival of a Rebel gunship at a firefight decided the day: the enemy, hearing the crackling blades overhead, the ~~chatter~~<sup>snarl</sup> of multiple ~~machine guns~~<sup>mini-guns</sup>, and the *whump* of incoming rockets, would cease fire and fade away. We liked the Rebels because they were on our radio nets, talked our language, and understood our tactics and procedures, even as we knew theirs.

And so today we add to the relics of the Division's service this helicopter. It deserves to be here, in ~~this~~<sup>the collections of the First Division Museum, a</sup> unique place of honor, as a reminder that, in Vietnam, among the greatest of the warriors of the Big Red One were its Army aviators.