



POWER PACK



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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

1965-1966



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TO THE MEN OF THE
82d AIRBORNE DIVISION
WHO DID NOT COME HOME,
WE HUMBLY DEDICATE THIS
BOOK
—
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
1965

DEC 14 1977

ANDRES DOCKS

PUEBLO NUEVO

VILLA DUARTE

DUARTE BRIDGE

VILLA FRANCISCA

SAN ISIDRO

CORRIDOR

LOS MINAS

SANS SOUCI

CAUCEBO



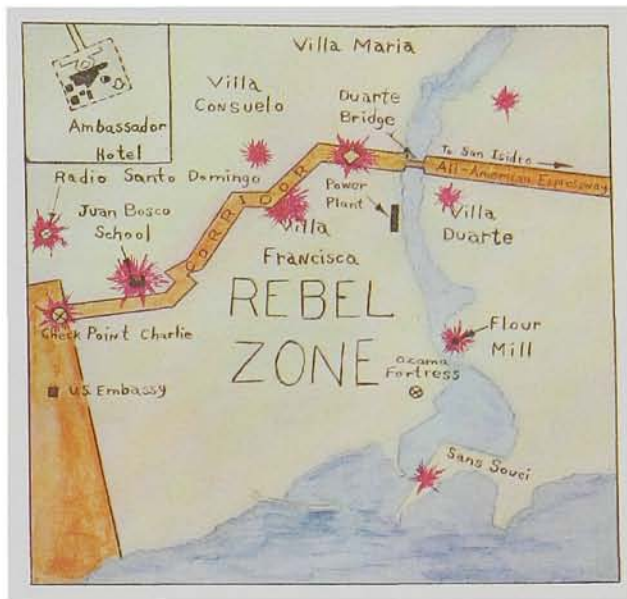
SANTO DOMINGO

BOCA CHICA

PEYNADO BRIDGE

LA FRANCIA

OZMAN RIVER



SHOTGUN-

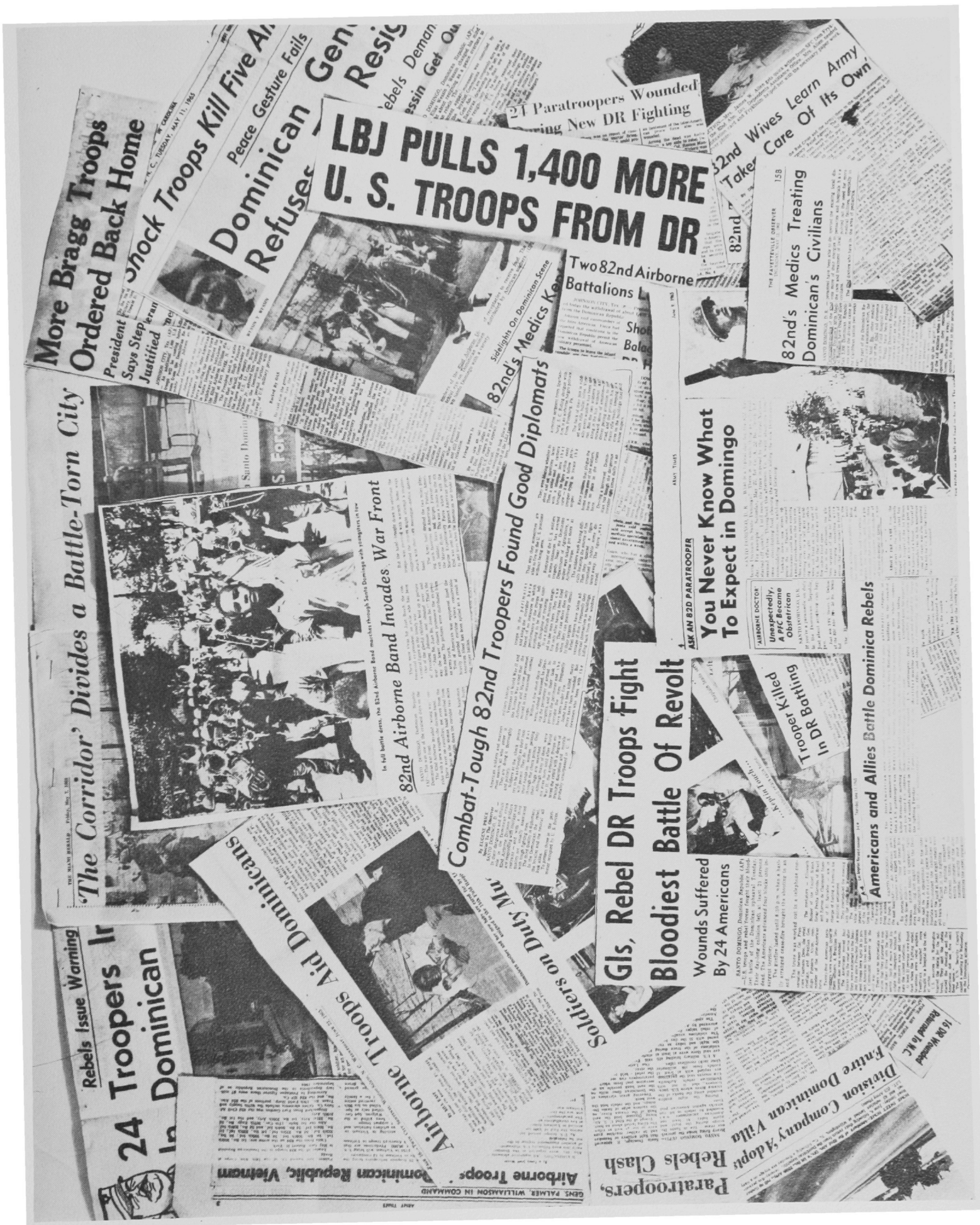
SHOTGUN-

SHOTGUN

