THE HURRICANE

MAY 1970 NUMBER THIRTY-ONE
A PUBLICATION OF 11 FIELD FORCE VIETNAM

RFs Rough-it with US Infantry

Lieutenant General Michael S. Davison was born in San Francisco, California, on March 21, 1917. He was graduated from the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, in 1939 and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant of Cavalry.

After assignments with the 12th Cavalry Regiment and the 1st Cavalry Division, he was transferred to the Operations Division, War Department General Staff. In 1943, he went with the 45th Infantry Division to North Africa and became commander of the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry. He was then assigned to Headquarters, VI Corps, in November, 1944, where he served as G2 and G3.

In 1951 General Davison earned a masters degree in Public Administration from Harvard. Following tours of duty in the Pentagon and at West Point, he attended the National War College, graduating in 1958.

In 1961 he assumed command of Combat Command A, 3d Armored Division, in Germany, and in June, 1962, was appointed Chief of Staff of V Corps. He returned to the United States in March, 1963, to become the Commandant of Cadets at the U.S. Military Academy. He returned to the Department of the Army Staff in April, 1965, as the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development. In August, 1966, he was assigned Commandant of the United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

General Davison became Deputy Commander-in-Chief and Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Pacific in October, 1968, and in August, 1969, he assumed the duties of Chief of Staff, Pacific Command.

Lieutenant General Davison is married to the former Jean Miller and they have three children: Captain Michael S. Jr., Mary J. and Donald A. Davison.

THE HURRICANE

MAY 1970 NO 31

A PUBLICATION OF II FIELD FORCE VIETNAM

Racial discrimination has been a front page topic for over 20 years—and much longer in the Negro community. The government has decreed, resolved, and legislated, spurred by the Supreme Court's school decision in 1954, and the military has painstakingly sought to insure fair treatment throughout its ranks.

Unhappily, however, discrimination still exists. In the Army the Pentagon has published a circular (DA Circular 600–70) quoting a speech by Defense Secretary Laird on equal opportunity in the services.

The 3/7th Infantry has been working in and near War Zone D with local regional forces. Their Dong Tien (Progress Together) operations have scored notable successes there. The front cover was shot by Sp4 Bill Seitz and Lt Bill Watson wrote the article beginning on page 20.

Specialist 5 Mike Tharp discusses the progressive Chieu Hoi center near Ham Tan. The center has provided much needed housing for relocated Hoi Chanh families. Sp5 R Reimer shot the rear cover of a young lad picking papayas while with the writer at Ham Tan. (story p. 28)

As a change of pace, a series of photographs taken under the waters of Cam Ranh Bay are included beginning on page 13.

The Editor

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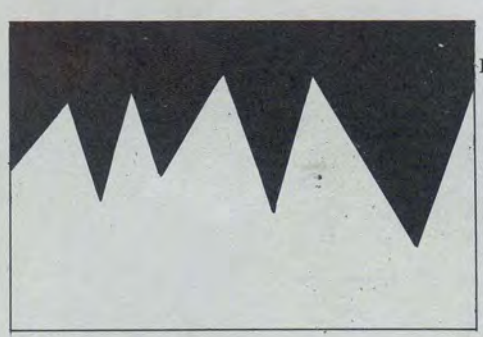

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II FIELD FORCE
VIETNAM
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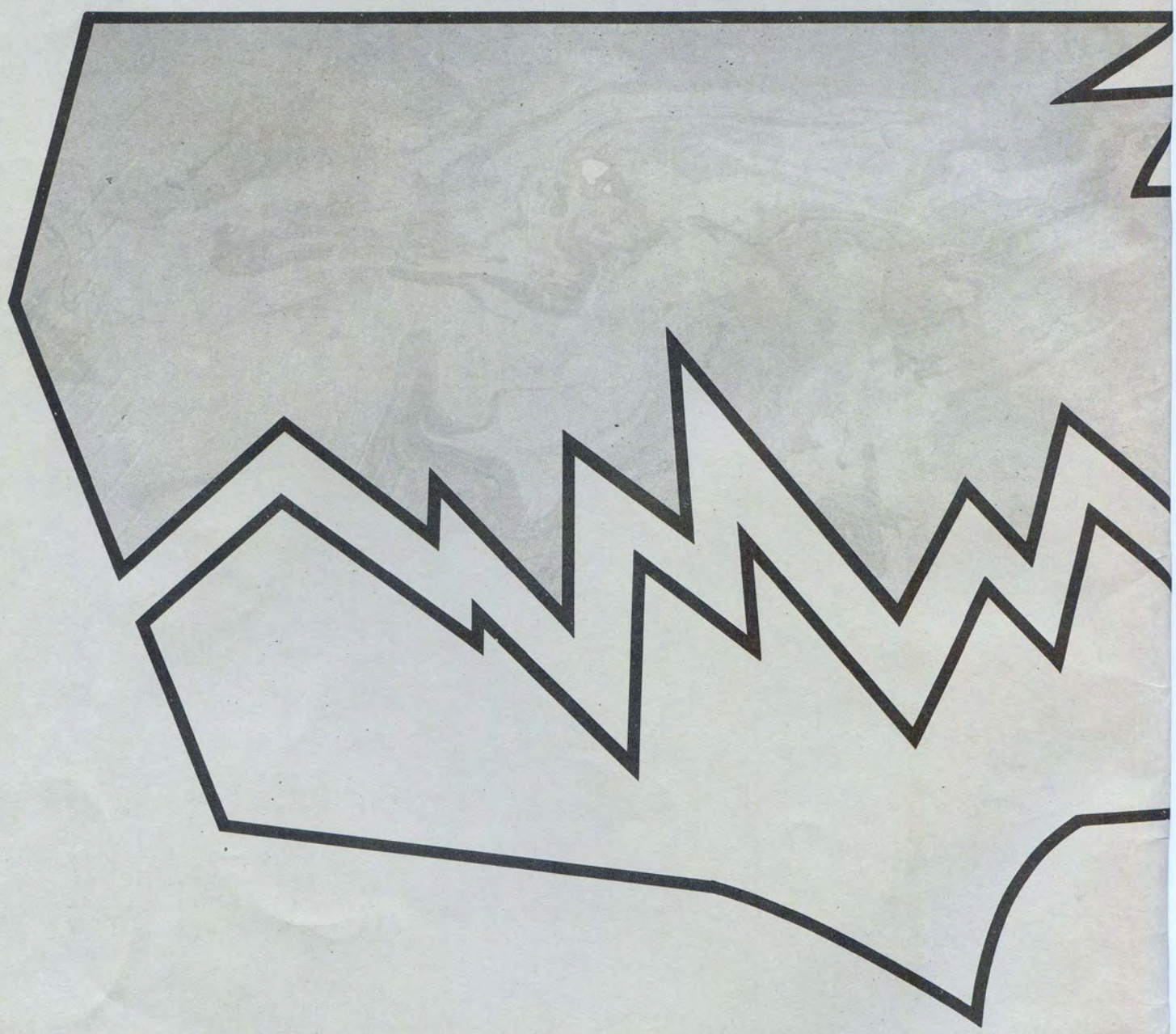
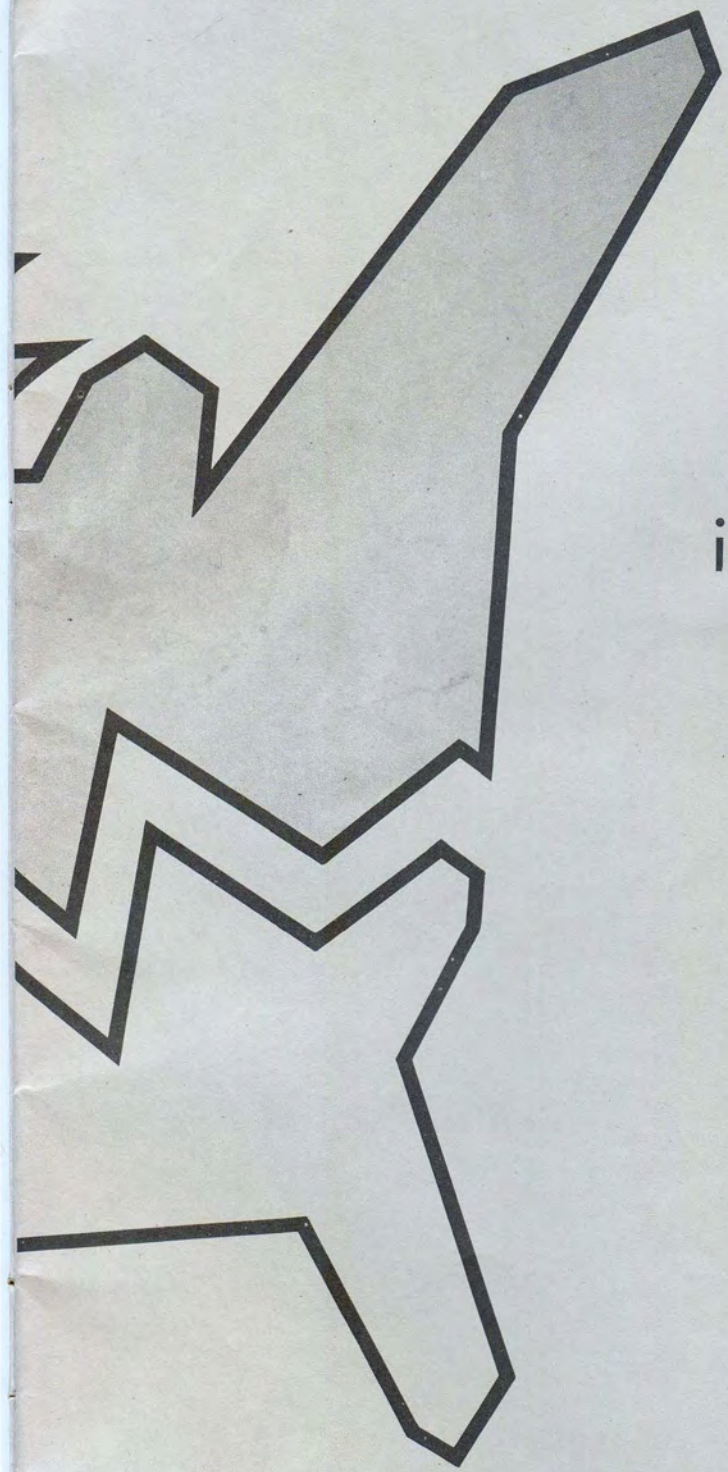


Our nation is dividing into two communities—one white, one black: seperate and unequal.

