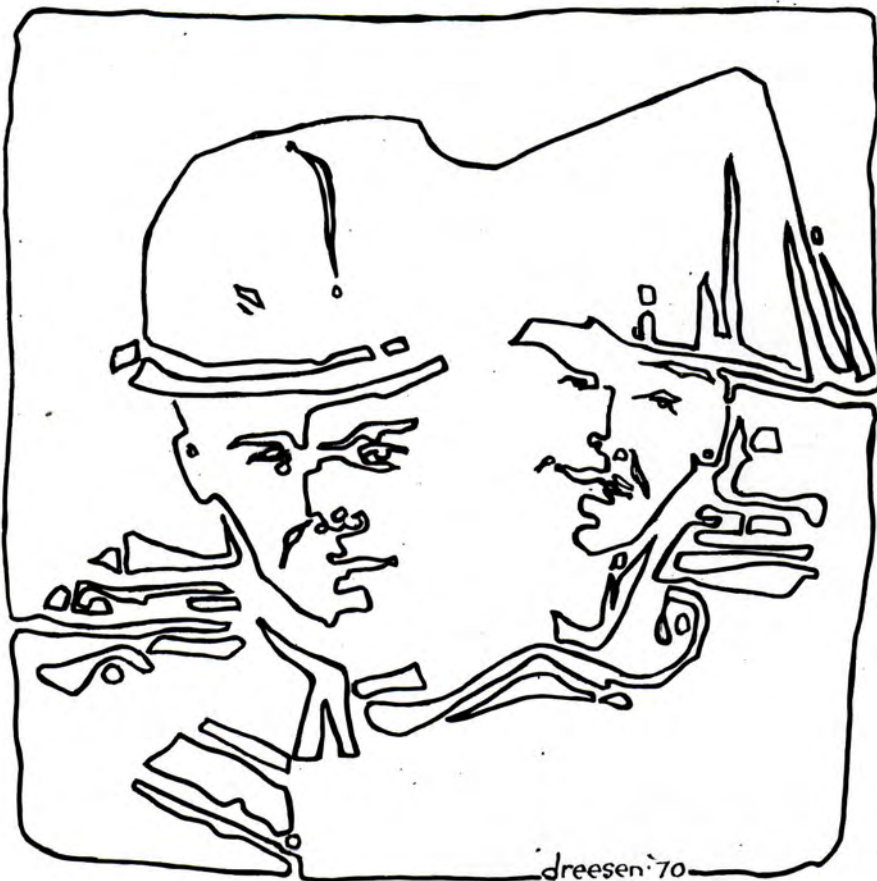


# AMERICAL



APRIL, 1970



Dreesen

From

## "The Nine Dragons Hymn"

*From two Oceans how many indomitable seafarers  
Dropped their oars and help build the Nation...  
The human flood and the water flood, two streams  
From two directions, coming to meet  
Mixes the cream of Western and Eastern civilizations*

*By Nghiêm Xuân Việt*

*translated from the Vietnamese by Moxie Craus*



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# AMERICAL

*The Quarterly Magazine of the Americal Division, Vietnam*

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### The Cover

Pacification is people helping people, whether treating the needy on a MEDCAP, or simply smiling at a passing Vietnamese. (Painting by SP4 Thomas H. Dreesen, 11th Inf. Bde.)



# AMERICAL LOG

## A QUARTERLY RECAP OF MAJOR ACTION

Combat activity during the quarter of December, January, and February was characterized by small to moderate sized unit contacts. Major company and battalion sized engagements were centered around the Tam Ky area.

Americal troops killed more than 1,500 enemy soldiers; captured 244 weapons, 25 crew-served; and destroyed or evacuated more than 22,000 pounds of the enemy's food staple—rice.

A temporary halt in the December monsoon weather allowed allied forces to bring full air and ground power

to bear on the few enemy strongholds left in southern I Corps.

The beginning of the New Year saw action flare throughout the Americal AO. In three separate actions soldiers of the 196th Brigade along with members of 1st/1st Cav. and F Trp., 17th Cav. combined for a total of 350 enemy soldiers killed in action and two large weapons caches confiscated.

In February, light to moderate action prevailed, with the enemy activity waning as the Americal forces pushed deep into the enemy entrenchments.

By SP4 HARRY BAUMANN

### DECEMBER

As the forboding monsoon weather clouds finally began to clear, the ever-ominous war clouds filled the skies of southern I Corps as Americal air and ground units put the pressure on enemy operations, killing more than 400 enemy soldiers during the month of December.

In action 6 miles southeast of Tam Ky elements of D Trp., 1-1 Cav. engaged an estimated force of 50 VC. In the heavy fighting that followed the troopers killed 12 of the enemy soldiers.

On December 3, B Co., 1-52 Inf. proved to be stunning hosts when their firebase, LZ Stinson, had some unexpected visitors. The visitors, an estimated unit of 20 NVA sappers, were repelled by the infantrymen.

On December 16, fighting was touched off in the 196th Brigade AO when LOH from D Trp. 1-1 Cav. drew sniper fire while flying over the jungle in northeast Quang Tien Province. Gunships and ACAVs from D and C Trp. were called in to assault the heavily-entrenched enemy positions.

"After receiving the go ahead we started approaching the area and moved toward the enemy," said CPT David L. Miller (Blossvale, N.Y.), C Trp. commander. "We caught them by surprise when we came in from behind," explained CPT Miller.

The action ended with 34 enemy kills credited to D Trp. and 18 for C Trp.

Action remained relatively calm during the 3rd week of December until the 21st when members of B Co., 1-52 Inf. engaged an enemy force





southwest of Quang Ngai City. The encounter left 12 enemy killed.

All was not quiet the day before Christmas as "Professionals" of 1-46 Inf. and supporting elements engaged and killed more than 20 enemy soldiers in heavy fighting south of LZ Professional.

December ended with light and scattered action prevailing over most of southern I Corps as 1969 finally hobbled out after a long, hard 365.

## JANUARY

On January 4th Americal troops of B Co., 4-3 Inf. fought off an enemy mortar and sapper attack against their night defensive position. The infantrymen withstood the intense mortar barrage and ground attack and killed 29 of the insurgents.

A Trp., 1-1 Cav. combined with the 15th Regular Force Group to defeat

an estimated two companies of VC. A Trp. working in an area three miles west of Tam Ky killed 43 of the enemy in the engagement.

Contact was maintained through the next day as elements of F Trp., 17th Cav. and D Co., 3-21 Inf. operating northwest of Tam Ky accounted for 39 NVA kills and confiscated a large weapons cache.

Action erupted when, (the NVA) "started firing automatic weapons and RPG rounds at us," explained SSG Tony Alfieri (Jamaica, N.Y.). The Americal soldiers hit back hard with machinegun and automatic weapons fire.

"After a while they were pretty well in a hurt," said SSG Eugene Hodges, a tank commander from F Trp., 17th Cav. Armor and infantry moved side-by-side crushing the enemy as they assaulted the woodline.

A search of the area produced four RPG's with launchers, two machineguns, one 6mm mortar, and 16 AK-47 rifles in addition to the 39 enemy deaths.

Fierce action was reported in the 196th AO once again on January 13-14.

A task force, consisting of A and B Trp., 1-1 Cav. and a platoon of each of D Co., 1-46 Inf. and Co., 2-1 Inf., overran the enemy positions resulting in 40 enemy killed and a large quantity of munitions confiscated.

196th Brigade soldiers found themselves in the thick of it the next day as they recorded a total of 62 NVA soldiers killed in action in the "Pineapple Forest" area near Tam Ky.



Sporadic contact continued in southern I Corps during mid-January with the only major contacts centering around Tam Ky and Duc Pho.

"We received small arms fire while inserting an infantry element," recalled WO1 Richard Hughes (Atlanta, Ga.), pilot of a 123rd Avn. gunship. "We maneuvered to the location of fire and engaged an enemy force with machinegun fire."

This sequence of events led to the deaths of seven NVA.

## FEBRUARY

The first three days of February saw elements of 1-46 Inf., in constant contact with enemy forces south of Tam Ky. During the action the "Professionals" were credited with more than 40 enemy kills.