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE
BURNING RUINS OF BERLIN THE
ALERT WAS REAL AND
AT 0200 ON 30 APRIL 1965
THE 82d AIRBORNE DIVISION
WAS ONCE AGAIN THROWN
HEADLONG INTO COMBAT
HELL



BANNER HEADLINES FROM NEWSPAPERS



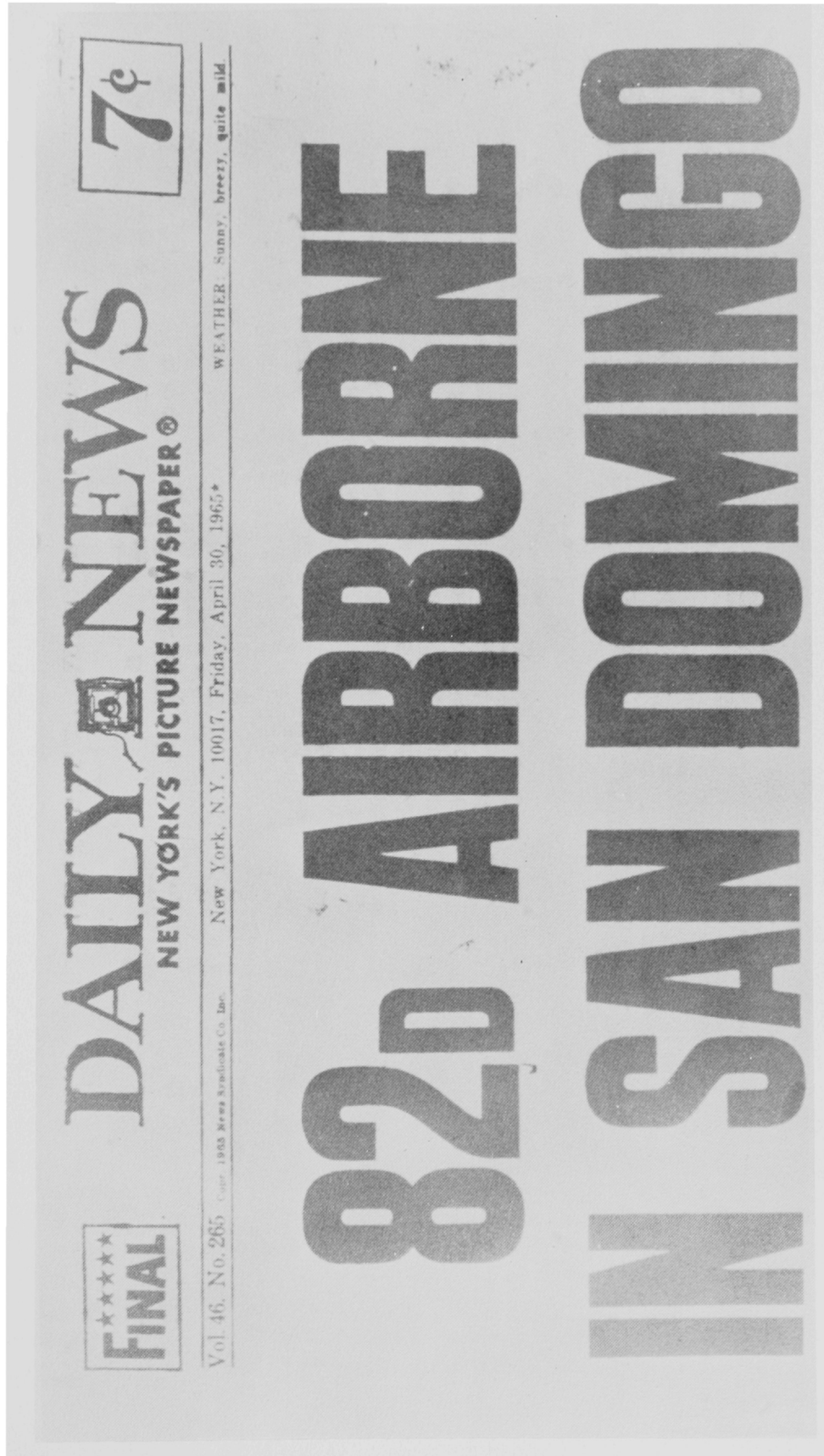
The eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola is called the Dominican Republic. The oldest city in the hemisphere, Santo Domingo is the capitol of Dominica. For twenty-six years this Caribbean nation had been ruled by the strong hand of Trujillo. The general elections following Trujillo's assassination brought new hope and freedom to the Dominicans. That was 1963.