Report of the National Commission on Civil Disorders



There is another
battleground here—
in a country not trampled
by boots, crushed
by tanks or
cratered by the B52's
bombs. Waged in
a small acre with no
automatic weapons, no
weary midnight marches and
no dusty jungle trails where

by Captain George Cox

even the principles of war do not apply; it is nonetheless, civil war. It pits wisdom against hatred, love against fear, understanding against apathy, and brother against brother. The battleground is the human mind, the enemy is racism, and the weapon to fight it is communication.

On a recent Wednesday at the II Field Force service club, a racial talkathon was underway. About midway through the discussion, four Negro soldiers, wearing sun-bleached fatigues and boots scratched from long days of jungle operations, joined the group. They stood silently, occasionally nibbling at the cookies provided by the club staff. They listened, but made no comments.

"I say legislate," expounded one white discussionist. "Legislate and integrate, until the people of this country finally realize that..."

"I don't think any discussion about race can be complete without a discussion of the problems we have with the Vietnamese..."

The four listened. "...They lived across the tracks, but until I went to college nobody knew there were problems..."

Suddenly they turned away and headed for the door.

This reporter followed, and asked them to join me in the club music room. It was quiet, and empty. Why had they left?

"Man, that's the same type of talk you hear back in the world, and it doesn't mean a thing. They ought to be talking about the problems we have here in Nam. Cause we've got beau coup, brother, beau coup," said Sergeant C.

"You get called nigger and black man over here more than you do in the States," added PFC G.

Specialist S stared openly at the tile music room floor. "This is a white man's war. We are fighting two enemies, the Cong and the whites. One's going to end for me soon, but when I go home, the other will continue."

He spoke slowly with authority, frustrated but without malice. "I hate to see it, but after this year I feel that a race war will probably occur in the States. Probably there will be some sort of an autonomous black state set up in the U.S." Tiny beads of sweat dotted his face—he looked tired.

All four looked tired, but S especially. He had finished his year. Soon he would board that big silver bird for Rhode Island —back to the ghetto slums that he had known all his life. He wanted peace of mind. The kind that comes from a good job and a respectable dwelling. But he felt the American Dream was not open to him—racism had killed it—and that all he could look forward to was the same slum. And in Vietnam, where he had risked his life many times, where he had been exposed to a totally integrated environment, S had crystalized these views.

The fears Specialist S related, were also echoed in a report published three years ago by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Also in the report was this statement: "White racism is the most serious social problem in the United States today."

What is racism? Whitney M. Young Jr., executive director of the National Urban

"You get called nigger and black man more in Vietnam than in the States"

League, himself a Negro, defines racism rather succinctly in his book, *Beyond Racism,* as "...the assumption of superiority and the arrogance that goes with it." The ways a man can assume an arrogant superior attitude are infinitely greater, than the combinations of a chess game. Each mind is different; as is each circumstance.

"Racism is more subtle than simply not desiring to sit next to Negroes or send white children to black schools," states Young. "That is insanity."

Persons may assume a superior attitude subconsciously, but occasionally even the deepest feelings surface. "Although a Negro," wrote the white officer on the efficiency report, "Captain P is an outstanding officer." Such a comment assumes that it is an exception for a Negro to rise above his "...unfortunate condition of birth" and become the outstanding individual the writer, surprisingly, finds him to be.

This writer experienced the subtle forms racism can assume while writing this article. Some white interviewees suggested that accusatory comments be checked out and well documented. The same "suggestion" never arose about statements made by whites.

Certainly statements made in fits of emotion or under stress must be analyzed, but the feeling that Negro soldiers might say something that needed documentation, while not weighing white comments equally seems a manifestation of racism.

Whites, when charged with prejudice, many times counter with "...Negroes are racists too." Such clearly is true in many cases. "Whites don't want us. Why should

Salutes used interracially symbolize empathy with the "liberation movement."

we want them?" Some black militants have claimed that all whites are "no good" and condemn fellow "brothers" for "selling out to honkey" when they attempt to cooperate or socialize with whites.

"We have our lunatic fringe too," acknowledges Whitney Young. "...The existence of a small but vocal minority whose anger at ghetto conditions and whose relative lack of sophistication lead them to make extreme statements has led to charges of 'reverse racism.' The undue attention paid to this minority seems another way of avoiding today's major problem—white racism."

Many whites would call the four who left the service club meeting radical extremists or defiant ones trying to buck the system. A few would say they were just "typical niggers."

But talking with them, one realized that they are Negro soldiers, serving with a combat unit which was experiencing a near total lack of communication about race—a fact that is not unique in III Corps.

The four felt that Negro grievances were ignored in their unit. If they complained, each felt he would spend more time in the field or on extra duty where they "... wouldn't have time to cause trouble." They felt that blacks had pulled an unfair share of KP and miscellaneous duties that had arisen.

"In rear areas," said one, "when four or five blacks get together we're told to break it up. The whites aren't." Were they given any reasons for this? "No."

Another said, "I have a supply MOS. When I arrived in the unit I was sent to the field and there was an opening in the supply room. A white guy was assigned to supply who didn't have the MOS." Was he given an explanation? "No."

Many white draftees are not surprised by such talk. "Overtly and covertly," said one specialist 5, who served four months in a line infantry company, "it's just like it is in the States. But here you have a tinderbox situation. If someone screws up, you (someone of a higher rank) can really get at him. Here it could mean the difference between life and death."

In his old outfit, the specialist felt that Negroes had extra details—"especially latrine burnings and KP"—and that many NCOs were biased, and that Negroes received more than their share of field duty. Added the specialist, "There was a near total lack of communication between the NCOs and the EM. The NCOs were shaken up every time they saw the black power salute."

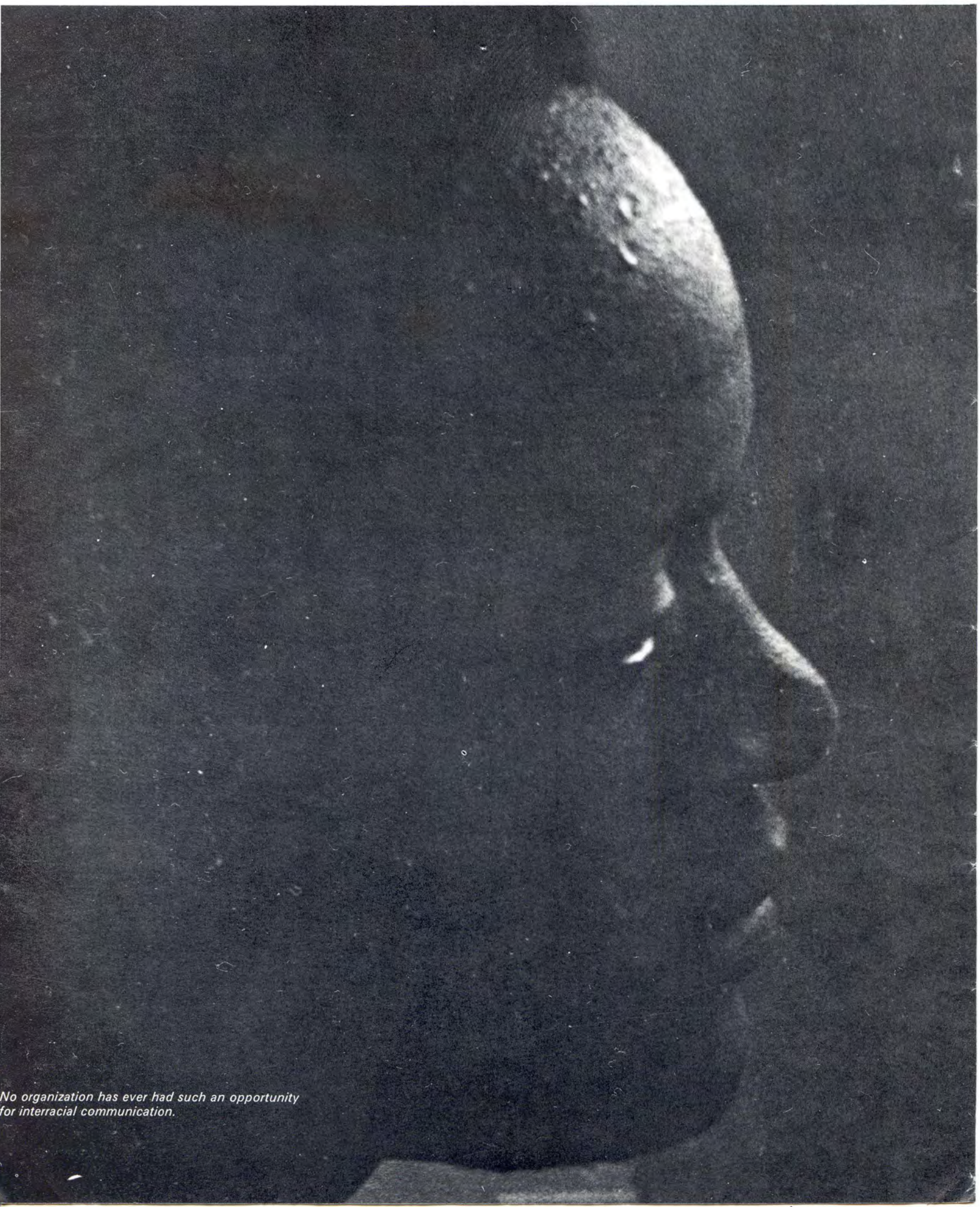
One of the four Negroes said, "When we give each other a salute our NCOs get real mad." Any reason? "...they didn't say." None of the four could recall any NCO or officer questioning them about the meaning of the salute, black power, slave bracelets, or Afro haircuts?