The remaining days of February produced a steady decrease in enemy activity.

During the second week of February, enemy activity was on the decrease as Americal units reported extremely light activity partially due to the TET cease-fire.

February 6, the TET Lunar Holiday, brought about the deaths of 17 enemy soldiers in scattered and unrelated actions throughout the southern I Corps area.

A recap of activity during the month of February showed more than 300 enemy soldiers killed in action and more than 60 weapons captured. 🇺🇸

**AMERICAL  
LOG**

# *"Helix Is Watching"*

By SP4 JAMES MAJERUS

A distant drone grows louder and suddenly a small, strange looking craft begins to circle a densely vegetated hill. The twin-engined, high tailed OV10A Bronco swoops and banks gracefully through the air. "Helix" is watching.

The Forward Air Controller (FAC) skillfully guides his Bronco as it darts and glides among the clouds that cover and sometimes conceal the higher hills. He searches carefully for signs of enemy activity. Disturbed vegetation, even the bare earth sometimes betrays the presence of the enemy below.

A target is spotted and the call goes in for an air strike. While the Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) secures Air Force, Marine, or Navy fighter-bombers for the mission, the "Helix" pilot is busy getting the necessary clearances for the mission.

After the clearances are granted, the Bronco sweeps in to mark the target with smoke and then makes way for the jets' slashing passes. After each bombing pass, the FAC guides his craft over the target area to assess the damage. The graceful, thundering rhythm of alternating passes continues until the FAC calls a halt, the target having been destroyed.

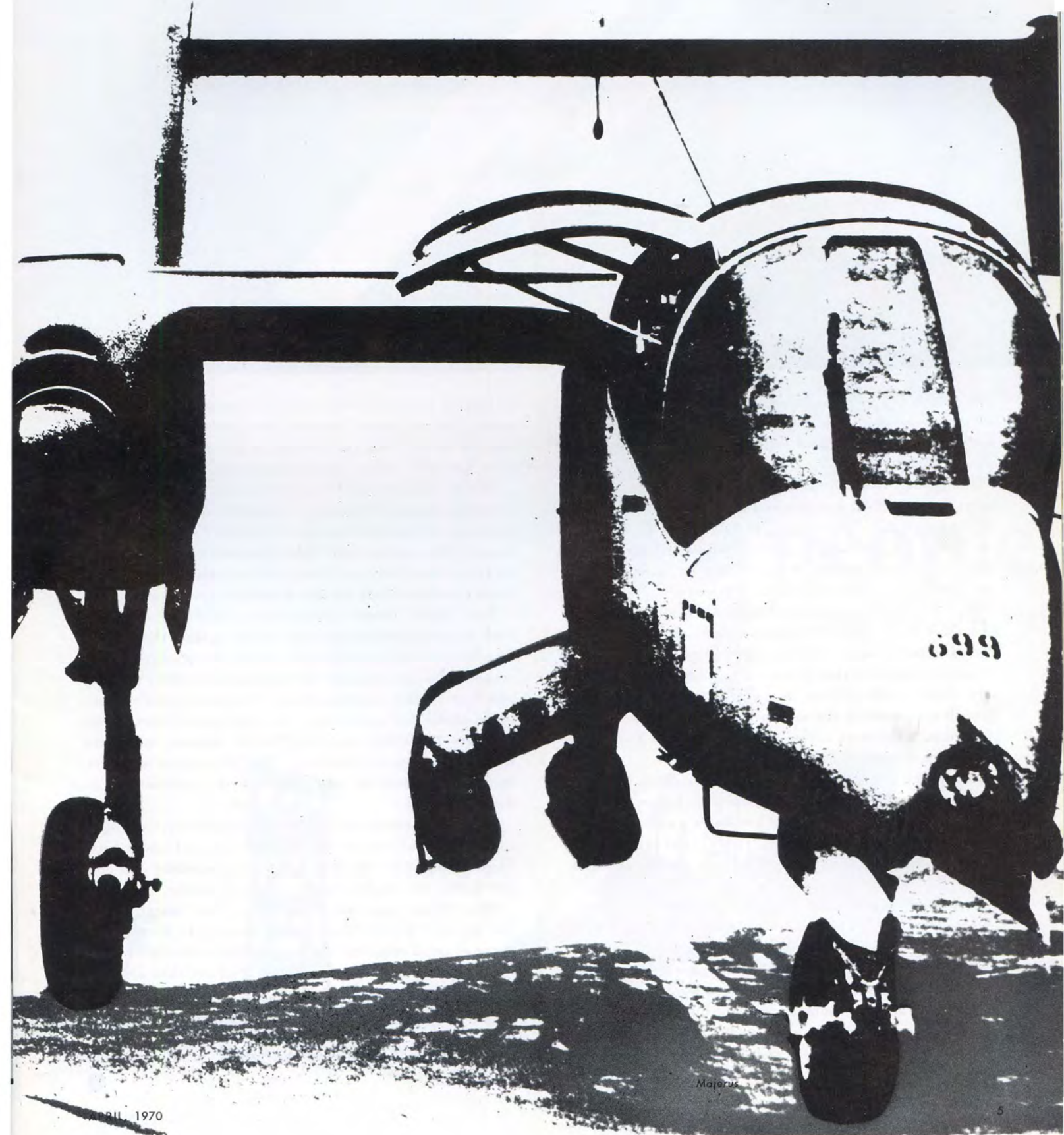
The mission completed, "Helix" slips off to search out another target.

Shortly before his air time is up, the FAC is joined by another member of his team. Both Broncos circle the area for a few minutes, then, the situation explained, the fuel-hungry Bronco heads home.

The Chu Lai airstrip eases into sight and the "Helix" circles it like a locust seeking a blade of grass. A swift powerful passage down the runway leads to the certain security of the steel-walled nest.

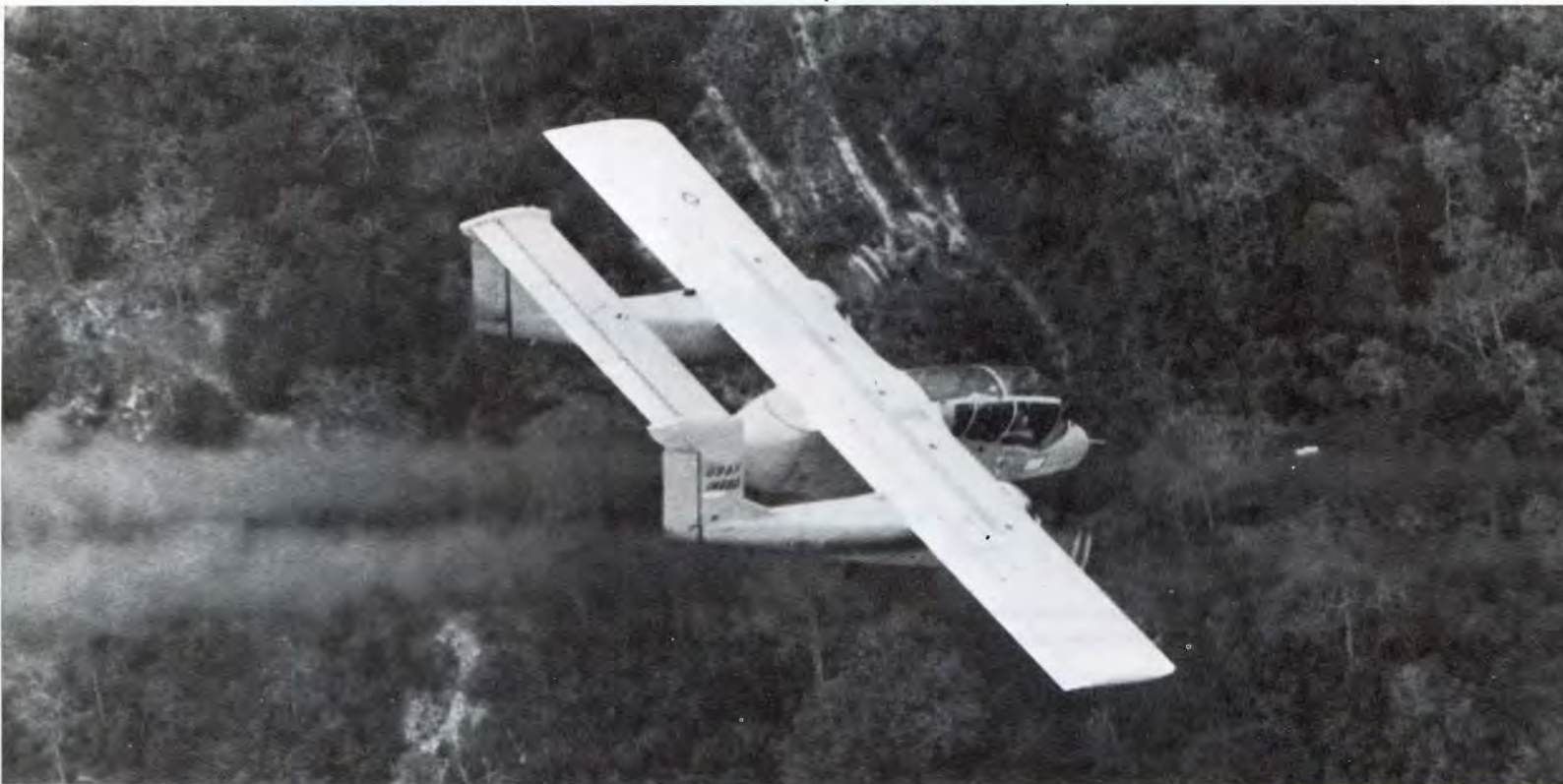
But the security will not last long, for the hardworked Bronco will fly up to three missions in one day. The strain of lifting the heavy, metal monster away from the clutching earth and into the heady atmosphere takes its toll among the 12 OV10As assigned to the Chu Lai Forward Operating Location (FOL) of the 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron (TASS). Engines must be changed after 1,500 hours of operating time and repairs must be made on the myriads of little things that go awry on all mechanical creatures.