On April 30, 1965 the first C-130 aircraft touched down at San Isidro Airfield, Dominican Republic. Approximately 1,171 miles from Pope Air Force Base, in the warm tropical morning breeze, we exited the plane to try to salvage what freedom was left, the hope was gone. More than 1,000 Dominicans had lost their lives in six days of bloody civil war.

Within a few hours thirty-three plane loads of us had landed and we were on the move to Santo Domingo, fifteen miles away. We could hear firing as we drew closer to the Duarte Bridge and the entrance to the revolt-torn city. For the twenty years since World War II we had been on alert. For twenty years anticipation had built a desire and tension in us. We practiced, we trained, we waited and now we were finally called.

They gave us a code name. How accurate it was! It had all built up and now we were about to turn it loose. We, the men of the 82d Airborne Division were justly named POWER PACK.

THIS TOLD THE STORY





TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 82d AIRBORNE DIVISION

On the forty-eighth anniversary of the 82d Airborne Division, I extend heartiest congratulations and best wishes to its officers and men on behalf of all members of the United States Army.

Fighting as an infantry division during World War I, the 82d established a record of valor and success in the Lorraine, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne campaigns. In World War II, the "All American" Division fought gallantly in actions in Sicily, in the capture of the Nijmegen bridge, in the Battle of the Bulge, and across Germany to force the surrender of the German 21st Army. Today, the Division continues to uphold its proud history, and recently displayed its readiness and ability to react quickly when it moved to the Dominican Republic to block the spread of communism in the Western Hemisphere. The superb performance of duty by the soldiers of the 82d in the execution of their important mission was instrumental in the preservation of liberty and justice in the Dominican Republic.

It is with great confidence that I view your future role and ever-increasing responsibilities, and I take pleasure in joining the men and women of the United States Army in paying tribute to the 82d Airborne Division and its distinguished record.

HAROLD K. JOHNSON

General, United States Army, Chief of Staff



You stand head and shoulders above any soldiers I've seen in my 27 years of service. What you proved by your actions in the Dominican Republic is what I've said all along . . . you are the best damn soldiers in the world.

ROBERT H. YORK, USA
Maj. Gen. Commanding



Brig. Gen. Robert C. Taber
Assistant Division Commander, Support



Brig. Gen. Edward P. Smith
Assistant Division Commander, Operations

PRELUDE TO POWER-PACK

“Santo Domingo is a volcano that is going to envelop all Latin America in flames.” These words, spoken by a professed latin communist at a meeting of the Dominican Republic’s Castroite 14th of June Movement, turned world attention to the island known as Hispaniola.

At Ft. Bragg, 1171 miles to the north of that Caribbean nation the 82d Airborne Division was conducting normal training including a Blue Chip demonstration.

Pope Air Force Base was a beehive of activity, as it always is with a major demonstration, planes were ready to drop troopers on Sicily Drop Zone for the spectators.

Plans were even being made for the Armed Forces Day Parade in New York City, May 16. It would have had a battalion of 82d paratroopers marching to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the WWII victory parade.

On April 29th at 7:30 p.m. the lead aircraft of the 82d Airborne Division’s Task Force left Pope Air Force Base for Puerto Rico in answer to a call regarding the revolution in the Dominican Republic, then five days old.

The “volcano” had erupted and someone had to put out the fire. There would be no battalion of the 82d Airborne Division in New York City Armed Forces Day 1965, they would all be in the Dominican Republic.

April 29 - At Pope - The Same Old Question Comes Up - Will We Go?



TRUCKS WAIT



PLANES WAIT



WE WAIT

America's Guard of Honor



**DAMN RIGHT WE GO
“ALL THE WAY”**



LOAD YOUR 130's



SAN ISIDRO

It wasn't quite dark when the wheels of the first C-130 lifted off the long blue lighted runway at Pope Air Force Base. The ride was long and filled with anticipation. Our briefing said we would touch down in Puerto Rico. Somebody said to get some sleep—how the hell did he expect us to sleep—he couldn't.

“De-rig, we're going straight in!” Well this is it, you could see it written on everyone's face. “Are we the first to land?” asked a Sp4—no one had time to answer—we had to pull the chutes off our jeeps and mules. I remember they told us later that this was the first time heavy drop was derigged without equipment.

We touched down and unloaded into the tropic breeze - strangest feeling I've ever had. Beautiful sky, funny that's the first thing I looked

at, it was 1:15 in the morning and the sky had a light blue effect to it—at least it did to me. Some of the bulk loads had to be carried off—everything happened so fast—and off went the 130. With an imagination you could see a hose spitting 130s all over the sky; it seemed as if one landed as one took off.