The fact is that many NCOs and some officers are hostile toward the wave of symbolism associated with American Negroes of the late sixties. Some see saluting as a symbol of defiance—and even open resistance—of military authority. Others, and probably the majority, feel that the conduct and dress associated with this symbolism are below traditional military standards.

A 20-year veteran first sergeant felt that black power could act to re-segregate the Army. "If you permit one group to have its own style of hair, pretty soon they'll ask for their own barracks and then separate leaders."

By and large, however, Negroes in III Corps use the salute and wear "Afros" and bracelets much like college fraternity brothers use their secret hand clasps and wear frat pins. Both are fraternal symbols—romantic appeals to brotherhood. "Power to the people," is an oft-given definition of clenched fist salutes—a phrase common to the "Now!" generation, black and white.

A supervisor may take pains to insure accurate duty rosters and fair field assignments but still be accused of racial discrimination, if decisions which could have racial overtones are not explained suffici-



No organization has ever had such an opportunity for interracial communication.

ently. The view, as aired by one career NCO, that, "If you explain the 'whys' of a decision you'll create even more problems," is highly refuted by others.

"The old attitude that I'm the commander and what I say goes, simply doesn't work today," said one Negro officer. "Brothers want answers and they want them now." The officer felt that most allegations of extra field duty and too much KP could be explained, but that mummouthed NCOs and commanders bear the prime responsibility for not explaining decisions properly.

A recent allegation of racial discrimination that reached the Inspector General's office, occurred in the Long Binh area. Two Negro specialist 4 section mates, who had been working for some time in the same section, were joined by a newly arrived white specialist 4. Shortly, the white was promoted. The three had identical MOSs and were occupying the same TOE (Table of Organization and Equipment) slots. It was discovered that one Negro was doing outstanding work but had just made specialist 4 a few weeks prior, and that the other one was under a bar to reenlistment, which prohibited his promotion due to inefficiency. The commander did not explain the situation to the concerned parties and as a result it was left to the IG.

"So many white NCOs and officers are afraid to talk," said one Negro captain who has been commanding companies off and on for the past seven years, "and that's the biggest mistake that can happen."

Discussion at company meetings, especially between NCOs and EM, would, in the captain's eyes, help commanders identify individuals who might be prone to racially discriminate, and give him (the commander) confidence in dealing with cases where unfair practice was alleged as a cover-up to poor job performance. "There are some guys that think this race thing is beautiful. If someone mentions inefficiency, they just automatically slap a tag on him that he is prejudiced. A commander has got to deal with this, or he is lost as a commander," said the same captain.

Major Hernon Henderson, a Negro officer assigned to the IG section, II Field Force, had this to say about the complaints he has received: "We have received from II Field Force and other USARV personnel several complaints alleging racial discrimination. . . Inquiries into these allegations revealed inadequate communication between the command and supervisory elements and the men, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of regulations, actions and intentions, false imaginations, failure to remove through discussions of command information the appearance of racial inequities, the lack of recreational programs and activities which promote cooperation and respect for others and authority. Some of the complainants were being considered for elimination from the Army due to poor conduct and some complaints appeared to have merit."

It is significant that it is officially recognized that some complaints *did* appear to have merit.

But communication is more than a commander's tool for explaining to someone that he is not pulling extra duty. Interpersonal conversations between friends and acquaintances in the barracks can probably strike a much more lasting blow at racism. Deeply covered feelings tend to become exposed in such talks. Through interviews whites might discover, as this writer did, that many Negroes observe Confederate flags flying on radio antennas with the same scorn as whites when they see a Black Panther flag. Someone also might make a comment similar to one made by an officer at the service club discussion: "People think it is being defiant when two brothers give the salute. But I have never seen anyone get ruffled over someone playing 'Dixie.' Now that song really gets me going, because I know what it stands for."

Perhaps many whites have a phobia against discussing race; they might discover it in themselves and this would be hard to live with. "To find prejudice in others is disturbing," said one Louisiana State University student to a *Time* reporter two years ago, "but to find it in yourself is disastrous." American troops in III Corps represent a cross-section of young America. They are from California, Louisiana, the Dakotas, Nebraska and Harlem. Their educational and social backgrounds are as multifarious as their personalities, but from interviews the following sketches of the white and the black in this area can be generalized.

The average white soldier is totally unaware of the bitterness of ghetto life, of the constant frustrations his Negro counterpart has experienced seeking jobs. He doesn't know what it is like to try to move a family into a new community, and find his application ostensibly bogged down in administrative red tape. He has read and re-read the daily news, listened to the evening telecast about busing, the ghetto life, and snipers in Detroit, and has developed a boredom concerning the subject as many civilians of all races are bored with the constant news exposure of the Vietnam war. (Several interviewees stated that, "I'm tired of talk about race.") He may even have the rather naive feeling that because the government has legislated "equality,"

CLEVELAND

equal housing, schools and job opportunities automatically exist.

The Negro soldier also comes from all over America. He entered into the totally integrated military environment like the white troop for the first time. Daily he is witness to the white apathy, and the unwillingness to discuss the problems—a continuum of aggravation for him. Then there are the small things—the laughter from a white group that hushes when he passes, and the PX's lack of wide-toothed hair combs which ". . . nobody thought would be needed."

He sees and feels these things and he rebels in his own way. It may not always be open. He may turn inward, talk little, brood or drink a lot. He may, on the other hand, take up athletics or music. He considers slave bracelets, Afro haircuts, and clenched fist salutes as an appeal to black brotherhood; to the new found pride in black awareness. He may be potentially violent, but he is in the distinct minority if he is.

But whoever he is, he knows there are complications to his life that he feels no white will ever have or understand.

The need for the white and the black soldier to communicate, to sit down, and talk about racial problems, can be preached about for decades, but unless they do it, the sermons will have done little.

A commission investigating charges of discriminatory practices in the unit of the four blacks at the service club would take months to compile the facts, and publish the report. By that time, the unit's faces would be different, and no personal communication would have been accomplished —only charges and countercharges.