The normal daily schedule of 15-18 flights would give each craft three flights every two days were it not for the repairs that may ground up to three Broncos at one time.



699

Majerus



USAF

The 16 enlisted men stationed at the Chu Lai FOL, 11 of whom are assigned the maintenance task, put their skill and energy to the task of supporting the 25 pilots they serve with.

Each pilot flies approximately 70 hours per month, averaging one flight per day and controlling one bombing mission each day. "However," as CPT Barry G. Flanary, the 198th Brigade Air Liaison Officer (ALO) pointed out, "a pilot may control four bombing missions one day and none for the next four or five days."

The "Helix" pilot's primary function is to direct tactical air strikes, but he must frequently employ alternate means of destroying a target. When fog and rain close in and reduce the visibility that is so vital to air strikes, the FAC may utilize artillery from any of the nearby fire bases. His job is essentially the same with artillery as it is with air strikes. He must adjust the fire and then assess the damage to the target.

In addition to directing air strikes and artillery, the FAC must be prepared to work as a team with helicopter gunships, locating their targets and keeping a watchful eye on their activities. Occasionally "Helix" has even been given the task of reconnoitering a route for the earth-bound infantry.

In dealing with tactical air strikes, the FAC must concern himself with three different types of missions. Pre-planned missions are strikes against targets that have been determined some time previous to the pilot's flight time. The clearances for the target, usually a bunker or tunnel complex, are almost automatic, and the bomb-laden planes can be scheduled to arrive at a specific time.

Immediate missions result when an enemy troop target

is sighted or an infantry unit in contact requests an air strike. Making certain that he knows and communicates to the rest of his team the location of all "friendlies" in the area, the FAC calls in for clearances and strike craft.

Divert Air, the third type of mission, occurs when an air strike planned for a target in another division's area of operation is cancelled because of weather or other conditions. The aircraft are then directed to an Americal location where they may drop their ordnance on suspected enemy positions that did not warrant a special mission.

But "Helix" doesn't always have to wait for other aircraft to arrive before initiating action against the enemy. The Broncos are armed with 14 white phosphorous smoke rockets, the same number of high explosive (HE) rockets, and four 7.62mm machineguns. The pilots seem enthusiastic about the armament. It gives them more of an offensive capability and they can be of more immediate use in an emergency situation. The HE rockets were first installed and used in July, 1969 and the machineguns in January, 1970.

During his scheduled two and one-half hours of flight time, each FAC covers one brigade's area of operations. Flights start with the first light in the morning and end just before the stealthy night asserts its power.

But "Helix" goes neither unnoticed nor unscathed by the enemy. Even though pilots attempt to stay out of range of small arms fire, the Broncos have taken a few hits. "As the tempo of the war goes up, we get shot at more often," CPT Flanary observed.

But in spite of the danger and the frequently inclement weather, the OV10A continues to survey the land and monitor the enemy's movements. "Helix" is still watching.



AMERICAL

Night falls quickly in Vietnam, more quickly than in the United States because southern I Corps tactical zone is closer to the equator than even the southern-most point of the Florida Keys.

In Chu Lai, near the 16th parallel, night changes the face of a military city.

For the night people, work begins at sundown and ends sometime around dawn. The jobs they do are as varied as those of their daytime counterparts. Security, tactical operations control, intelligence operations and support activities must be operating twenty-four hours a day.

Out in the field, combat soldiers operate around the clock, whether they're on a night operation, resting in a night laager, or pulling security duty at a fire support base. There can be no lag in the support they receive from the rear. Activity cannot stop at dusk.

The security of Chu Lai is the responsibility of the Chu Lai Defense Command (CLDC). In the operations bunker of the CLDC, nighttime brings a change in the tasks of the assigned officers and men.

Once the sun drops below the inland hills, every bunker must be manned by alert personnel. Reaction forces must be ready to take up positions on the perimeter on short notice.

LTC Thomas A. Breen, deputy commander of CLDC, puts in a long work day to make sure the bunker line is ready for the men who guard it each night.

"The individual on duty in the bunker is the keystone of the entire operation," stated LTC Breen. He explained that the most effective defense can be provided only when men take their jobs seriously and report what they see and hear to the man in charge of their sector of the perimeter.

# the night people

By SP4 WILLIAM HAYES



Gray



Robison

Flare-carrying helicopters patrol the perimeter, often dropping flares at irregular intervals all around the base. If the situation requires it, CLDC can dispatch additional flare ships to illuminate any part of the perimeter where enemy activity is suspected.

As the men on bunker guard keep the base secure, the men on duty within the perimeter focus their attention on tactical operations, intelligence and support activity.

In the division headquarters area, within the security fence and past the armed guard, lies the Division Tactical Operations Center (DTOC). The tactical operations of all elements in the division are monitored constantly and plotted on the situation maps which are continually updated.

A short distance from the DTOC, the intelligence section's lights illuminate the area around the building as men inside continue working through the night compiling the daily intelligence summary. The summary provides an analysis of enemy activity in the area, and how friendly forces are being deployed to counteract efforts of the NVA and local VC groups.

One of the sections providing intelligence information is the Target Missions Force (TMF). In their bunker, the men of TMF monitor radio equipment, keeping track of enemy unit movement near several strategic locations.

Enemy activity is reported to the TMF section and plotted on an illuminated situation map. The reports are then correlated and assembled into a single report for a specific time period and passed on to division intelligence and operations personnel.

Once enemy forces have been located, it is the job of ground and air combat personnel to bring fire to bear on the enemy. The night is no longer an effective screen behind which the enemy can hide.

Depending upon the level of activity in southern I Corps, the number of tactical air strikes launched from Chu Lai each night varies. When the need arises, aircraft can be sent screaming down the runway at an amazing rate. Once clear of the runway the pilots rein their



Kondor

quickly-accelerating craft around and streak toward their target areas.

In their operations center, the men who fly and maintain contact with Forward Air Controller (FAC) missions are ready to respond when they are needed.

The Air Force aviators, who perform the FAC missions, do fly at night, though the extent of their night flying depends greatly on the level of activity in the division area of operations.