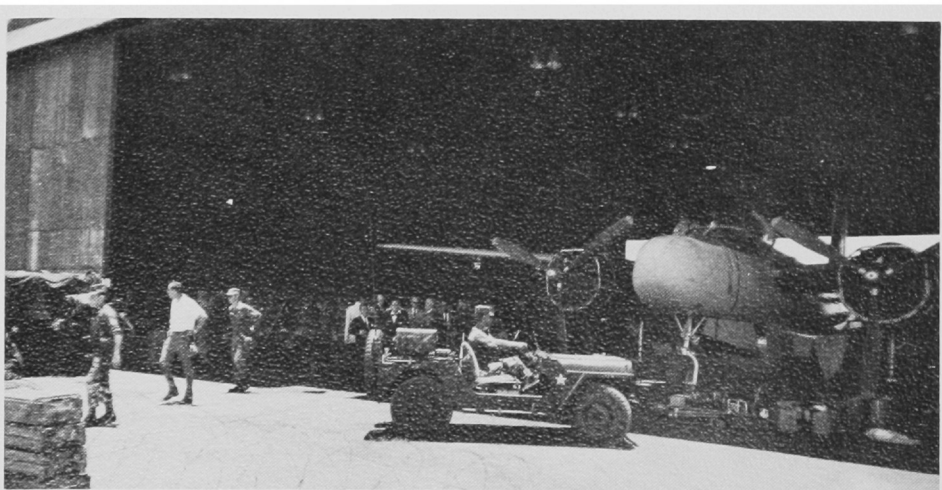
The Dom Rep Air Force wasn't much to talk about, and the place was deserted. The first division CP was set up in one of the larger hangars, one of their light bombers was in it—one engine half assembled. We had landed and now the division began to pour in. For the next four days the 130s would keep coming, day and night. Troopers, trucks, ammunition, rations, supplies; they all landed at San Isidro, our first stop in the Dominican Republic.

SAN ISIDRO AIRBASE, DOM. REP.