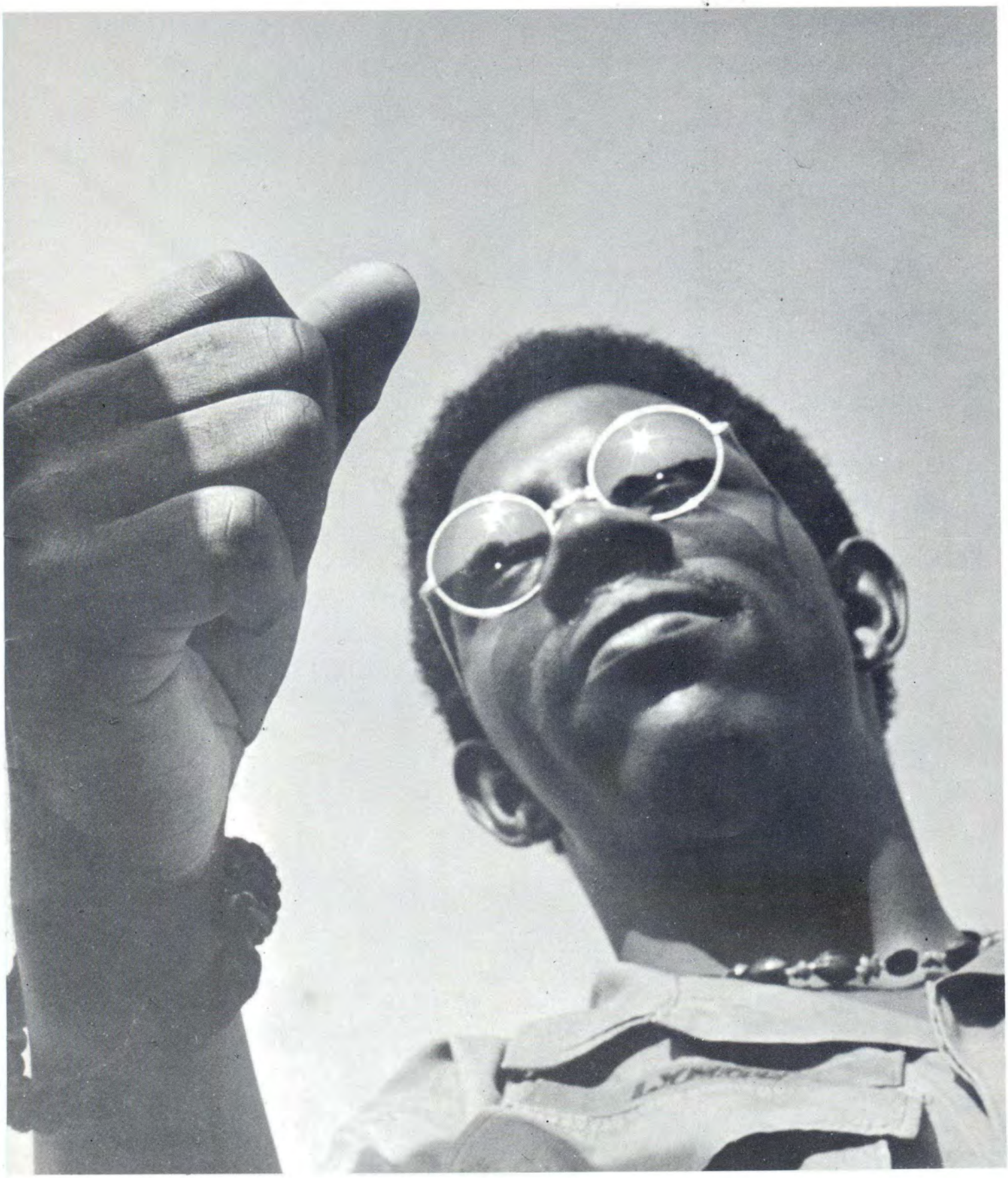
If communication had been effective in their unit in the first place, if commanders had explained decisions adequately and eliminated biased or potentially biased leaders, and if interpersonal communications were carried on in the barracks and clubs after hours, perhaps Specialist S would have a different feeling as he returned to the United States. Perhaps, he would feel that the American Dream was a Black Dream also.

"When written in Chinese," writes Mr. Young, "crisis is composed of two characters; one represents danger and the other represents opportunity."

The American military is the largest interracial organization in the history of mankind, affording an opportunity for whites blacks and all minorities to communicate with each other and to understand the racist cancer. No institution has ever enjoyed such an opportunity.

The danger is that this will not occur.

Clenched fist salutes symbolize black brotherhood —"power to the people."



SKIFFINGTON

Companion's Guide to Phuoc Tuy

by Specialist 4 Phil Schieber

A FEW YEARS AGO, if you wanted to drive from Saigon to Vung-Tau, you always left a last letter to your loved ones with a friend back in Saigon. Today, though, national highway QL-15 boasts a steady traffic between Saigon and Vung-Tau, and on weekends, the great race down QL-15 makes you long for the calm of the Los Angeles freeway during rush hour.

A large part of your trip will take you through Phuoc Tuy Province,

which lies southeast of Saigon. The province is bounded on the south by the municipality of Vung-Tau, and the South China Sea.

If you had driven through Phuoc Tuy Province in 1962, a return journey in 1970 would show notable changes in the countryside and attitudes of the people.

Mr. Martin Christie, the Province Senior Advisor, explained it this way:

"The people of this province are traditionally anti-government. In the old traditional society, the villages were highly autonomous and paid only lip service and taxes to

SKIFFINGTON

Women prepare the latest catch for market

the Vietnamese emperor. When the emperor's tax collectors made their annual visits to the villages, many times they were stopped at the gates. The people would pay their taxes, but they wouldn't allow the Emperor's representatives to enter the village."

"This is the kind of atmosphere we're working in today," Mr. Christie continued. "When the French came in, they 'dehorned' the village officials and introduced district and province chiefs in attempts to centralize the government. And during the Indo-China War, a great many of the people in the province were Viet-Minh. And even today, the Viet-Cong are preaching anti-central government. Phuoc Tuy is a very difficult place to work pacification."

"But," he added, "pacification is beginning to work here, partially because of the security provided by the Australian Task Force, and their Civic Action unit, which entirely specializes in development and pacification. The Vietnamese are beginning to get more confidence in central government."

The most impressive piece of evidence to support Mr. Christie's observations can be found in the capital of the province, Phuoc Le, or as it is more often referred to, Baria.

Several years ago, the market place in Baria occupied a space in the center of town no larger than a tennis court. Then, the village government borrowed five million piastres from the GVN for construction of the main building in the new market place, which is located on the outskirts of town on QL-15. The management of the market buildings was leased to a private contractor, who collects taxes and rents from the merchants who occupy the market. In return, the contractor pays the village government one million piastres a year. The village government then pays that million to the GVN, and in five years the village debt will be paid off.

The Baria market resembles a shopping center. The buildings are modern and clean. A large parking lot is able to hold all the lambrettas, motorcycles and trucks that converge on the market daily from other villages in the province. Although most of the investors are from Saigon and Cholon, an increasing number of local people are erecting shops in the market area.

Down the road from the new market is an old folk's home. Several times a month Mr. Hal Wheatley, a former Peace Corps Volunteer in India, now serving as USAID Assistant Development Officer, distributes food commodities to the residents of the home.

"We have 32 residents in the home now," said Mr. Wheatley. "Most of the people are alone and without children to take care of them."

"To live in the home, an elderly person must obtain a letter attesting to his needs from the Province Chief," Wheatley continued. "The living conditions are somewhat modest, but they're clean and dry, and a lot better than what they were living in previously."

Living conditions have improved for others, too, including a former Montagnard refugee village which has progressed so well that the inhabitants are no longer considered refugees. Permanent homes and full stomachs are not the stuff refugees are made of. Located on the outskirts of Baria, the village is a clean, spacious one, with an Australian windmill and a Catholic church steeple extending toward the sky.

On Saturday afternoons, you won't want to miss one of the several soccer matches that are held on those weekend afternoons. Organized by Captain Brian Franklin of the Australian Task Force, matches, which pit big burly Aussies against small, quick Vietnamese soldiers have been drawing crowds of up to 400 people for an afternoon.

The athletic competitions are gaining in popularity, and have been expanded to include volleyball, and badminton.

"The Vietnamese trounce us regularly in volleyball and soccer," said Captain Franklin, "but we can get back at them in badminton."

Often called the Pied Piper of Phuoc Tuy, Cpt. Franklin has great hopes for sports in the province. "A few months ago we held a sports festival, which was well attended," he said, "and in the future we hope to organize inter-village and district competitions."

Travelling through the districts of the province, you will see a tremendous amount of construction under way on the part of the First Australian Task Force. Under the auspices of the Civic Action Unit of the Task Force, 30 windmills have been built for wells throughout the province. Dispensaries, schools, and roads are constantly under construction. Presently there are plans to run electricity from Vung Tau to Baria, while already four villages within the province are completely electrified.

Serving with the Task Force is a network of liaison officers who are all trained linguists and work closely with each village chief.

Agriculture and fishing are the chief industries of Phuoc Tuy Province. Both farmers and fishermen want bigger crops, bigger catches. Although 60 per cent of farmers are tenants, there are approximately 1,000 owner-operators within Phuoc Tuy. Better breeds of swine, such as purebred durocs, have been successfully introduced.

"These people want new things," said Mr. Robert Wayne, an agronomist working with USAID. "Where it suits them, they'll begin to adopt and use new products."

"The fishermen need big boats that can stay out for two to three days and bring in fifty tons of fish a year," he continued, "but it takes capital, credit, and desire."

"You can only build something like a government on a step by step basis," said Mr. Christie, the PSA. "What we have to find are the ways in which we can spread out that will accelerate pacification. Should we have rice or other crops? Beef or pork? Is ponding worthwhile? Can beach sand make good glass? Can we get private investment to come down and invest?" he asked. "All these questions we're going to have to answer."

"The real key is not what we do for them," he added, "but what they do for themselves." ⬆

Man's fascination for the sea is universal. It is the cradle of his existence, and a friend as well as a bitter adversary to those who have tried to forge a living from her or solve the enigma of her unexplored realm.

Colonel Richard Boberg, commanding officer of the U.S. Army Engineer Command's Central District, recorded the beauty and mystery of the rich turquoise waters of Cam Ranh Bay, equipped with water camera, special flash device, flippers and diving mask.