LTC Lowell R. Edwards, air liaison officer for the division, explained how they adapt, "Our night operations are geared primarily for the defensive posture of firebases and night encampments."

The night sky over Chu Lai is alive with more than just the howl of jets. Army aviation units also send their helicopters on night missions, ranging from flare drops to

dustoffs. Invisible rotors spin on invisible axes passing through invisible aircraft, concealed by the darkness. And the beating of metal wings throbs on, testimony to the active role rotary-wing aircraft play in Vietnam.

One of the tactical elements based at Chu Lai is the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry. In the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) men are on duty all night, monitoring radio frequencies linking the 1st/1st with its subordinate units and higher headquarters.

SSG Philip Sternberg, TOC NCO for the unit, knows that the persons on duty at night have something in common, in addition to being soldiers.


"It takes a special breed of man," he said. "They must have a degree of patience to overcome any frustration in connection with the job, and must have reached a level of professionalism."



Majorus

It takes a myriad of materials and supplies to keep a division operational and most of the incoming material arrives by ship, making large scale docking and cargo handling facilities necessary. The Naval Support Activities Detachment at Chu Lai provides docking facilities, a sand ramp for off-loading of the large LSTs, and storage for perishable foods and materials. The facility also handles combat-related gear like munitions and military equipment.

In addition to providing this service, the Navy is also responsible for harbor security. Patrol boats working with the Vietnamese National Police make sure Vietnamese water traffic does not become a screen for enemy activity.

The units of the Americal Division and their support elements continue their round-the-clock operations seven days a week, making Chu Lai a city that never sleeps. While many of the persons in southern I Corps are asleep, the night people of Chu Lai put in a hard day's night beneath the stars that form the Southern Cross. 



Kondor

# Do

not look for frills on a firebase. Every line is functional, each sandbag and wisp of wire is right where it is for a reason, and the overall impression is one of strength and security.

Strategically scattered throughout Quang Ngai Province, at the southern tip of I Corps, the forward firebases of the 11th Infantry Brigade survey some of the most topographically diverse terrain in Vietnam. Here the sandy beaches of the South China Sea gently give way to coastal lakes and soggy rice paddies, stopping abruptly in the shadow of a rugged mountain range. These mountains are an infantryman's nightmare; steep, and covered by triple-canopy jungle dense enough to obscure the summer sun.

In tactical parlance, a "firebase" is a position serving as a base of operations for a combat mission, having the organic artillery capability to support that mission. It may be a semi-permanent position, as in the case of a battalion-size firebase, or spring-up one night and be gone the next, its mission complete.

The big guns rule there: the constant rumbling, the bone-shaking concussion, the fiery flash, and the stinging odor of consumed powder. You learn to live with the "King of Battle": mortars, howitzers, the big "8-inchers", and the giant "175s". They lull you to sleep at night and wake you at dawn.

What of the men who make this montage of sandbags, wire, and artillery a living, breathing thing? They are the heart of a firebase: sweaty palms loading the big guns, steady hands pulling the lanyards, watchful eyes that can draw a deadly bead on the enemy or moisten unashamed with the strains of "Silent Night" on Christmas Eve.

When the monsoon mist settles just below Firebase San Juan Hill's 1,250 foot summit, the firebase looms like an island in a white sea. Located 11 miles west of Duc Pho, it is the home of the 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. "Old Guard".

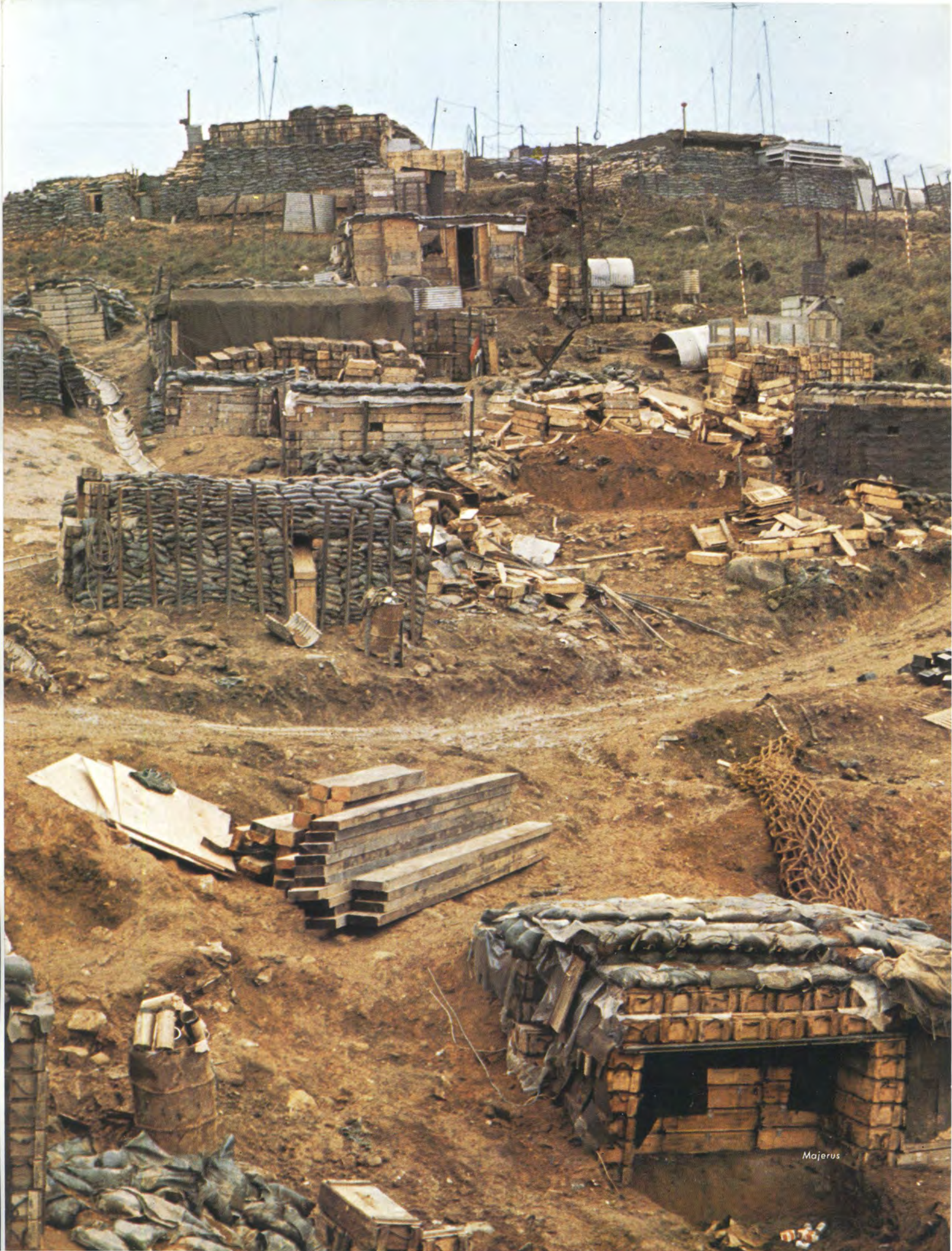
The base is situated on a saddle in the heart of the Ba To mountain district, and overlooks lush jungle valleys. Says SP4 John Rumsey, "For us, San Juan Hill is more than just a headquarters—it's a fortress, a symbol of security and military might. After you've been here a while, it grows on you. You feel like it's your mountain, and you'll fight for it."

PFC Charles Smith points out the necessity for teamwork on this isolated firebase: "You find very little friction among the men here. The other guy depends on you, and you on him."

"Luxury" items such as showers, hot food and electricity—things not available to the men in the field—rank highest on the list of what men like best about San Juan Hill.

To SP4 Tom Nelson, the worst aspect of life on "the hill" is the weather. "It rains more here in the mountains," he says, "and during the monsoons resupply isn't always regular."