**ALL THEIR PLANES
WERE DOWN**

1st CHAMPION CP



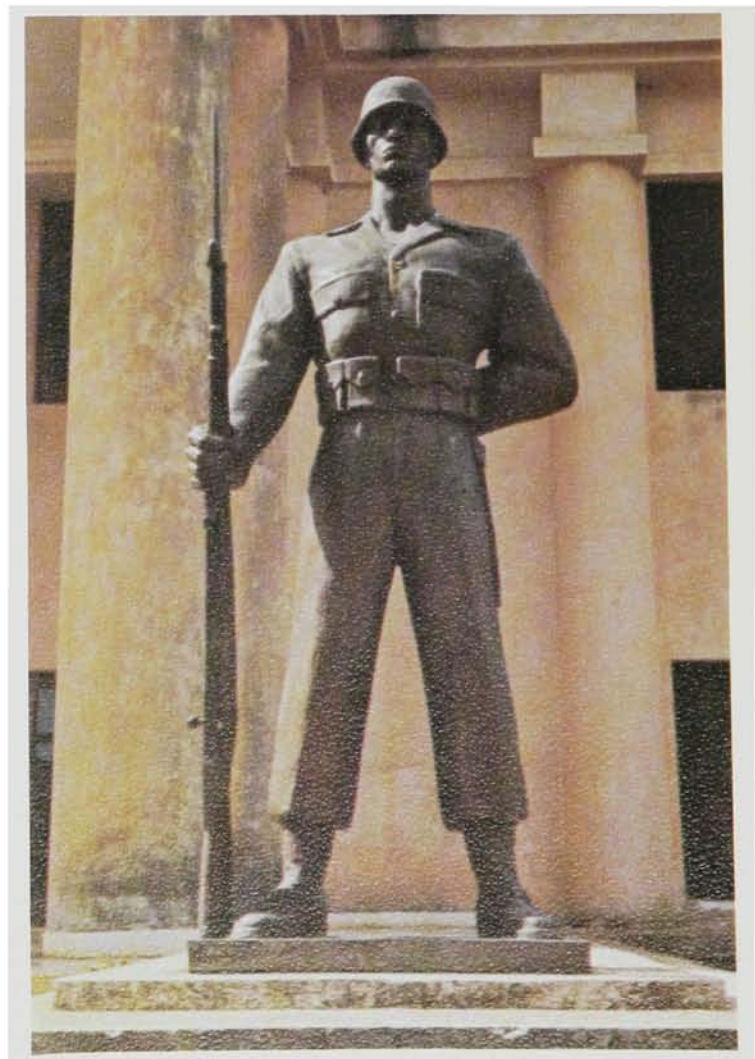
**VISITORS CHECKED OUT
AT FIRST HOME**

**NOW THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!!
CHAMPION CP**



OUR ONLY COMPLAINT—LOUSY PLUMBING

**REMEMBER THE DAY
WE ASSIGNED
HIM TO DIVISION?**



SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE HAD A JUNTA



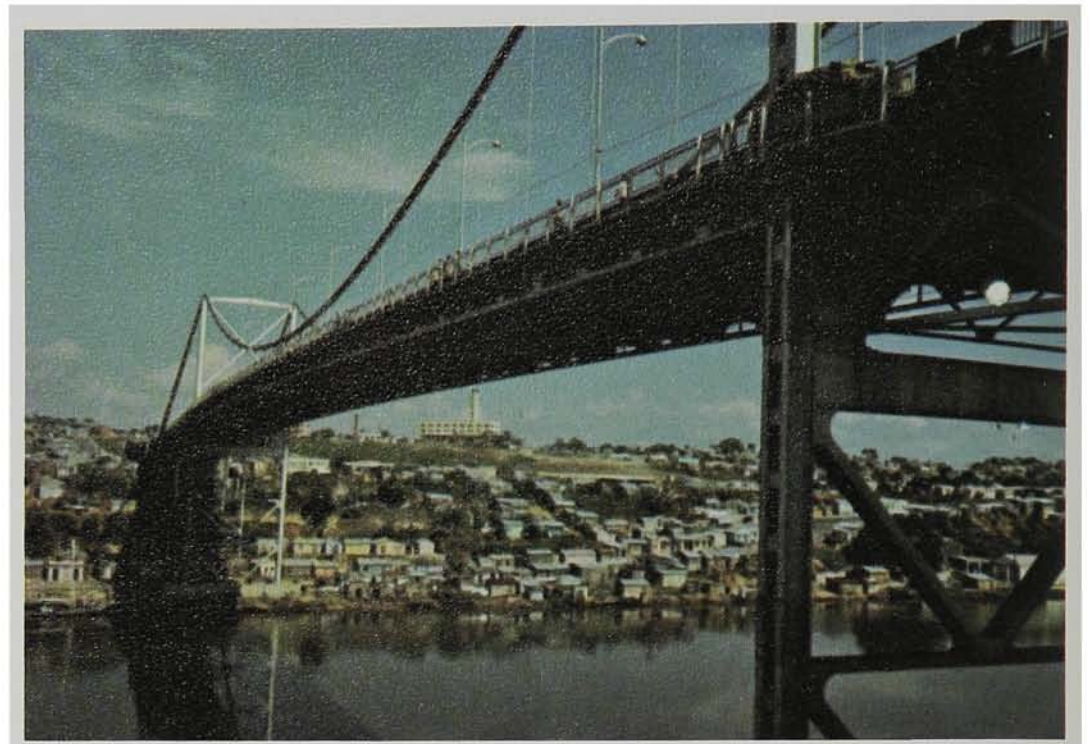
**"ONE MORE
FOR THE
ROAD — SIR"**

THE ROAD - THAT DEADLY ROAD

MOUNTED JEeps MOVE THROUGH TOWN



DUARTE BRIDGE - GATEWAY TO HELL



YOU CAN'T TRUST ANYONE-

REMEMBER THOSE TRUCKS WE GOT ON THE BRIDGE?



DUARTE BRIDGE - OZAMA RIVER

We all crossed the Ozama, mostly via Duarte Bridge. Maybe you weren't with the lead elements of the 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry; Troop A 1/17th Cavalry and the 307th Engineers. But we all crossed it, most of us saw the ancient tanks and trucks used by the Loyalists and Rebels in their battle for the bridge that we had to secure.

The sniper fire was light as we approached the east bank of the river but it was the first time, for most of us, that someone was shooting at us. Here, 1171 miles from Ft. Bragg, the realism of our mission really sunk in as rounds from a hidden enemy slammed into our jeep.

We cleared the houses on the east side with ✓ no casualties, Villa Duarte was ours; but as we looked across the river we saw a complex of old wooden shacks and hundreds of poverty stricken Dominicans. We knew it was sniper infested and it had to be cleaned out. Word came that the entire 3d Brigade was in and the 2d Brigade was on its way.

Just below the Villa Francisca on the west ✓ side of the river was the vital Santo Domingo Power Plant. It was one-half mile south of the bridge. To Company C, 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry came the mission, "secure the power plant." It took close range fire and grenades but the mission was accomplished, as usual. The

bridge and river banks were ours; there was only one way to go; we had had our baptism of fire and our appetite was growing, the city was next.

A bullet makes such a neat hole when it goes in. And that morning we saw some of our buddies go down with those "neat" holes in them.

By afternoon the east bank was cleared enough for us to cross to Duarte into the heart of Santo Domingo.

We readied ourselves for the crossing. A team of engineers crossed the bridge first, checking for mines; then elements of the 17th Cav. in their recon vehicles; and finally the foot soldiers of the 1st Bn. 508 in a well-spaced file on each side of the bridge.

The bridge was ours. We were in the city.

Once on the west bank of the Ozama the units fanned out. Houses were cleared, all afternoon they pushed. An hour seemed like a day. It was hard to tell where a sniper was located, but their firing indicated they were moving back. By nightfall a semi-circle with about a six-block radius was cleared around the west bank of the Ozama.