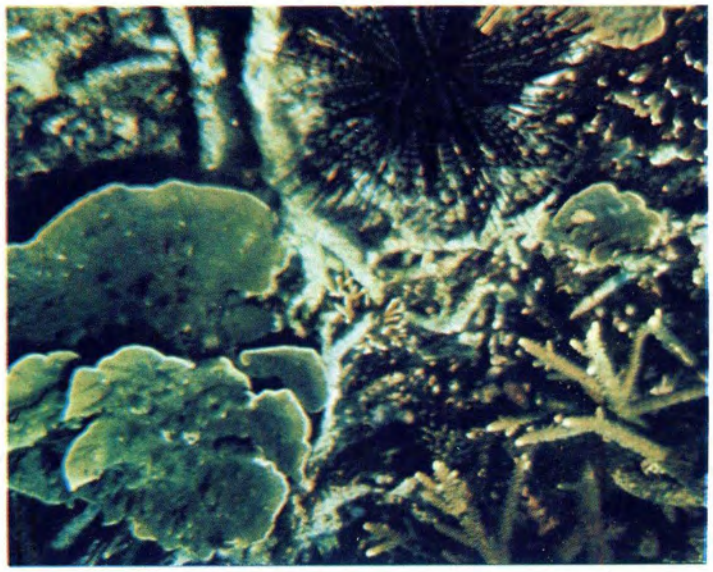
Staghorn Coral form an intricate maze of tunnels and passageways for tropical fish to hunt for food or protection from large preditors

BOBERG

Sea anemone abound in the warm clear waters off the coast of Cam Ranh

BOBERG

Black sea urchins form a perimeter of spines around this isolated brain coral



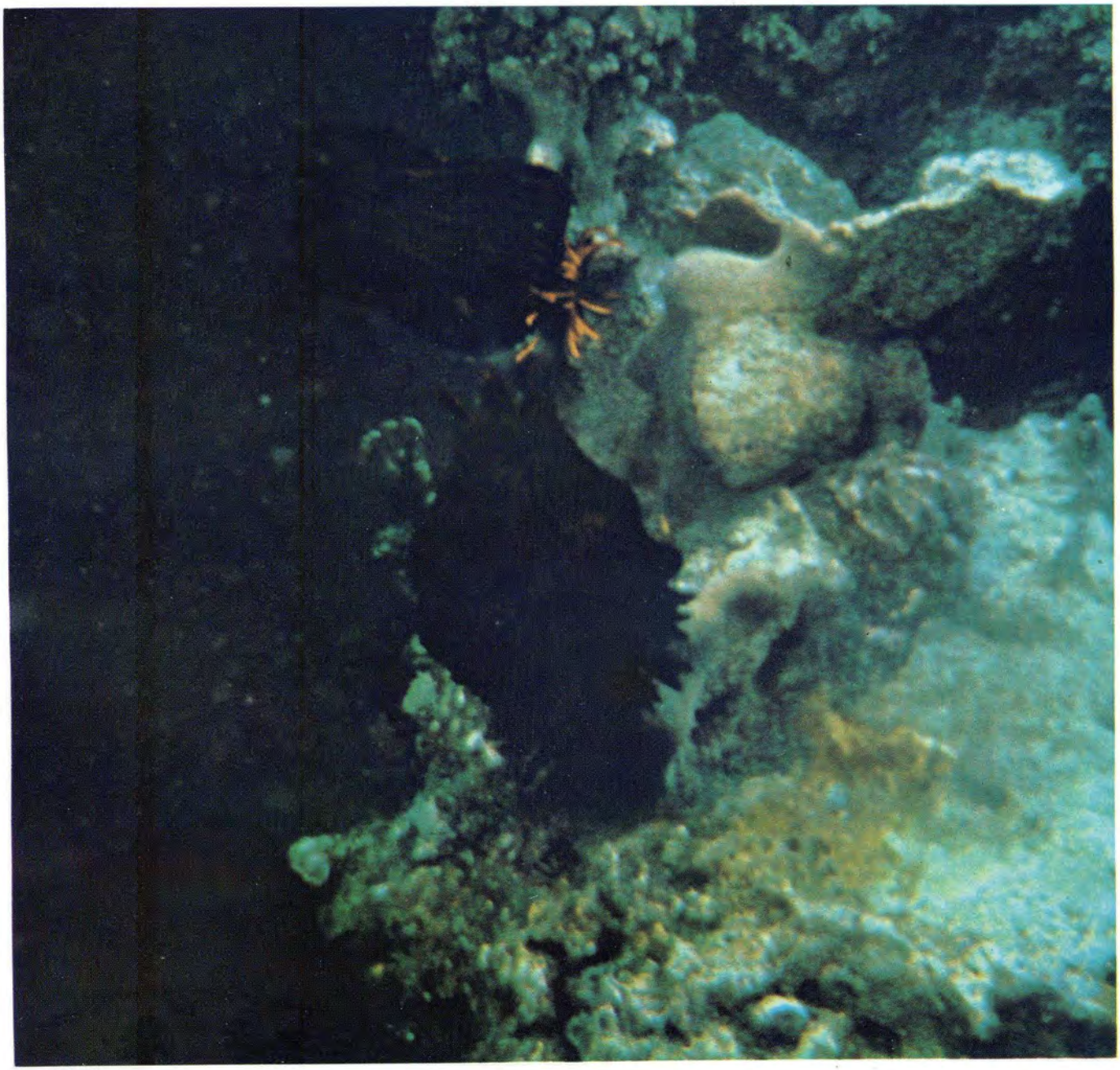
BOBERG

A lone spiny sea-urchin is surrounded by living coral

BOBERG

Small fish search for food among the ferns and stems of this miniature coral forrest

The delicate loveliness of this sea anemone invites small fish to play in the fragile tenacles. But the tenacles will paralize and absorb the unsuspecting victim



BOBERG

HURRICANE BRIEFS

Captain Manuel Davila is a man with a lot of pull. In fact, last month he pulled out 600 teeth.

Captain Davila is the dental officer on the USNS Corpus Christi Bay, anchored in the South China Sea off the coast near Vung Tau. Two or three times a week, Cpt. Davila flies by helicopter to villages on the mainland where he provides the people with free dental care.

"We call it medicine in the marketplace," said the captain. "In addition to treating patients, we're trying to get the Vietnamese to practice regular oral hygiene. One of my next projects is to distribute tooth paste and brushes at each village that I visit."

About 75–100 people usually show up to see Cpt. Davila on each of his trips.

"Sometimes they bring the complete family, 4 or 5 kids, and the mother and father," he said.

Flying in several times a week for six-hour long teeth-pulling sessions doesn't seem to bother Cpt. Davila.

"Once you establish rapport with them, they're no longer afraid of you, and they keep coming back."

"It's great to get off ship once in a while," he said.

A new road facilitating travel between Long Cong Hamlet and a neighboring hamlet was recently constructed by US Army Engineers.

It is named for Specialist 5 Ward Norton III, killed when his bulldozer overturned while working on the road site.

Long Cong Hamlet is located in southern Tay Ninh Province, Vietnam, where it forms a triangle with Go Dau Ha Village to the southwest, and Suoi Cao Hamlet to the south. But until Norton Road was completed, only a network of cart trails connected Long Cong with Go Dau Ha, and the in-between hamlet of Phuoc Thanh.

These cart trails are simply wide paths between rice paddies. The same rains which flood the paddies from April through October also flood the trails. For seven months, the paths are impassable, and then during the dry season suspected Viet Cong mines prevent extensive use.

Phuoc Thanh Hamlet is less than four miles from Long Cong. But to get there, the people had to travel around the triangle in the opposite direction through Suoi Cao and Go Dau Ha, a distance of almost 11 miles.

The people of the hamlet went to the hamlet and village chiefs and eventually to the national government, requesting permission and funds to build a road. Permission and funds were granted.

The US Military Assistance Command team in Khiem Hanh coordinated the support of American units in the area, and Vietnamese Popular Force troops were trained to sweep for mines.

Alpha Company, 168th Engineer Battalion provided heavy equipment and operators, and the first non-military road project in III Corps Tactical Zone in recent years was begun (others are now in progress).

Now, Norton Road is of great importance to hamlet life. There is a regular stream of bicycle, motorcycle, cart, and even cattle traffic to and from Long Cong. Norton Road isn't used by military vehicles or convoys, so the hamlet people really consider it their own.

New communications link

Ever wonder what Vietnamese civilians think about working for Americans? This request was recently submitted by a disgruntled worker after a bad day.

1. when i arrived at macv II bldg T-1640 to fix it, found that the rains had dislodged a large number of the roof. so i rigged up a beam with a pulley at the top of the bldg and hoisted up a couple of barrels full of tile.

2. when i fixed the bldg, there was a lot of tile left over, i hoisted the barrel back up again and secured the line at the bottom and went up and filled the barrel with the extra tile. then i went down to the bottom to cast off the line.

3. unfortunately, the barrel of tile was heavier than i was and before i knew what was happening the barrel started down, jerking me off the ground. i decided to hang on and half way up met the barrel coming down and received a severe blow on the shoulder.

4. i then continued to the top banging by hand against the beam and getting my fingers jammed in the pulley. when the barrel hit the ground it burst its bottom allowing all the tile to spill out. i was now heavier than the barrel and so started down again at high speed.

5. halfway down i met the barrel coming up, and received severe injuries by my shin. when i hit the ground i landed on the tile getting several painful cuts from the sharp edges.

6. at this point i must have lost my presence of mind because i let go of the line. the barrel than came down giving me another heavy blow on the head and putting me in the hospital.

i respectfully request sick leave. nguyen van teo

"Cowboy Lead, this is Cowboy 23." "Go ahead 23." "Roger Cowboy Lead, you're not going to believe this, but my skids just broke."

This radio conversation occurred recently while WO1 Michael Nicholaou, aircraft commander, was engaged in picking up 7th Division ARVN troops at Fire Support Base Moore, four miles east of Cai Lay.