# FSB

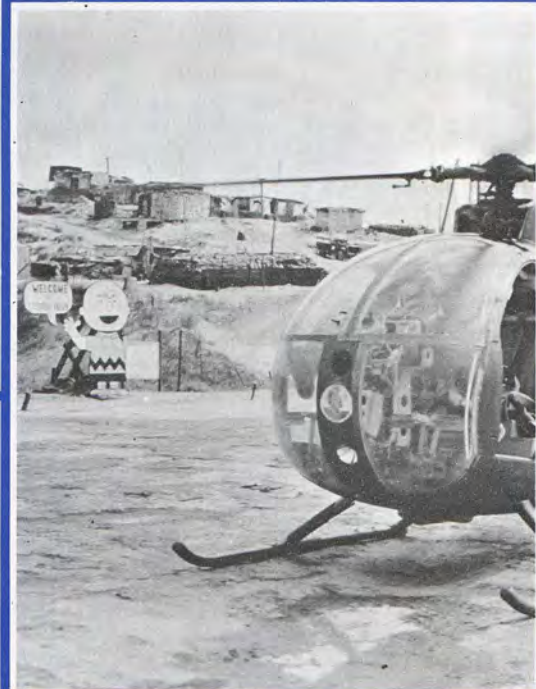


Six miles south of Duc Pho, Co. B of 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. occupies a small temporary firebase atop Hill 285. It was created overnight and will be vacated when the operation it supports is over.

Because of the short life-span of the temporary firebase, there are no conveniences here. Mail call and a single hot meal a day are the only luxuries. Said PFC Will F. Callen, "the first day is always the worst, the place is strange and you're busy digging in and setting everything up. You sorta get used to it, but by that time you're leaving. It never seems very homy."

Firebase 4-11 stands as a tribute to the combined efforts of the 4th ARVN Regiment and the 11th Infantry Brigade. Situated in the Song Tra Khuc river basin seven miles west of Quang Ngai City, the base was established in July of last year by the 3rd Bn., 1st Inf. and the elements of the 4th ARVN Regt. At that time, the area was a major enemy infiltration route where four NVA battalions roamed at will. After weeks of bitter fighting, 4-11 had earned its right to exist.

In October, thousands of Montagnard and Vietnamese refugees streamed from the surrounding mountains seeking security at the new firebase. The 3rd Bn., 1st Inf., in cooperation with government officials, created Tu My Village to accomodate the displaced and homeless refugees. Today





Story and Photos by  
1LT JAMES COLLINS JR.  
11th Inf. Bde.

SP4 John Copeland, "really comes into full bloom out here. Since we don't have TV, bull sessions are a popular form of relaxation."

SGT Jeffery Yentes plays "a lot of cards" to pass the time, while SGT Eric Boyle writes a lot of letters when he's on 4-11 because "the more you write, the more mail you get."

Going still further south you find a sign saying "Welcome to Firebase Charlie Brown". Charlie Brown sits on a small peninsula jutting out into the South China Sea, 17 miles south of Duc Pho. Its residents, the men of Co. A, 4th Bn., 21st Inf., are the defenders of "Gilligan's Island", a Naval support depot near the picturesque fishing village of Sa Huhyn.

"It's quite a sight," said Charlie Brown's officer in charge, 1LT Mike W. Fling, "when the entire fishing fleet lines up in the harbor at sunrise."

In populated areas, the firebase is not only a symbol of security to local residents but also an embassy of good will. Located four miles northwest of Duc Pho, Firebase Liz, home of the 1st Bn., 20th Inf., recently put out a welcome mat for 123 Vietnamese villagers whose homes were destroyed by savage monsoon floods. The evacuees were fed, clothed and housed on the firebase until the floodwaters receded.

To the strategists, a firebase is merely one of many dots on a large plotting board, but to the men who live and work there it is a home—lonely at times, and not terribly comfortable—but home. A soldier needs "his own place" and whether it be a simple lean-to in the field or a forward firebase, he'll be proud of it, and fight for it. 🇺🇸

5,000 former refugees have a secure home less than 500 meters from Firebase 4-11.

The men here are quite proud of their "Howard Johnson's of Vietnam" mess facility. That's exactly what the bright orange sign on the mess-hall proclaims. The familiar weathervane landmark sits on the colorful building's roof and a "We Give Green Stamps" sign adds even more atmosphere. The food here is worthy of the trappings. Says SFC Walter Winkles, "We give the men a choice of ten different types of omlets on our a la carte breakfast menu."

SP4 Robert Wayne Balon noted, "Time goes much slower on a firebase than it does in the field."

"The art of conversation," said

# phúc xã

By SGT. CLIFFORD MIYASHIRO

The slight Vietnamese boy made his way past the makeshift desks and chairs to the front of the classroom. His large dark eyes studied the large map for a moment; he hesitatingly pointed to a mass of green on it. The look of doubt on his face quickly turned to one of confidence as the teacher acknowledged his correct answer.

Tran Van Diem is a student at the Long Binh Refugee Camp school near Chu Lai. A few months ago, the nine-year old had never had a minute of formal education. Orphaned at five, Diem and his aging grandmother led a life of bare existence, one that had no room for such "luxuries" as school.

The promise of a better life prompted Diem and his grandmother to make a new home for themselves in the refugee camp. Shortly after their arrival last year, Diem began attending the camp's elementary school. A hard worker and quick learner, the eager young student has already expressed a desire to teach once he "grows up".

Diem's story is but one of many resulting from the efforts of the pacification program in the Americal Division's southern I Corps.

There has existed, for many years, a widespread American desire to "Win the hearts and minds of the people". It is with this thought in mind that the men of the Americal are working to help the Vietnamese help themselves.

Pacification in South Vietnam is not new, as the first intensive efforts began in 1954. Only in the past three years, however, has there been a truly coordinated effort between the Government of Vietnam and Free World Forces toward gaining the full support of the Vietnamese people by helping them meet their own needs and at the





same time depriving the enemy of his claim to popular backing.

Each Americal soldier has, either directly or indirectly, played a part in this extensive campaign to demonstrate that the Government of Vietnam offers its citizens the greatest opportunity for a free, peaceful, and full life.

"You cannot have a good pacification program without a clear and secure area," stated 1LT Gregory Sanders, Assistant G-5. "Economic and social activities can come only after an area is secured." To help meet this end, soldiers of several of the division's combat units have undertaken The Infantry Company Intensive Pacification Program. This program is designed to help organize,

build, and provide continual security in hamlets and villages against local VC forces, guerrilla units and VC/NVA main forces.

Bravo Co. of the 11th Brigade's 1st Bn., 20th Inf. has lived and worked with the people of Van Troung hamlet since October.

SP4 Kenneth Ingram was with the company when it moved into the small hamlet, five miles north of Duc Pho. "The biggest problem we faced upon our arrival was that of communication, which resulted in an initial misunderstanding on the part of both parties. Our patrol operations with the Popular Forces were conducted mainly with hand signals, that were often noncommunicative or misunderstood," Ingram noted. "Time, however, has solved that problem. Now that the people realize we're here to help them, they're friendly and we get along quite well."

High on the GVN pacification priority list is the establishment of responsive local governments. Once an area is secured, administrative committees and councils are appointed, and officials are selected until elections can be held. "All hamlet, village, and district officials in the Americal area are elected—this is a most important point," remarked 1LT Michael Tortorice, Assistant G-5. Political administrations of hamlets and villages are required to react to both the programs of the national government and the needs of the local people.

Another phase of the total program is the "Self-Help Program" between the people and their local governments which strives to develop understanding and cooperation in the areas of public health, education, agricultural services and public works. Increasing numbers of MEDCAP missions in the hamlets and villages of southern I Corps is the visible result of this interaction.