We had our toehold.

I'LL GET HIM SGT. - I'LL GET HIM



**IT WASN'T LONG
BEFORE
THEY HIT US**

SNIPERS HAVEN



YOU WATCH LEFT - I'VE GOT YOUR RIGHT

HE PUTS HIS
HEAD UP ONCE
MORE AND HE'S
MINE —
YOURS, HELL —
HE'S OURS



1ST BATTALION (AIRBORNE) 508TH INFANTRY

1st Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry assumed the mission of Division Ready Force at 1200 hours on 23 April 1965. Daily events continued in a normal vein until 0015 hours on 27 April when an alert was received placing the battalion in a "DEFCON 3" status. For the next two days, personnel and equipment were further prepared for an actual operation. At approximately 1930 hours 28 April the battalion assumed the status of "DEFCON 2." Late in the afternoon of 29 April, the battalion was informed that its assault echelon would take off from Pope AFB at 1930 hours that day.

Due to a change in plans, the proposed landing at Ramey AFB was cancelled and the word spread "We land in Santo Domingo at San Isidro Airfield." Thus at 0130 hours 30 April, the 1st Bn (Abn), 508th Inf became the first Army combat unit to set foot on the Dominican Republic, and the first unit in the 82d Airborne Division to enter combat since May 1945. The next few hours were spent derigging and unloading the heavy drop equipment that had been airlanded. At 0515 the Bn CO received an order to seize and secure the eastern end of the Duarte Bridge, check the bridge for demolitions, and clear the Villa Duarte section just south of the eastern end of the bridge. The task force, composed of 1st Bn, 508th Inf, and cavalry and engineer attachments, struck out on a dual-axis at 0700 hours securing the eastern end of the bridge without incident. Bravo Company and the Reconnaissance Platoon moved to secure the area north of the bridge on the east bank. Charlie Company and the attached cavalry element moved south against sniper and automatic weapons fire to secure the Villa Duarte area just south of the bridge. At 1030 hours Company A also proceeded south to clear the La Francia area and effect a link-up with Dominican forces located there.

At approximately 1500 hours, the Bn CO received the order to secure the Villa Duarte area, both ends of the Duarte Bridge, the city's electric plant, and to establish a foothold around the western end of the bridge. Charlie Company was given the mission of taking the Duarte Bridge, which it did under heavy enemy fire, thus becoming the first American unit to cross the bridge into the city of Santo Domingo. Our Company B and Company C (attached from 1st Bn, 505th Inf), followed behind Company C and fought on its right and left flanks respectively to secure a foothold on the western end of the bridge. Company A was given the mission of securing the Duarte Bridge and being the battalion reserve, and the cavalry element, was given the mission of securing the Villa Duarte area. By 1800 hours all assigned areas were secured and the battalion received only occasional harassing fire throughout the night.

At 0900 hours on 1 May 1965 the Bn CO received an order to organize a task force to move across the city and link up with Marine elements there. The battalion reconnaissance platoon and the 1st platoon from Company C were organized into the link-up task force.

The task force moved out immediately, and within minutes had neutralized the first heavily armed enemy position where it suffered (1) KIA, the first man killed in combat in the 82d Airborne Division since World War II. Despite sniper and automatic weapons fire received throughout the route, the task force was able to link up with the Marines at 1315 hours 1 May 1965.

By 1115 hours on 2 May the entire battalion task force, minus Company A which had been detached to provide close in security for the Duarte Bridge, had been relieved in place and moved to San Isidro Airfield to provide security for the surrounding area. Rifle companies on the airfield perimeter conducted foot patrols in the early mornings and late afternoons with platoon outposts established to their front at night. Company A rejoined the battalion as the reserve company on 4 May. A motorized patrol was conducted on 5 May by the Bn command group, the Bn Recon Platoon and Company A effecting coordination with the Dominican Armed Forces located at the International Airport 25 km east of Santo Domingo. It proceeded further east to Boca Chica, striking north for about 10 km and returning to the airfield by the northern route. Heliborne operations were conducted by the 3d platoon of Company B on 8 May and the 3d platoon of Company C on 9 May, but no enemy contact was made. Also on 9 May the battalion reconnaissance platoon escorted 120 American citizens from the Ambassador Hotel to San Isidro Airfield for evacuation from the Dominican Republic.

Starting 9 May the battalion was relieved of the airfield security mission and became the Division Ready Force. It remained in this status until 0900 hours 11 May 1965 when it was ordered back to the east side of the Ozama River.

While in this area from 11 May until 21 May 1965, the battalion received enemy fire on the average of about twenty times daily. On 13 May the battalion reconnaissance platoon was able to knock out a machine gun position with one 106mm RR round destroying the machine gun and killing four enemy soldiers.