The aircraft had suffered a material failure in the skid support section of the UH-1H. At this point Cowboy Lead instructed WO Nicholaou to return to Bearcat (home of the 335th Avn Co). WO Nicholaou then requested that the maintenance crews at Bearcat be standing by to advise him.

After the maintenance team received word of the situation, Cpt. Richard, the maintenance officer, determined that it would be best to change the skids while the aircraft was hovering! Cpt. Cseak then had his men remove the skids from an aircraft that was in for an inspection. This was accomplished by lifting the aircraft off the ground with a 5-Ton wrecker truck.

Before WO Nicholaou's arrival, the maintenance crew was ready with their tools and skids to replace the defective ones on the aircraft.

Forty minutes after the skids broke, WO Nicholaou arrived at Bearcat. It took only ten minutes to remove the old skids. Now the most critical point of the operation was at hand. If another emergency developed, if the engine failed, the aircraft would be lost with possible injuries to the personnel involved. Fire trucks and an ambulance were standing by just in case something did go wrong. The crew worked rapidly to put the new skids in place, while WO Nicholaou continued to hover the aircraft. Ten minutes more and the new skids were on, and WO Nicholaou put the aircraft on the ground.

The Kiowa—latest in airmobility.

The Army's light observation helicopter (OH-6A Cayuse) which entered combat with the 1st Cav in late 1966 is nearing completion of its role in the famed hunter-killer team.

Through necessity rather than choice the aircraft, affectionately known as "loach," "roach," or "flying goose egg" by its pilots, is handing its mission to the newer shark-tailed, slope-nosed OH 58A "Kiowa."

Loach enthusiasts who have used the "tough bird in a tough war" for scouting missions are a little skeptical of the Kiowa's potential. "It's acceleration isn't as good," commented one loach veteran, "and it doesn't hover as well either."

But the advantages of the newer model are lower cost, larger capacity, smoother flight and longer range. The Kiowa also has a better auto-rotation characteristic: inertia of its weighted rotor enables it to coast better than a half a mile without power.

Warrant Officer Richard Grubb, 25th Aviation Company (Corps), has flown 75 hours in the Kiowa. He thinks the Kiowa is a better courier ship and VIP carrier than the loach. "It's quieter, especially in the passenger area. Wind buffeting used to be quite a problem with the loach." Visibility is also increased.

The Kiowa is filling a tri-fold mission begun by the loach. Aside from its primary function, light observation work, the Kiowa augments the fixed wing bird-dog fleet and the bubble topped choppers, (nearly obsolete) by directing artillery strikes and low level observation.

The Kiowa has demonstrated its abilities as the Army's only intermediate sized helicopter, but its field reliability has been relatively untouched. Armed with a mini-gun, the Kiowa will soon have a chance to prove itself.

The Customs Department and Post Office Department have expressed increasing concern over contraband items—weapons, narcotics and explosives—entering the US in parcel mail from Vietnam.

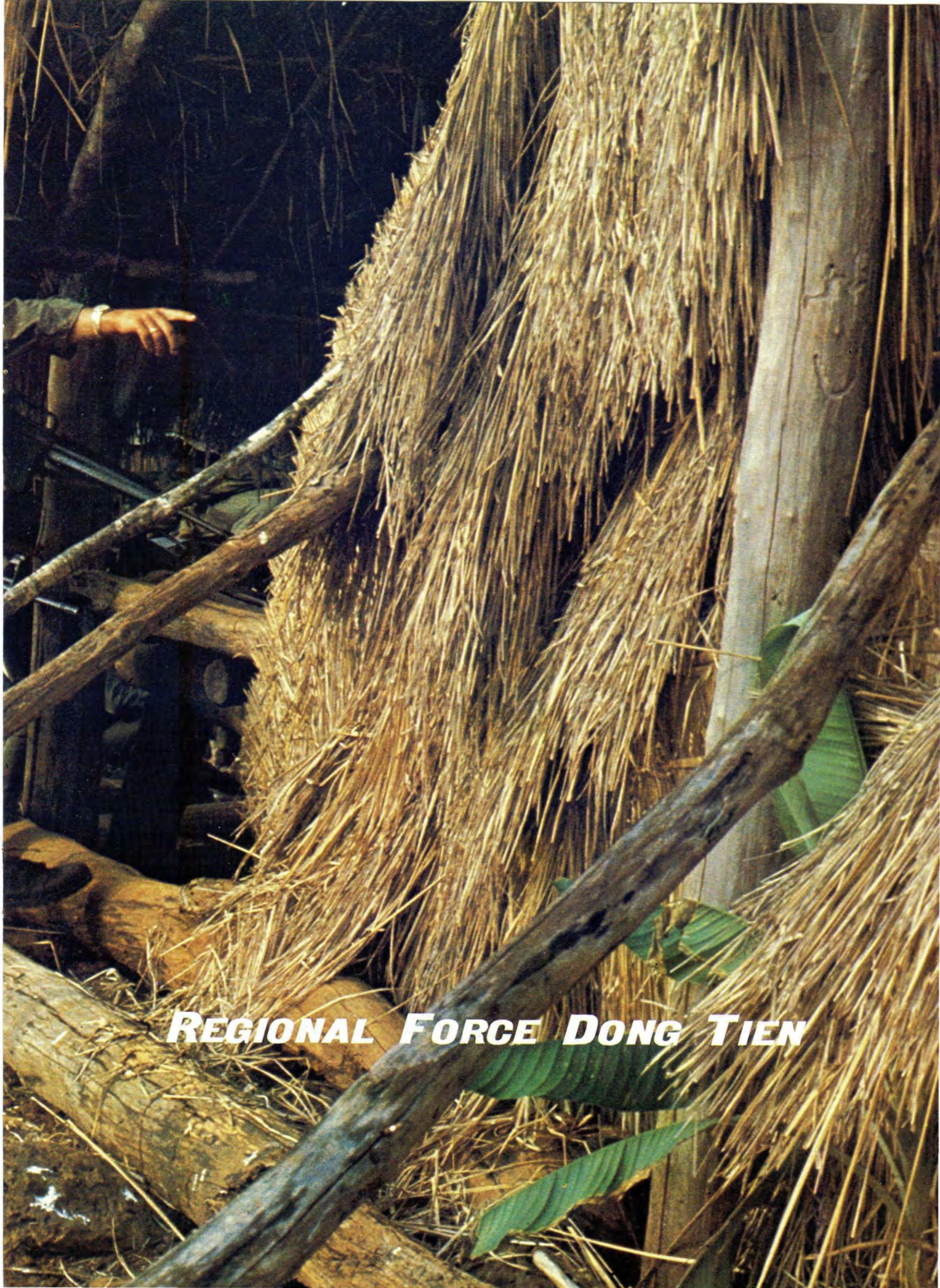
According to military officials there are certain items soldiers can mail from Vietnam. But before shipping any item, the soldier should check with his commanding officer or the proper postal authorities.

When a person ships contraband items, he is violating very strict laws, but also dangering the lives of personnel working for postal transportation and delivery units.

Parcels are being examined both in the U.S. and Vietnam postal channels. Two machines are presently being used by officials to help detect such items: fluoroscope (a device for observing the shadows projected upon a fluorescent screen by objects put between it and a direct beam of X-rays or other radiation), and mine detectors. Postal clerks are rigorously enforcing the provisions that parcel contents and their value be declared and the sender/addressee be properly identified.

If illegal items are found, the violater is subject to punishment by federal courts for breaching U.S. custom laws. Federal courts can impose a sentence of one to five years in a federal prison or a $5,000 fine.

US and Vietnamese RF troops on combined search operation


REGIONAL FORCE DONG TIEN

Doctor Thomas A. Dooley spent his life treating the people of Asia. After many years in that part of the world he summarized, "I believe that it behooves those of us who attempt to aid in a foreign land to be content with small achievements. We must not attempt to build dynasties. We must try to build at the level of the people, or just one step ahead, always planning it so that the Asian can ultimately take over."

In July of 1969 the United States launched a program called "Dong Tien" (Progress Together), under which some US troops have been working, eating, fighting—and even at times dying together with Vietnamese soldiers. One such unit is the 3/7th Infantry.

by Lieutenant Bill Watson

THE POINT MAN signaled to the rest of the patrol to halt, and motioned the platoon leader and Regional Force sergeant forward. The two observed a small trail worn from recent use. One point in the trail angled toward a swampy area.

Sergeant First Class Ronald J. Reid, platoon leader, placed his men for security then went with the reconnaissance element to search the path leading into the swamp.

"The Regional Forces spotted it almost immediately. If a person wasn't looking right at it I don't understand how he could see it. But the Vietnamese have a sixth sense about these things."

Behind a huge tree and covered with brush was an enemy cache—cigarettes, rice, sugar, fish, tea, and milk were stored for future use. It even held 12 cans of ovalteen.

The patrol's find was radioed to the company commander—then the men began preparation for the night ambush.

It felt good to drop those 50-to-60 pound packs, even if the hotel accomodations for the night were far from the best. The two sergeants, one from Maryland and one from a little hamlet "somewhere" in South Vietnam, sat in the middle of the perimeter and discussed plans for the night's operation.

"We usually talk with hand signals. My sergeant counterpart carries a book with him during the whole seven day operation that translates the English into Vietnamese. These people really want to learn."

The two decided on a triangle ambush and informed their men accordingly.