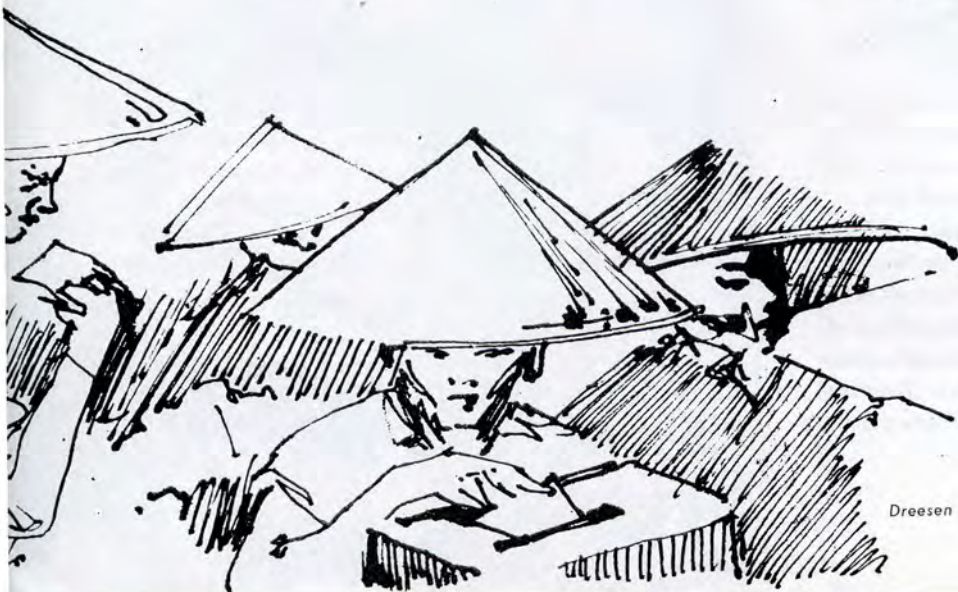
"Whenever we hold a MEDCAP, people come from miles around. Many of them have never seen a doctor before, much less been treated by one," commented 1LT Sanders. One reason the people come is because the word has been filtered down to them through their local governments. The Americal Division treats an average of 27,500 Vietnamese civilians a month, and an increased effort is presently underway to visit the hamlets and villages on a regular schedule.

Education plays an important role in the overall pacification effort. New schools are virtually popping up throughout the division area. "We provided assistance, but the people carried out the project, contributing labor and often times money or construction materials," remarked 1LT Carl Thomas, a member of the 6th Plat. of the 29th Civil Affairs Company. The platoon was instrumental in providing technical and material assistance for the construction of the Long Binh Refugee Camp School. In order to help the Vietnamese utilize the education program, scholarship programs have been started to provide financial assistance. Americal Division scholarships are awarded to needy families, with special consideration given to children of soldiers killed in combat.

One of the main objectives of pacification is the economic growth of the nation as a whole. The Republic of Vietnam is a potentially wealthy country. The greatest appeal to the people lies in the promise of increased prosperity. Its fertile rice paddies, farms, rubber plantations and untapped lumber land stand as a promise of economic growth once peace comes.

The 6th Plat., 29th Civil Affairs Company also supports the 4-T Clubs, which are the counterpart of the agricultural and domestically oriented 4-H Club in the United States.

"The boys raise animals and grow crops," commented 1LT Thomas, "while the girls are involved in home economic type projects such as sewing and cooking."





Anthony

Currently, 4-T members and the farmers of southern I Corps are being introduced to a new strain of rice, IR8. Developed in the Philippine Islands, IR8 rice is much more durable and has a three- or four-times larger crop yield than the conventional strain grown in Vietnam.

"It doesn't taste the same," noted 1LT Thomas, "but the people have taken to it very well. The farmers seem to really appreciate the increased crop yield."


With fish and pork making up a large portion of the Vietnamese basic diet, the creation of fish hatcheries and pig farms are among 20 of the major projects being sponsored by the 29th Civil Affairs Company.

Another step in the pacification outline is the Government of Vietnam's refugee program, which has been instrumental in the reintegration of Vietnamese refugees into a normal life. The first step in this reintegration is the return of the people to their homes where they are shown the rewards of their own self help programs. A reintegration program takes time, and while the people are awaiting return to their homes, they are housed in new refugee camps like Hiep Duc and Long Binh where relief and services are offered in the form of medical care, clothing, and education in sanitation and agriculture. 1LT Tortorice went on to note that "the Americal Division resettled 70,000 refugees last year."

APRIL, 1970

The Chieu Hoi program is perhaps the most familiar aspect of pacification known to the Americal soldier. Chieu Hoi encourages enemy personnel to rally to the Government of Vietnam and help in the continuous growth of the country rather than working to destroy it. Upon completion of a re-indoctrination program, the Chieu Hoi rallier earns the title of Hoi Chanh—one who has returned to the path of right.

To the people of Vietnam, pacification provides the foundation of peace, social justice and security as a lifetime of fear begins to diminish and is replaced by the secure feeling of a united people.

President John F. Kennedy said in 1963 of the Vietnamese conflict, "In the final analysis it's their war—we can help—but they have to win it." 


**"In the final analysis it's  
their war — we can help —  
but they have to win it."**



Dreesen



H. BRADY



# THE GENERAL

By SP4 STEPHEN FRAZIER

"One-six this is one-four. Eight of 'em moving into a woodline at 11 o'clock, did you see them, over?"

"One-four this is one-six, that's a negative. Were they wearing packs and carrying weapons, over?"

"Roger that. One on top of the hill at your 12 o'clock."

"We see him, one-four . . . one-six, elements move on line keeping your present order facing this woodline at 12 o'clock."

"One-zero, roger."

"One-one, roger."

"One-two, roger."

"One-three, roger."

The air has little room for sounds, engines rush bluish-gray exhaust into damp air, gunners drop from their riding positions into armored safety, bolts are let forward.

"One-six elements . . . open fire!"

The "fire" doesn't echo. It's there and gone. Nothing fires, and nothing will fire; a no-sound prevades.

This is a story about the Sheridan tank. Three of them now sit "on line" facing a thick woodline.

The author must make a choice on carrying the action through. He can pen the cause and effect of projectiles to trees, and describe the bright flash and loud bang, but they scarcely portray the human involvement. Our Sheridans are still "on-line", and we are going back to them, but with direction, knowing where to look.

The Sheridan is steaming, water and mud dripping from the sides and tracks. The cupola is empty, as the tank commander (TC) is inside the turret. The .50 caliber machine gun has yet to fire.

Time has let the first few M-60 rounds fire, and looking down the barrel to the woodline we can see our tracers ricocheting, but no human movement.

Inside the turret, it is white like white plastic, the basic load of .152 rounds are racked in place like wine bottles, while the co-axial M-60 blares in our right ear. The TC has his gloved hand on a black handle with a red trigger. A red light flashes as he turns a knob selecting the type of round.

The next few movements are rapid, rhythmic. The time sequence speeds up; through the CVC (helmet) one hears anything from "Fire in the hole", to "Hold on, dammit".

Hands searching for hand-holds.

A finger curled impatiently around a trigger... then depressed.

The BANG and our Sheridan jolts.



From the woodline facing our Sheridan, 10,000 daggers tear through every leaf and stem, saturating for a moment even time.

What is the story behind this Sheridan and this action? What brought us to this moment?

In the early training stage the men of the 1st/1st Cavalry were wary of the Sheridan's technicalities. They were used to the M48, and driving a vehicle somewhat foreign to them in the field while facing the enemy was a little frightening.

But as soon as it was taken to the target range, like the first knock in a football game, the tenseness was relieved.

"On the range we had targets of five-ton tractors, cranes, and trucks from the PDO yard (disposal yard) and the Sheridan just blew them away," said SSG Ed Robinson, S-4, 1/1 Cav.

Firepower—the end product of mobility, maneuverability and speed is what the Sheridan can deliver. The Sheridan can fire from its stubby .152mm cannon, HE (high explosive) and cannister rounds.

A co-axial M-60 and a turret mounted .50 caliber machine gun augment the main gun.

"The handling of the Sheridan is much easier than the M48," claims SSG John Williams, a tank commander with A Trp. 1/1 Cav. "In the monsoon season the old M48 couldn't even go out. The Sheridan is much lighter (16-1/2 tons to 60 tons) and can move over the muddy roads and paddies much quicker."


Unlike its predecessors, when a Sheridan comes to a steep berm or an overgrown paddy dike, it merely backs up and vaults over, instead of looking for another place to cross.


A driver also has to be a mechanic. "It's not all just the push and pull of the floor pedals and levers," explained SSG Robinson. Each time you get a new vehicle, you have to learn new skills.