On 14 May Company B lifted a 106mm RR by helicopter to the roof of the nine-story flour mill. On that same, day, heavy fire was received by the flour mill from an old fort located across the Ozama River. Return fire of nine 106mm RR rounds from the gun on the roof wreaked such havoc in killing enemy soldiers and destroying weapons and warehouses that for the remainder of the battalion's stay on the east bank no significant fire was again received. The battalion also participated in civil affairs during this period handing out foodstuffs to the local populace, and treating 250-500 civilians daily in the Bn medical aid stations.

On 21 May this battalion again moved to the west side of the Ozama River taking up positions that it had first cleared on 1 May 1965. From 21 May until 3 June the personnel of the battalion improved their positions under sporadic enemy fire. On 4 June the battalion was given the additional mission of guarding the city pow-

er plant and guarding the Duarte Bridge. Civic action activities during this period consisted of food distribution, medical treatment of approximately 450 civilians daily, and so ambitious a clean-up campaign on the part of Company A that the civilians presented a letter to Gen. York thanking him for the wonderful work his men had done.

Food distribution and administrative inspections were quickly forgotten when, at 1030 hours 15 June 1965, the battalion got the order to attack south. Company A and C jumped off in the attack at 1100 hours. As on 30 May 1965 Company C again bore the brunt of the attack. Both companies immediately began hitting stronger enemy resistance than ever encountered before, but returned fire with such confidence and courage that within one hour and a half, the battalion front had advanced from two blocks south of the Corridor to 10 blocks south. Company B, on order, had also attacked west securing two more blocks on the battalion right flank under heavy enemy sniper and automatic weapons fire.

By 1230 hours the entire battalion area was secure and orders were given to prepare defensive positions.

The following day fire again erupted but was quickly put down by determined men. The battalion was not without its losses for the battle. Company C had three men wounded the day of the attack who later died of wounds. Twenty-seven men were also wounded in action during those two days.

The losses and wounds hurt, but far less than the rebels with 67 KIA and 59 WJA.

The area had quieted down to normal harassing fire by 17 and 18 June despite increased rebel activity in the southernmost area of the city.

1st Battalion, 508th Infantry was relieved in place and sent west of Santo Domingo to an area near the town of Jaina, June 19.

And the job was done. Suffering six KIAs and 48 WIAs, 1st Bn., 508th Inf. was credited with 97 enemy KIAs, 76 WIAs, 181 POWSs, 284 detainees, capturing 51 rifles, 12 pistols, 15 knives, 14 vehicles, 10 grenades, 2 caliber 50 MGs, 3 shotguns, 5 gas guns, 1 rocket launcher, 1 20mm gun and an unknown amount of ammunition. It destroyed 3 caliber 50 MGs, 2 ARs, 8 rifles, 1 cal. 30 MG and 4 warehouses, 2,000 civilians were evacuated through the lines.

DOOR BY DOOR



STREET BY STREET

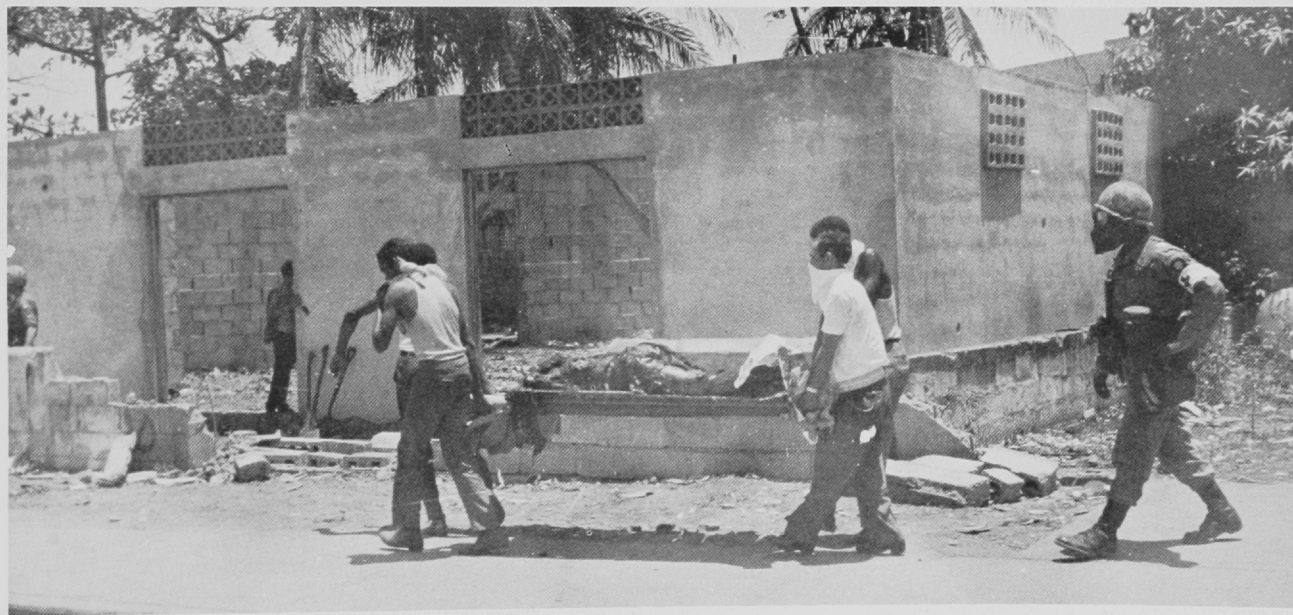


DOWN THERE—OPEN FIRE

SOME REBELS WERE BURNED



OTHERS CARRIED OUT



STILL OTHERS WALKED OUT

Supplies Arrived By Ship



Got To Us By Trucks



1ST SQUADRON, 17TH CAVALRY

To us would fall the honor of being the first cavalry unit committed to operations since the Korean War. To us also would fall the single honor of carrying the golden standard of the 17th into its very first action since its organization in 1916.

