

THE FALCON



"ABOVE I CORPS"

VOL. I No. 11

16TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP, DANANG, RVN

15 NOVEMBER 1968

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

SAIGON (ABC) The South Vietnamese government has ordered one of Saigon's three English language newspapers to suspend publication for three months. A government official said the Saigon Daily News had failed to uphold the national cause....the government has taken action against more than ten publications in recent months.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (VOA) Officials in Washington today say there is proof that the North Vietnamese have used the Demilitarized Zone at least seven times since the first of the month for the transportation of trucks and guns, engaging United States forces in the area. Spokesmen for the State Department said the United States does not believe there can be serious talks if the infiltration of the DMZ continues.

BRUSSELS (VOA) Foreign and defense ministers opened a meeting today to discuss possible changes in NATO policies as a result of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The ministers are reported to be concerned over the Russian statement citing they have the right to interfere with other countries to protect the communist system.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA (VOA) The Communist Party Central Committee opened a meeting in Prague today. Reports say the committee may make changes in some of Czechoslovakia's new liberal programs.

NEW YORK (VOA) The United Nations is continuing the debate to give the UN seat of the Republic of China to Communist China. Representatives of France and the Soviet Union spoke in support of the resolution yesterday but representatives of four other countries opposed it. New Zealand's representative said that giving the seat to Communist China may result in a major war.

ITALY (VOA) As many as 12 million workers have joined in a nationwide 24-hour strike. The strike is being supported by the three major organizations of workers in Italy. The striking workers are demanding improved social conditions for older people who are no longer working. Another strike is planned for next Tuesday.

COMBAT NEWS

"Alley Cat" gunships of the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company were scrambled this week to take in an unusual assault for Army personnel, combined forces operation.

A light fire team, led by Captain Robert Owsley, was given the mission of covering a combat assault by marines, but the unusual part of the mission was that the assault was to begin from the U.S.S. Tripoli, a Navy helicopter tender stationed in the South China Sea near Danang.

As the gunships approached the Tripoli to land, pilot 1Lt. Terry Davis gave landing instructions, "Land to the port side of the bow, wind up the deck." This of course, was Greek to the land based Army Aviators, so after a brief explanation, the landing site was determined.

Lt. Davis related, "When we landed, I held fast onto the controls for with the ship rocking, it felt like we were going to slide right off the deck." They didn't, however, and the lift soon began.

About 500 marines were transported in CH-46 "Sea Knight" helicopters and escorted by 282d ABG "Alleycats" into landing zones on an island near Hoi An, about 20 miles south of Danang. Later the "Alleycats" escorted the marines out after the one day operation was completed. The operation was routine, for most involved, but it was indeed a unique day for the Army crews that participated.

Last week helicopters of the 174th Assault Helicopter Co., 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, flew two combat assaults, both led by 1st Lt. Thomas W. Larkin, Towanda Ill., in support of the 3rd Battalion 1st Infantry and the 1st Battalion 20th Infantry, both of the 11th Light Infantry Brigade.

While flying a visual recon mission "Shark 060," a UH-1 gunship commanded by WO1 Robert Thomas, Birmingham, Ala., reported six enemy killed in an area northwest of Duc Pho. The well armed "Shark" spotted two of the enemy hiding in some undergrowth and made contact with them killing both.

On returning to the area, four more enemy were engaged and consequently killed. All of the enemy had full field gear, including green uniforms and steel helmets, and the ground unit operating in the area reported discovering a number of bicycles loaded with packs and an assortment of equipment.

In other action "Dolphin 519," commanded by WO1 John O'Sullivan, Brooklyn N.Y. reported receiving intense enemy sniper fire while flying a command and control mission for the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry, 11th Light Infantry Brigade. WO O'Sullivan, also reported sighting numerous concrete reinforced bunkers surrounded by freshly dug trenches and encircled by barbed wire, but no enemy troops were observed in the area.

THE FALCON

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ON ROUTINE

(From 14th CAB Daily Summary) CHU LAI

"If you're a housewife in Iowa, or a cook in Germany, it may mean getting through another day, but if you're an aviation company in Vietnam it has another, different, meaning. Routine action means doing things to hold and improve your situation, expenditure of equipment, materials, and especially human energy and emotion. By not dropping their guard, by performing their job correctly and efficiently, the "Kattlers" and "Firebirds" and all their ground support activities of the 71st Assault Helicopter company completed another day of "routine action."

A NEW FRONT

(178th ASHC-10)

The paradox in Vietnam is that to win the war, we must first win the peace. The peace can be won only at the, "rice fields," among the rural people in the small hamlets of South Vietnam.

The 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company is proving that we are winning this peace by means of an "unknown and practically unknown program of agricultural assistance."

The big news of the war's turning tide is not only on the battlefield, but in American-Vietnamese cooperative programs. For three months, the men of the 178th ASHC "Boxcars" have been supporting the, "Chargers" of the 190th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division, in a tremendous rice harvesting effort in cooperation with the South Vietnamese Allies.

The program, sponsored by the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, is part of the Que Son District's agricultural program to harvest rice from formerly dangerous and inaccessible areas.