Maintenance is not a drawback with the Sheridan. "It's a maintenance man's dream; motorwise a good piece of equipment," said SFC Lewis Northern, A Trp., 1/1 Cav., motor sergeant.

Diesel driven, the Sheridan with full fuel capacity can travel without re-servicing for 373 miles. Each tank is brought in on the average of once a month for a complete checkout.

"Since it is so light, it can be air dropped, or cargo dropped by a runway level aircraft, and it has slow-current deep water fording capabilities," said CPT Robert Weathers, S-1, Hdqs., 1/1 Cav. "Everyone is happy with its performance."

A reliable and durable vehicle, tested more than any other U.S. Army Combat vehicle weapons system, the General Sheridan, officially the "Armored Reconnaissance/Airborne Assault Vehicle, AR/AAV, M551", has proven itself a profitable asset to the effort in Vietnam. 



To say that every man in Vietnam is entirely dependent on the helicopter may be somewhat of an exaggeration, just as it would be to say the helicopter has solved all of the Army's mobility problems; but for the soldiers in the field, the helicopter is their breadbasket, their mailman and their primary means of transportation.

To the causal observer these aircraft give the impression of being entities unto themselves, needing only the presence of man to stimulate them into motion. In watching the sleek forward pull of a helicopter, rarely does one think of the grace in terms of the complex piece of electronic equipment that it actually is. Underneath the olive drab aluminum skin hides a mass of mechanical and electronic wizardry that would spin the mind's of many laymen.

It is here that our story begins, the story of the men who maintain these helicopters. Knowing that the helicopters are the backbone of nearly all transportation beyond the perimeters of the main base areas, we must dig into the often invisible behind-the-scene operations; the shops and maintenance areas where the helicopters, receive the attentions of both major and minor surgery, that will refurbish their thin skin, strong frames, and delicate internal workings.

# HELI-EVAC

By SP4 WILLIAM GILPIN

14th CAG

Gilpin



The point to be made is that these helicopters, though highly mobile and capable of amazing feats of strength, do break down. They stop functioning; sometimes completely, sometimes only in part, sometimes because of mechanical failure, and sometimes as a result of enemy action. The job of the maintenance men, armed with tools and knowledge, is to repair these choppers so they may return to their primary missions quickly.

The job of maintaining the aircraft begins with the flight engineers and crew chiefs. Prior to each flight these men must perform a daily inspection. The exterior of the craft is checked for minute cracks, loose screws and missing rivets caused by the continuous vibrations that shake the ship. The oil and hydraulic systems, very critical for the operation of any mechanical system, are likewise checked for leaks and adequate levels. Close attention is also given to areas where gritty dirt may have collected. Action necessary for the immediate removal of all dirt is of paramount concern since these gritty build-ups, tiny as they may be, can raise havoc with the smooth continuous operation of the aircraft.

"A change of the main rotor pitch change link will be completed before working on the 90 degree gear box or light control hydraulics."

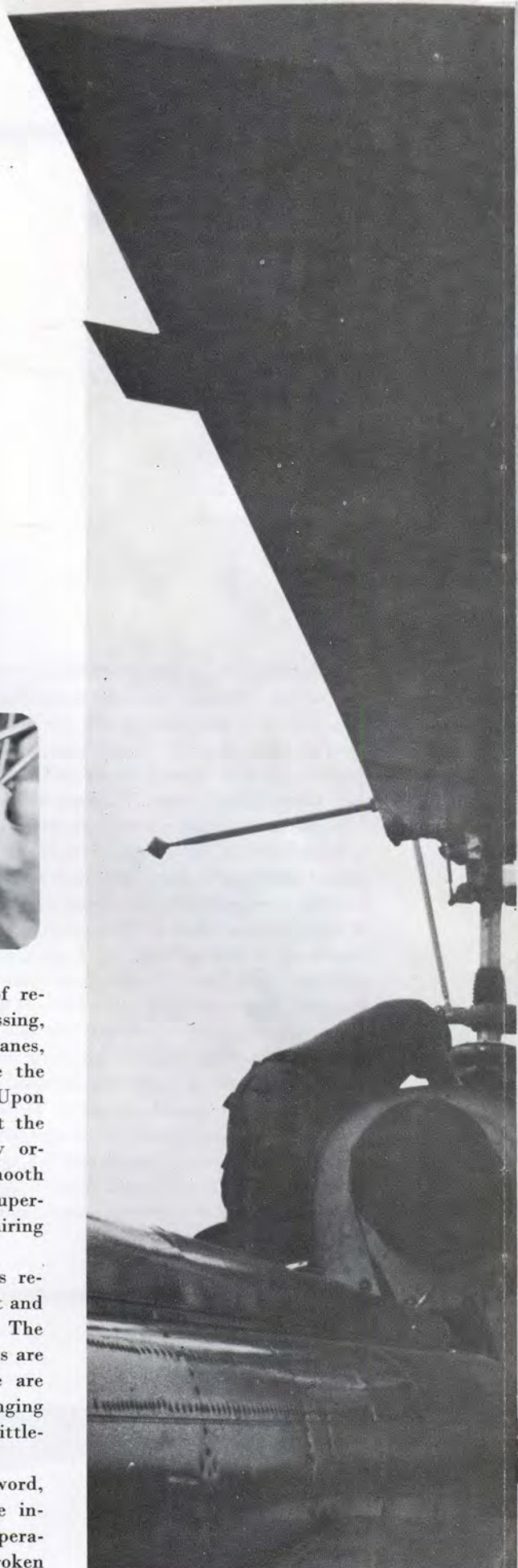
Such a strange and seemingly alien barrage of language finds us in the maintenance hanger of the 176th Assault Helicopter Company, 14th Aviation Battalion, where the hustle and bustle of men working is reminiscent of tireless ant colonies. At first glance one gets the feeling of confusion, men swarming on and over



aircraft all in various stages of repair: tailbooms off, engines missing, transmissions dangling from cranes, main rotor blades lying beside the ship like amputated wings. Upon closer observation one sees that the confusion is actually as highly organized as are ant colonies, a smooth intergration of mechanics and supervisors bent on the task of repairing helicopters.

"One of the biggest problems resulting from the ever present dirt and sand is worn out bearings. The helicopters' flight control systems are dependent on bearings and we are constantly checking and changing them," stated SP5 Robert Littlefield.

"Constantly", a very apropos word, for these maintenance men are involved in an around the clock operation. The work forces are broken





down into day and night teams, scheduled and unscheduled teams. The day and night scheduled teams are concerned with the scheduled routine maintenance, that is, ships which have been designated a specific time for periodical maintenance checks.

These periodicals cover everything from the 25 hour check, when the ships receive the equivalent of an automobile's tuneup, to the 2,200 hour periodical when the ships are, in essence, rebuilt from the tailboom to electrical systems.

The unscheduled crew performs any maintenance a ship might require between the scheduled checks. This can include something as simple as patching bullet holes or as complicated as changing a malfunctioning transmission.

The importance of maintenance can be seen simply by comparing the amount of time spent on maintenance to the time each helicopter spends in the air. The scheduled checks for the "Hooks", the most extensive being that required after 1,200 flying hours, can take anywhere from 25 to 40 days, depending on the mechanical problems encountered and the availability of parts.



Twenty men working night and day to assure the air safety of the aircraft, is quite amazing. Isn't it? Resigned to a dirty greasy "behind the scenes" existence, few people realize the incredible knowledge and skill which is expended daily on the wires, the hydraulics, drive trains, and electrical systems of helicopters.

Maintenance is a never ending process which offers little praise for the expertise of the team.

The story of the maintenance man is written on the faces of those involved, the PFC's, the SP5's, whose hands, scarred by slipping wrenches and permanently discolored by grease and oil, bring the story into reality.

What would be the outcome of this Vietnam conflict without this group of dedicated individuals who are responsible for maintenance? Almost without a second thought is quite obvious that the war would grind to a standstill, for American combat soldiers in Vietnam are almost totally dependent on the availability of helicopters. One might be justified in saying that the helicopter maintenance personnel, though faceless and but a shadow to the combat soldier, hold down one of the most important positions in Vietnam. 🛡️

# Mission: 153



## Story and Photos by PFC Laszlo Kondor

The day begins long before dawn for the men of the "Blue Ghosts," F/8th Cav., 123rd Avn. Bn. It's still dark as they assemble at the briefing room to prepare for the morning mission. A pilot swallowed a yawn as the briefing started.