With the initial alert, the squadron moved to secure the departure airfield and call-forward portion of the marshalling area, using first Troop A, then Troop B. As planning progressed, it became clear that the entire squadron would not be able to deploy by air; however, there was a pressing need for the mobile firepower represented in the reconnaissance platoons and the air cavalry section. The 301 cavalry men deployed were organized into two reconnaissance troops, lightened for parachute and airlanding operations an aero scout section with armed H-13 helicopters, a small command group, and a light field train with medical, maintenance, mess and supply support. The support echelon, with the bulk of the headquarters troop and the heavy vehicles of the squadron, was never called into the operation. It performed minor miracles on a daily basis preparing the remainder of the squadron for its deployment, then continuing on faithfully to fill the many administrative details required at Fort Bragg, freeing the Power Packs to devote full attention to the operations in the Dominican Republic.

The first element to deploy was Troop A. It arrived in the San Isidro airhead on 30 April and was immediately launched with the elements of the 3d Brigade to seize the bridge over the Ozama River and develop the situation in the capitol city, Santo Domingo. The troop continued probing patrols into the city and along the Ozama River as the remainder of the squadron closed with Power Pack II. Troop B, together with the squadron command group, arrived on 3 May, as a corridor was being punched out across the center of Santo Domingo from the Ozama River over to the U. S. Embassy area in the western suburbs. Troop B elements conducted the first evacuations of U. S. and foreign nationals from the Embassy and Ambassador Hotel areas across the city and out to San Isidro airport, under harassing sniper fire.

Security missions along the east bank of the Ozama, which was to become the beat of the cavalry, alternated with escorts of convoys down the "All American Expressway" from the Embassy to San Isidro, with an occasional, pleasant interval of missions to the In-

ternational Airport at Caucebo and the Andres Docks near Boca Chica. The citizens of Los Minas, Ozama, Villa Duarte, and La Francia came to know the cavalry well. The surgeon, and his medical platoon circuit riders treated an average of a hundred civilians a day as part of the civic action program that found the reconnaissance platoons helping with the distribution of food and rehabilitation of utilities and facilities in the area.

The attitude of the population in these areas changed gradually from surly looks and sniper fire, to smiles, waves, and even "All the Way" shouts from the children. During the clearing operations conducted by the anti-rebel forces in the northern part of Santo Domingo each troop in turn was reluctant host to vast volumes of small arms, mortar, and tank fire. The normal harassing fires from the rebels were augmented by all the "overs" and ricochets from the anti-rebels.

With the rebel influence restricted to the southeastern corner of the city after 28 May, the cavalry gladly abandoned its water and mud-filled observation and gun positions north of the Duarte Bridge and concentrated its effort in the area to the south, prepared to support any eventual effort to move against the rebels in that area. The observation posts on Sans Souci Point and in the flour mill at La Francia were subject to harassment by snipers and machine gunners, firing from the rebel areas near the Ozama fortress.

Under the "no fire" orders, the cavalry found it extremely galling to sit by without returning this fire while the rebels practiced and improved their aim. Finally, on the morning of 15 June, permission was granted to the 3d Brigade to move south against the rebels in retaliation for their repeated breaches of the cease-fire. The cavalry was permitted to fire in support of this movement and did so. In the period after 16 June, the squadron continued its security guard missions at antenna sites, water points, road blocks, and installations.

The Air Cavalry was outstanding throughout the operation, flying hundreds of hours of combat support missions on reconnaissance, security, and surveillance for both the squadron and the division. Although diplomatic restrictions limited the possibilities of firing the armament, the helicopters' presence in the air was a definite deterrent to rebel boldness.

An outstanding achievement of aerial observation was the early discovery and repeated surveillance of the possibly subversive antics of a pair of zebras, on a farm five kilometers northwest of the Peynado Bridge.

No statement of the cavalry's doings in the Dominican Republic would be complete without special mention of the outstanding support rendered by the field train. Installed on a field where softball and water polo

matches succeeded each other at one-hour intervals, they slogged their way through support operations in high spirits, keeping the weapons, radios, vehicles, and aircraft in service; and pushing the food, ammunition, and supplies forward unfailingly.

We are proud in the 17th Cavalry; proud of the comradeship that unites us in danger bravely faced and proud of our part in the operations in the Dominican Republic as a part of the All American Division.