On October 30th, Aircraft Commander CW2 Lige Tillman, Tampa, Fla., pilot WO1 Norman Morin, Hagerstown, Md., SP5 John LeCates, flight engineer, Delmar Del., crew chief SP5 Joseph Kendra, and Gunner SP4 Reinaldo Hernandez, Cleveland, Ohio boarded "Boxcar 462" and in the course of their mission, set a new milestone in Allied assistance programs.

After months of intense work, "Boxcar 462" gently hoisted the 1,000,000th pound of rice from the rain-filled rice patties of Que Son District.

Rice, the staple crop of the Vietnamese diet, is indispensable to the rural people of Vietnam, and they store it in caches, and draw upon the reserves during the long monsoon season.

By nature, rice is easily transported, stored and hidden, and essential to the enemy who stores it along supply trails to support major military offensives. The enemy's area of operation is limited by the size and location of these caches, and rice becomes a precious war commodity, without it, the enemy's ability to fight for sustained periods is hampered.

In former years, "Charlie," waited in ambush and confiscated the rice as laborers transported it from fields to villages.

The versatile "Boxcar" cargo helicopters however, with ground support

from the "Chargers," are able to transport the rice high above the enemy's grasp.

In the long run, cultural assistance programs may be the determining factor in a free Vietnam.

Although they don't make flashy headlines today, the cumulative efforts of units such as the 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company, and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, will create the headlines of tomorrow.

282d Change of Command

On 10 November 1968 change of command ceremonies were held at the Marble Mountain Air Facility, home of the 282d Assault Helicopter Company, where the company guidon was passed from outgoing commander Major Ralph V. Moffett to the new 'Black Cat Six', Major Valentino Panzitta.

Presiding at the ceremonies were Colonel William C. Tyrrell, Commanding Officer, 16th Combat Aviation Group and Lieutenant Colonel Bernard W. Bruns, Commanding Officer, 212th Combat Support Aviation Battalion.

Major Panzitta of Chattanooga, Tenn., comes to the 282d Assault Helicopter Company from Headquarters, 16th Combat Aviation Group where he served as assistant operations officer for the past six months.

Major Moffett will move to Headquarters, 212th Combat Support Aviation Battalion and will serve the remainder of his tour as the battalion operations officer.

NEW OFFICER'S CLUB

Colonel William C. Tyrrell, Commanding Officer, 16th Combat Aviation Group, and Lieutenant Colonel Bernard W. Bruns, Commanding Officer, 212th Combat Support Aviation Battalion, jointly participated in ground breaking ceremonies for a new Marble Mountain Officer's Club.

The present club, formerly the 282d AHC Club, strained to serve 16th CAG.

The new officer's club, will provide facilities for more than 200 men and will include an 18 by 12 foot raised stage for entertainers, inside latrine facilities, and imported rattan furniture.

Under supervision of Major W. White, safety officer, 212th CSAB, the opening day ceremonies are planned for Christmas Day, 1968.

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"PATCHES" GETS REVENGE

(132nd ASHC-IO) CHU LAI, RVN

Since the mighty "Guns-A-Go-Go," the heavily armed CH-47 left the fighting in Vietnam, CH-47 Chinooks rarely produce enemy KIA's.

Under fire, Chinook pilots must act with consideration for the many troops in their compartment, or for the vital and unwieldy cargo slung beneath their aircraft. In such a situation, discretion is indeed the better part of valor, and the Chinook aviators must "beat the scene," often before the source of fire is identified and the fire is returned.

These tactics save many lives and much equipment, but create just a little frustration for the CH-47 crews who must passively sustain combat damage to their aircraft.

One "Hercules" crew of the 132nd Assault Support Helicopter Company has been endowed with quite a bit of such frustration, and after sustaining 32 hits in less than six months of combat duty the crew appropriately renamed their ship "Patches."

Last week however, "Patches" got some revenge when monsoon weather forced pilots CW2 Jeffrey Van Roppe, Columbus, Ga., and CW2 William Gates of Houston, Tex., to fly the ship briefly at 100 feet above the ground.

Predictably, "Patches" came under fire but this time the pilots and flight engineer, SP6 Herbert C. Kukuk of Toledo, Ohio, saw the VC soldier firing from a rice paddy. With the aircraft commander's instant permission, SP6 Kukuk quickly bagged one enemy KIA with the M-60 mounted in the door of the aircraft.

So ended a story that was most welcome to all the "Hercules" crews of the 132nd ASHC, and particularly to the crew of "Patches."

(14th CAB-IO) CHU LAI, RVN

During Oct. 24, 1968, a "Hercules" CH47B helicopter and crew from the 132 Assault Support Helicopter Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, stationed in Chu Lai, delivered a bulldozer to a remote village in Thailand.

After a long and tedious journey, the bulldozer was delivered and the crew was personally thanked by King Bhumipol Adulyadej of Thailand.

In a letter to the Commanding Gen-

CANT GET ENOUGH

(21st RAC-IO) CHU LAI, RVN

The pilots and men of the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company just can't seem to get enough flying during a normal workday. When they aren't working with or in a real airplane, they are working on one of more of the scale models that are being constructed in the company area.