"Today we are going to insert a Ranger team into this general vicinity," stated CPT David W. Owen, operations officer, as he pointed at a large wall map. "We will insert them here and here. Any questions?"

The "Blue Ghosts" were in the air shortly after dawn. The team consisted of a Light Observation Helicopter (LOH) flying point at a low altitude, with two Cobra gunships flying support above the LOH, followed by two Huey's with Rangers of G Company, 75th Infantry.





...they crossed themselves, that is the way they go in...



...it was another  
routine mission...

They flew past the low-lands of rice paddies, hooches, and people; out past the hills, and into the towering mountains southwest of FSB Siberia.

The LOH flew in first, to reconnoiter the area, bobbing in and out, sideways through the trees, "Blue Ghost" style. While directly above the LOH, the narrow, lethal-looking Cobras circled ready to strike.


A Huey loaded with Rangers followed close behind the LOH, the men sitting ready to spring out of the chopper and into the jungle.

There was a strange silence just before the insertion. Some of the men were moving their lips, and you knew that they were praying. As the Huey touched down, they crossed themselves and that is the way they go in.

SSG Ralph B. Dunham led the silent party carefully forward, moving slowly and cautiously along a worn trail. The leader froze and motioned an arm signal to the others. Everyone silently melted into the jungle. There was a hushed atmosphere that seemed to linger along the trail as the men lay in wait. Then suddenly there was a sound and a NVA appeared carrying a rifle and a large sack. He came along the trail, and then suddenly turned and ran. There was a crack and he fell. A Ranger appeared out of the jungle beside the downed NVA. Swiftly and silently, the man was moved back along the trail to the pick-up point, and a chopper was called in.

The LOH came in first, dipping down among the tree-tops checking for more of the NVA; followed close by the Cobras. A Huey came in over the river to hover above the water, and the wounded NVA was loaded aboard the ship to be taken back for medical treatment.

The Rangers then moved further down the river to a clearing and called in another Huey to lift them out.

It was a routine mission. The prize was an NVA messenger with a large sack of documents. The men who carried out the mission had no doubt that they would succeed in others like it: 



# AMERICAL MIRTH

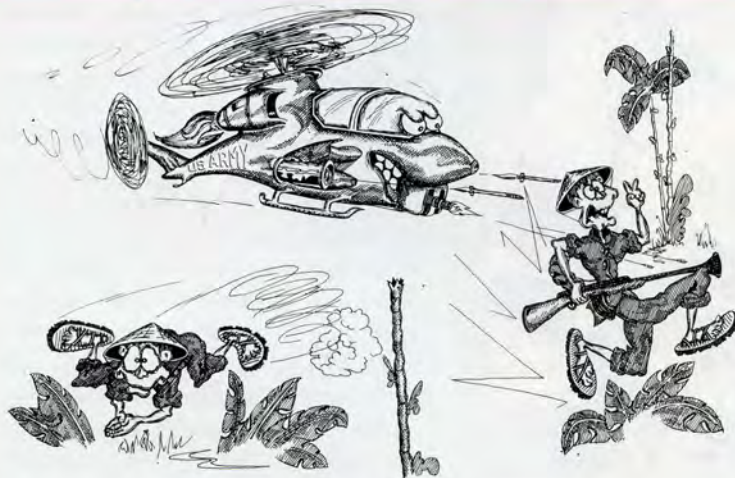
By PFC DAVID DAPKUS  
H & MS-13 MAG 13



"What's he burned up about now?"



"Safe!"



"Why me?"



"If he wants you  
... then what am I doin' here???"

# Essence Of The Vietnamese Family

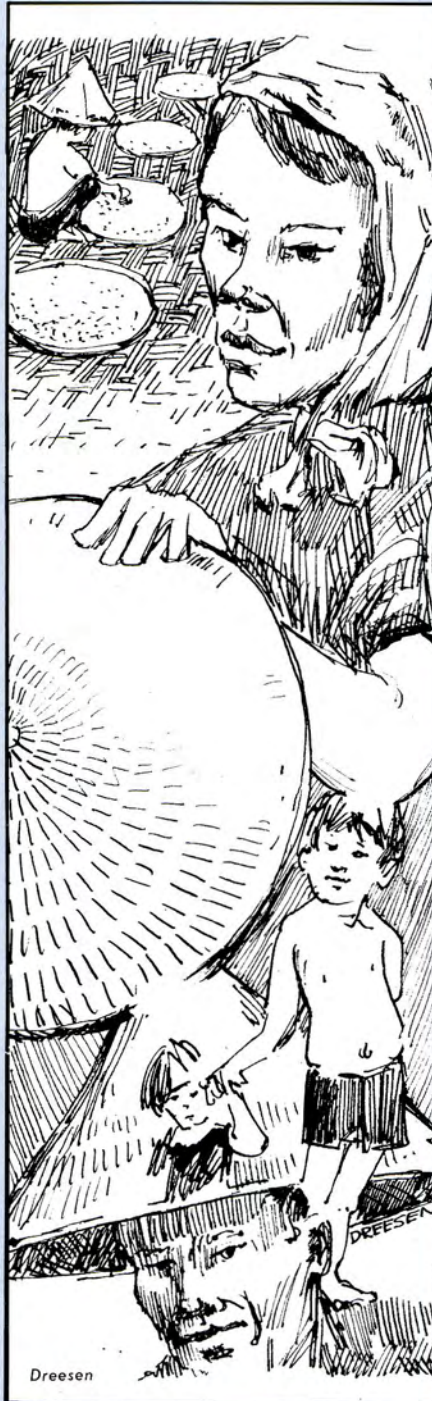
By SP5 JAMES BROWN

The family composes the heart of any society. Nearly all South Vietnamese still feel that in essence, the family structure has first claim on their loyalties and that the interests of each individual are subordinate to those of his common descendant group.

The traditional extended family includes three generations, a senior couple, a married son with his wife and children, and the senior couple's unmarried children, all living under the same roof.

Moreover, in the traditional social order the individual was less an independent being than a member of a corporate family group which includes not only living members but, in a spiritual sense, a long line of ancestors as well. Emphasis is on group rather than on individual interests. Family functions extend into many areas of behavior that in more complex societies are regulated chiefly by other institutions—economic, educational and religious.

The lineage—a group of people tracing descent from a common ancestor—still represents the chief source of social identity for the individual. In the Vietnamese family structure, great respect is rendered to men, especially to older men, and particularly to the head of the lineage, who traditionally makes all the important decisions for every member of the family. However, in the modern period, family decisions such as the choice of occupation or marital partner are generally made by the head of the individual household, with concurrence of the wife and perhaps the grandparents.



When decisions are made in this manner, unquestioned obedience on the part of the younger generation is demanded and received.

Throughout her marriage a woman is expected to be dutiful and respectful to both her husband and his parents. The wife is expected to become an integral part of her husband's family, to care for him and their children and to perform all household duties.

Women play an important role in the nation's economy and are particularly prominent in retail trade of all kinds. The village woman assumes a great deal of responsibility for cultivation of the family rice fields, sometimes working harder than the men.

The educated urban wife is accepted as an intellectual equal by her husband, entering into literary discussions with him and listening as he recites poetry; a few own agricultural estates, factories and businesses.

Both she and her village counterpart typically manage the family income. Ideally, relations between marriage partners are characterized by unfailing politeness and courtesy. A good husband and wife, the Vietnamese say, always treat each other as guests.

Regardless of their social origins, all children are expected to be polite to their parents and old persons and solicitous of their welfare, showing their respect through proper manner and forms of address. After the death of their parents it is incumbent upon surviving children, and their children in turn, to honor their memory through the maintenance of the Cult.



Potkin

"War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things; the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. A man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight; nothing he cares about more than his own personal safety; is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free."

John Stuart Mill

