

by beverly deepe

saigon .- the toll of military and civilian reporters and photographers covering the vietnamese war is inexorably rising.

the latest count : ten killed.

four of these were american citizens, one a singapore citizen of indian extraction, one a vietnamese working for the associated press, one a military photographer with the 25th division, and three vietnamese reporters working for local newspapers.

only one of these , u.s. freelancer jerry rose, was killed in what could have been an accident. the air vietnam civilian plane he was riding crashed.

the rest died violently on the battlefield.

the latest to die was charlie chellappah, 26, a freelance singapore photographer who had done previous string work for the associated press in malaysia.

chellappah was hit in the head with a heavy caliber bullet february 14 as he moved with a squad from the 27th wolfhounds regiment outside cu chi. (NORTHWEST OF SAIGON) in his short time in viet nam,

chellappah had taken some distinguished pictures.

he died instantly alongside a private from the 25th division's press information office. earlier that same day, associated press correspondent john wheeler was hit with grenade fragments as he moved up with a squad.

wheeler has his arm in a bandage, but is otherwise okay.
more deepe

saigon -- first add newsman's toll xxx okay.

newsmen have taken more casualties around cu chi in the past two weeks than any other one place in the country. bob jones from the honolulu advertiser was hit with mortar fragments february 10 near cu chi. five soldiers ~~near~~ him were killed, six others stretcher cases.

jones was the only one who walked away, but he had two fingers broken and shrapnel in his back. he says most of the ~~shrapnel~~ ^(METAL) has already been dug out.

the same mortar blast ^(THAT DAY) killed specialist fourth class kermit h. yoho, from moundville, west virginia, a 21 year old photographer for the 25th division. he was killed just one week before he was due to return to the united states for his discharge, and a job with a newspaper.

the toll of newsmen and photographers wounded has now reached more than thirty. it is expected to go higher. On one day alone last week, two CBS cameramen were wounded--one Vietnamese and one Thai. more newsmen than ever are going out to units in the field,

accompanying them on dangerous operations to get the feel and temper of the war that is unobtainable in saigon.

the soldiers are happy to have them along.

"this way, the folks back at home really know what we are doing and the frustrations we are going through over here," one first division lieutenant commented to a reporter the other day.

the soldiers also have a lot of respect for the newsmen who got out day after day with them. more deaps

saigon --- second add newsmen's toll xxx with them.

a special ~~forces sergeant~~ ^{who served in viet nam} wrote to one newsmen recently:
"we all heard how much the late ernie pyle was loved by the troops
in world war two. now I know why.

"I have seen newsmen out at my camp time after time when there
were a million others places better to be, they were sharing
our dangers and our fear.

"I respect them/and love them." endit deepe