Probably the most experienced model builder in the company is Sergeant Gary E. Teeter, a member of the crash and rescue squad at Chu Lai Airfield.

SGT Teeter, 29, of Richland, Washington, has been building model aircraft for many years and his inventory includes gliders, powered free-flight, control line and electronic remote control models.

He considers among his greatest accomplishments the construction of a remote-control twin-engine jet fighter with a wingspan in excess of six feet.

At one time there were as many as 15 models either completed or under construction within the company. They included all types and models from the pre-World War I era up to and including an exact replica of the O-1G "Birddog" presently being flown by the pilots of the 21st RAC.

Not all the models have been of aircraft—one pilot has constructed an operating scale model of a competition race car and several others were under construction.

If you are ever landing at Chu Lai late some afternoon and you see a small aircraft that seems to be out of the normal traffic pattern, have no fear, it is probably the 21st RAC test flying a new model.

ROYAL BULLDOZER HAULER

eral, 1st Aviation Brigade, General Creighton W. Abrams, Commander, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, commended the "Hercules" crew, CW3 Billy Stafford, Columbus, Ga., CW4 Robert Merkle, Columbus, Ga., SSG Kenneth Kinjin, Sanger, Calif., SP5 Michael Bourque, Berwick, Me., SP5 James Deming Birmingham, Ala., SP4 Thomas Grillo, Fairlawn, N.J., on behalf of the American Ambassador to Thailand, Leonard Unger, for their "support and contribution to practical diplomacy."

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MR. TRUCHON'S CA

(176th AHC-10) CHY LAI, RVN

November 2nd was a fitting day to climax the Army career of Chief Warrant Officer Three Michael Truchon of the 176th Assault Helicopter Company's "Minutemen" stationed at Chu Lai, RVN.

CW3 Truchon goes home in December to retire with twenty years in the Army, nine spent as an enlisted man.

During his career he had two tours in Europe, one in Japan, and was an infantryman with the 1st Cavalry Division during the first beach landing in the Korean Conflict.

On his first tour in the Republic of Vietnam, June 1965 through May 1966 he was assigned to the 120th Aviation Company "Deans" at Tan Son Nhut Air Base near Saigon and while there participated in numerous combat assaults and eagle flights in support of the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

When the 120th went to VIP support, CW3 Truchon volunteered for maintenance "So I could stay busy," he said. Some hard work at on-the-job training, and his military occupation specialty was changed to maintenance officer.

Now on his second Vietnam tour with only 29 days left, this former tactics instructor at Ft. Rucker, Ala., volunteered to go on a "hot" combat assault west of Quang Ngai.

CW3 Truchon was on the "Blacksmith" maintenance ship and had been sent to the Quang Ngai Airstrip as a standby recovery aircraft during a large combat assault involving more than 20 lift ships.

When one of the ships had to shut down for a maintenance inspection, and another had battle damage, CW3 Truchon volunteered to take their place. He took part in seven lifts and received heavy small arms fire, but took no hits as he was flying right behind an aircraft in which both pilots were wounded.

"It was just like old times with the 120th," he said smiling.

On retiring Mr. Truchon plans to complete a course in hotel management and settle down in New England to take up a new profession. With the drive and determination Mr. Truchon has shown for the last twenty years, the hotel business can expect some stiff competition in its ranks over the next twenty years!

VETERAN'S DAY MESSAGE

A message from COMUS MACV commemorating Veterans' Day disseminated to all commanders in Vietnam, was received too late for publication prior to the holiday, November 11th.

Its timeliness remains intact, however, in reminding men of the U.S. Armed Forces in Vietnam of the gains and goals they are achieving.

"Within" the week, on November 11th we will commemorate another Veterans Day, giving thought as we fight here to those Americans who have served before us in defense of the freedoms we prize so highly during the past months, you have added a worthy chapter to that history. Together with our allies, we have come a long way toward restoring peace and security to this country. The enemy has met with nothing but defeat throughout South Vietnam. His major units have suffered massive losses. A large proportion of them have retreated to border areas or completely out of the country. The military successes and demonstrated effectiveness of Vietnamese and allied forces, together with our own, have brought us now to a dominant position of strength and of confidence for the future.

With the continuing defeat of the enemy's main forces, the opportunity now opens wider to destroy his local forces, guerrillas and infrastructure, and progressively eliminate his remaining capability to threaten the security of South Vietnam. At the same time, we must continue to provide assistance to the program of the government of South Vietnam to provide its people a secure and productive future. The enemy is hard pressed on all fronts and must so remain.

Ambassador Bunker clearly stated our Government's policy on November 5th when he said: "As we work in close and friendly relations with our Vietnamese allies, I ask each of you to be understanding of their concerns. Our support of the people of South Vietnam and our common determination, has gained for them many military successes and major advances in bettering their life. Each of us must continue to work in that same spirit until the goal of peace for this war-ravaged land is reached. Our goal remains unchanged—an honorable and just peace in which free Vietnamese people can live and prosper."