"We employ two different methods. Sometimes the elements are mixed with both type soldiers, and at other times the elements consist of only American or Vietnamese. Both methods have proved successful."

The trail gets dark and the vigil begins. "We used to have some problems keeping the Vietnamese quiet (night discipline) and it bothered the American troops. But in only one month since we began this type operation the Regional Forces have learned the importance of night discipline and abide by it, knowing it might save their lives."

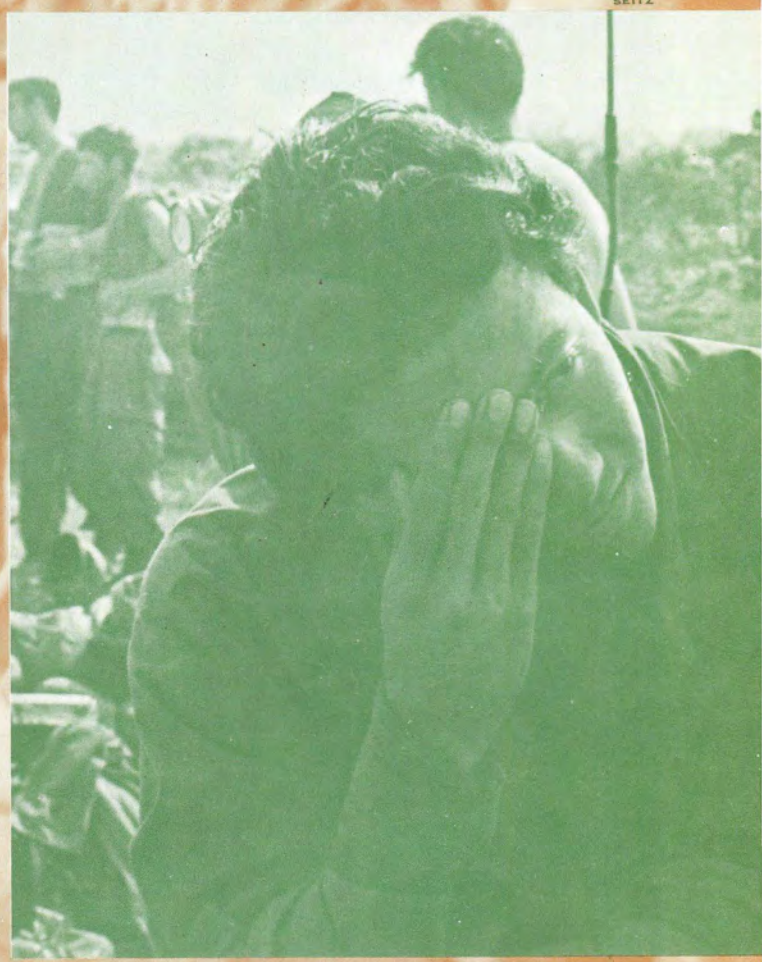
Morning comes with no "action" during the night. This is the seventh day and the patrol heads toward base camp, Fire Support Base Teresa.

FSB Teresa is the R&R center for soldiers assigned to B Company 3/7th Infantry, of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade. This R&R center is not like the ones a soldier finds at Tokyo or Sydney, but it affords a welcome sight to the "foot-soldier" after a week in the "boonies."

Located five miles southeast of Xuan Loc it acts as a coordination point for the combined "Dong Tien" effort. A hundred yards down a dusty path is the RF compound commanded by Captain Nguyen Quoc Ngu, affectionally known to his American counterparts as "the Dai-uy." *pronounced die-wee*

Unit members talk over the operation—behind a tree and covered with brush was an enemy cache.

SEITZ



SEITZ

SEITZ

Both soldiers have acquired the skill every soldier learns—to find a place to relax at a moment's notice

"The Dai-uy is a hard working individual and a topnotch soldier," relates Captain Robert L. Mattin, Bravo's company commander. "We coordinate at least three times a day and more if a hot operation is in process."

Both captains stay in radio contact with each patrol out on operation. When the American patrol leader calls to inform his commander on unusual events the RF leader does likewise.

"We have only been here one month," said Cpt Mattin, "and the RFs have learned so much."

"But this is a two-way street," he continued giving much credit to their will to learn and their knowledge of the terrain. "These people can always spot things in the field that it is difficult for us to find, not being used to the enemy's tactics, method of fighting and living. But we are improving as are the RFs."

The RFs have acquired skills such as noise discipline, all-night guard without sleep, setting out claymore mines, preparing ambushes, and initiating action against the enemy. They have even acquired the skill every soldier learns shortly after being inducted into the army—to find a place to relax and fall asleep on a moment's notice.

The idea of the operation was to build confidence in the regional forces, to get them out of their hamlets, to keep them out after dark.

"The RFs now know they can count on air and artillery power. This helps quite a bit. They don't mind fighting night or day now because they know dustoff is only a radio call away."

At night Cpt Ngu sends out six man ambush patrols to guard the surrounding hamlets. These patrols consist of only RFs. "Not long ago these men were eight to five soldiers. It's hard to train an eight hour day army. But now with the American support they no longer fear the night and the long hours needed by each man."

Perhaps President Nixon put it best when he said, "You can't fight other people's wars for them. As Vietnamization progresses, it will be a test of whether the United States, without committing combat troops, can provide the kind of aid and inspiration that will enable Asian countries to handle insurgency-invasions of this magnitude."

THE FREE PORT OF CHOT RON

by Captain David Givens

FREE PORT. To travelers or spy novel enthusiasts, the words alone conjure images of Oriental centers of sin and intrigue.

From either the South Vietnamese or Cambodian border stations, Chot Ron (market in the sun) looks very unimpressive—a sprawling collection of straw and tin roofed shacks situated in the shadow of Nui Ba Den (Black Virgin Mountain). It seems the farthest thing in the world from Hong Kong.

None the less, although it is not a port, Chot Ron is in every sense of the word "free." It is at the juncture of the Cambodian border, and Vietnamese National Highway 1, about 40 miles northwest of Saigon. The "Open Market," as Americans in the area prefer to call it, caters to anyone from both sides of the border. A continuous flow of people moves along the muddy paths that lead from Cambodia to the market.

Most of the trading is done in livestock and farm produce from

Cambodian girl at the market.

GIVENS

both countries. But products from more distant areas also find their way into the market. Tibetan jade is shipped down the Mekong River, joined en route by products from Thailand, Burma, Laos and Cambodia. The products are then transported to the market.

Chinese and North Korean products are imported into Cambodia, and transported by various means to the market. Ceramics and other Vietnamese manufactured items are shipped up from Saigon along with U.S. and Japanese products from the thriving Saigon black market.

On a good day one can find Communist Chinese crockery, reputedly among the best in the world, Thai silk, Tibetan jade, Cambodian ivory, French perfume, Japanese cameras, American whiskey, and every conceiveable brand of cigarettes.

The prices of U.S. manufactured items and of those from the American Post Exchange system are extremely high. U.S. cigarettes and liquor may go for five times their original price.

Fifty-dollar Japanese radios sell for $200. Ivory and jade trinkets, on the other hand, are available for perhaps one-tenth of their U.S. value. Like most markets in Asia all of the prices are, to some degree, negotiable.

Trade at the market, which is carried on with little regard for taxes or import restrictions of either country, is, of course, extra-legal. It is tolerated by both governments primarily because it is traditional in a land that thrives on tradition, and because it is done on such a small scale that while the stimultion of the local economy is significant, the overall impact on the national economy is negligible.

There are, however, more sinister aspects to the market. Cambodia is the traditional supplier of narcotics to Vietnam. It would seem, then, that the open market would be an ideal target for narcotics smugglers.

To combat this, the Republic of Vietnam keeps a Regional Force company stationed at the market to provide security and local control. There are police checkpoints along Highway 1 that check for narcotics leaving the market and for items of supplies, going in.

Although narcotics would probably be made available in the market to a person with the necessary contacts to get it, it is doubtful that a significant amount enters the country in that way. Presumably it is easier to transport contraband across the border by routes that are under less intensive scrutiny.

In fact, all of the drugs that have been confiscated were taken by patrols at other locations. Primarily, this has been marijuana. No American in the area recalls any opium or other hard drugs ever being captured.

From a military point of view, the market poses a more serious threat. Cambodia, of course, is the sanctuary where North Vietnamese troops quarter, resupply, and stage offensive operations in South Vietnam. The market serves as a supply and intelligence gathering place for these troops. Military supplies are scrupulously prevented from entering the market to prevent them from being used by the North Vietnamese.

Food for the troops in Cambodia does not come from the market, although nearby units rely very heavily on the market for foodstuffs. In any case, the total amount of food in the market would not feed a regiment, and there has never been any indication of the enemy shipping food from Vietnam to Cambodia. Rather the opposite has been the case. As with other contraband, military supplies usually cross the border at other more covert locations.

North Vietnamese do, however, come into the market. Young military age Vietnamese men in military type clothing, who speak with a Northern accent can be seen entering the market from Cambodia. Primarily, they make purchases of sundry items such as cigarettes and liquor. They also look for anything of intelligence value.

From a visitor's point of view, the market is of interest primarily because it is unique. Although the bargaining is more voluminous in Hong Kong and Singapore is more appealing to the eye, Chot Ron, by its insignificance is vastly more exotic.

As is the case with many unknown local attractions throughout the world, Chot Ron's attraction to a visitor is amplified by the fact that visitors are so rare.

'Market traders move freely along this trail which crosses the Cambodian border

GIVENS

Ham Tan's Hoi Chanhs

by Specialist 5 Mike Tharp

CHASING WINDMILLS might play a significant role in the pacification of Binh Thuy Province.

The machine that plagued Don Quixote in arid Spain could portend a windfall of agricultural develop-

REIMER

ment in this seasonally dry, hot eastern province.

George Peters, deputy senior advisor for the province, recently discovered 32 rusting Taiwanese windmills half-hidden over four years near the provincial administrative offices at Ham Tan.

Peters' recognition of the necessity for irrigation in the province is anything but quixotic. "The resettled areas around here lack adequate water," he said. "We're refurbishing these windmills in hopes they might be of use during the dry season."

If the windmill idea gets off the drawing board, it will be an additional drawing card for the province's Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program of readmitting, rehabilitating and resettling ex-Viet Cong throughout the Ham Tan area.

Four hamlets of resettled Hoi Chanh (the designation once they have completed Chieu Hoi rehabilitation) have achieved stability through the program. They are Phuoc Binh, Bac Binh, Van Binh and the Chieu Hoi hamlet near Tan Linh.

Peters understates the success of the program in his province. "We have practically no Chieu Hois and as a result we do much better," he said.

The province was established as a relocation center for refugees in 1957 by then President Diem. With the influx of people from the north, population swelled from 17,000 to over 65,000.

Although Binh Thuy has been

One of Binh Tuy's Chieu Hoi centers nestled along the coastal plain

REIMER

Time out at the community swing.

Fishing boats near one of the coastal centers.

historically secure, the threat of VC attack looms as close as some of the hazy black mountains northwest of Ham Tan. Seven persons have been ambushed in the past 19 months.

Water is only part of the problem and windmills only part of the solution in pacifying the province. There are no American combat troops and only one platoon of ARVN military police in Ham Tan. Since combat operations in a locale usually generate response to the Chieu Hoi program, there are few Hoi Chanh in Binh Thuy Province.

Still, province officials provide for the possibility. Gay pastel signs on downtown corners advertise the success of the local program in attaining "Hoa Binh"—peace. There is a 100-person capacity Chieu Hoi center in Ham Tan, initial step in the rehabilitation process. Shortly before Tet this year it contained 14 Chieu Hois, 11 men and three women.

Those who have deserted the Viet Cong live from six to eight weeks in the center. They eat, sleep and practice a trade such as carpentry, sewing or printing and receive 50 piasters a day from the Chieu Hoi Ministry to supplement their subsistence level.

Running water and drains are novelties for the center. A barbershop, dispensary, kitchen, dormitory,

Village dwellings are adequate-plus by local standards.

REIMER

REIMER

airy meeting hall and courtyard comprise the spartan facilities.

Pham Manh, 33, a former primary school teacher, served with the Viet Cong in Hoai Duc for nearly a year. Why did he Chieu Hoi? "I decided it was a poor situation," he said. "The VC tell lies." He plans to become a government propaganda official when he leaves the center. "I received much help from here but I want to leave," he said.

While at the center many of the Chieu Hois participate on an armed propaganda team which literally beats the bushes to recruit Viet Cong and sympathizers into the program. This is one way the recruiters show their sincerity in reforming.

Ho Thi Phan, 15, was captured in March by the Viet Cong. "All protection was gone from our village and so they took me," she said. At the center she is learning to sew and hopes to be reunited soon with her family in the Hoai Duc District.

When the Hoi Chanh leave the center, they are resettled in one of the nearby hamlets to begin a new or resume an old way of life.

Binh Phuoc lies on the sandy crest of a hill on the outskirts of Ham Tan. Its simple huts house about 136 families, all of them resettled Hoi Chanhs.

Wind buffets the village 15 hours daily and the windmills could transform the bleak furrows into lush vegetation. A small stream provides a natural watershed but power is needed to pump the water to the fields. Peters' windmills might churn enough to irrigate the rice, green beans, onions, lettuce, cabbage and manioc capable of growing in the area's sandy soil.

But for now the villagers squint into the sun and shield their faces from flying grit as they quarry rock for a highway fill or build a bridge to cross the stream to a highway. They scrape the earth with pitted hoes, raise bright-eyed children and wait for the monsoon when the road

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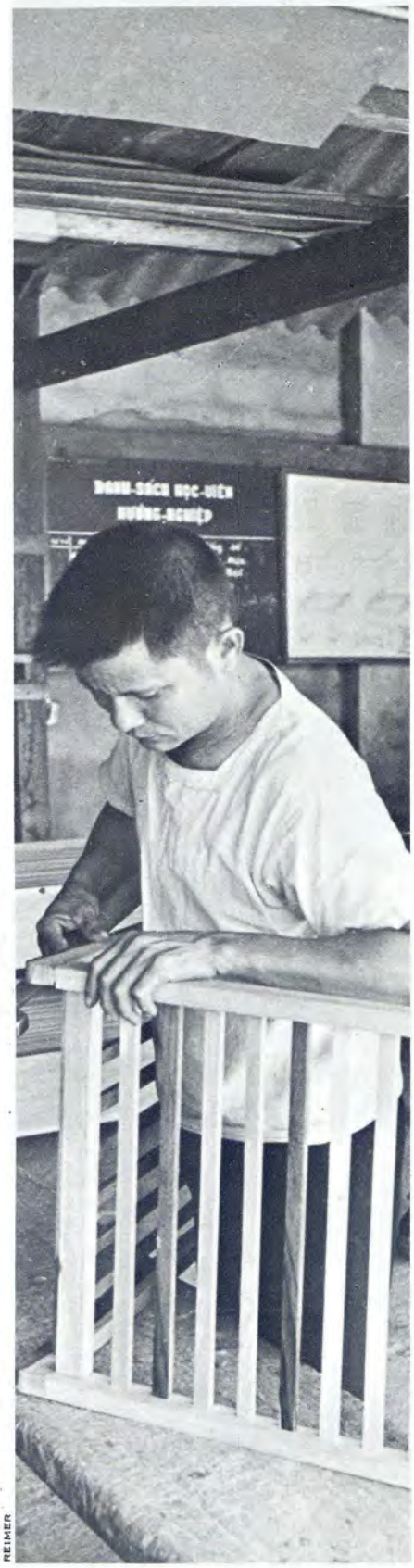


REIMER

Former anti-government agitators now build new lives behind sewing machines and in cabinet making shops

becomes glue but the crops prosper.

Slogans sprout over their gateposts amid the vines: "There is no peace under communism."

Vo Thong, 41, father of six, farmed in a Hoai Duc District Viet Cong village for over a year. "I lived like a bum," he said. "If I raised 100 kilos of rice, the VC would take 70. Here I have more freedom though I must work hard and walk far to the rice paddies."

Tran Hon, 57, a deputy village chief in 1965, made charcoal for over five months with the Viet Cong near Chinh Duc. "Now I stay home and work, though I am very sick," he said. His family also has six children.

Ho Van Nhi is 10 and wears a scarf-like cap on his head. "It must be worn for three years," his mother explained."His brother was killed in a battle four months ago on Highway 1." Her son now helps her grow pulpy squash and papayas.

During the day the villagers quarry rock, bake charcoal in the jungle, farm or build the bridge, currently the hamlet's central project. A three-year-old school draws about 250 children to class. The temple, vocational building and meeting hall surround the school.

Rural Development cadre leader Nguyen Thanh Xuan said, "We have a difficult way to live because of the dryness. We support and help to maintain the land."

Peters notes that Binh Phuoc's Hoi Chanhs and refugees in the valley below have "an attitudinal problem. They're not interested in long-range development—they just wait for the war to end so they can go back home."

Some of the hamlet's inhabitants have been here for three years and Binh Phuoc is more of a home than any they have known.

"We can make everyone rich if a few changes are made," said the deputy senior advisor. "In a time of peace this could be a tourist attraction, especially for hunters—there are tiger, elephant, deer and boar throughout the province. It's only a matter of time and of breaking up a few logjams. Besides the obvious one of the war, there's water, rural electrification, diversification of agriculture programs to complete."

The discoverer of windmills compared his province to his west Texas homeland. "When I was a boy I lived on a ranch and farm without running water, electricity—the modern conveniences. Now it is a rural area 'with it' and Binh Thuy is a rural area 'without it.' "

NGUYEN'S WORLD TODAY

by Specialist 5 Don Sockol

NGUYEN VAN NGAN is 41. He is tired of fighting. Nine years ago, when he joined the Viet Cong, the insurgents controlled his village and most of his province.

But time has played a trick on the revolution. The men in Nguyen's company spend most of their time in hiding now. Two years ago company strength, already

lowered during the 1968 Tet Offensive, was 120 men. Now it is 29.

For almost a decade, Nguyen was able to visit his wife and eight children only once or twice a year. The pleas of his wife to leave the VC and return to his family weighed on his heart. His brothers' children had grown and their sons are ARVN soldiers. Nguyen's own five sons are young men now and belong to the People's Self-Defense Force in the village.

In 1961 when Nguyen first joined the VC, he thought of himself as a nationalist fighting "...to liberate the people." The people helped him and his comrades.

But something strange happened to Nguyen's world. He became a hunted man. His nephews and his own sons had taken up arms against their government's enemy. And Nguyen...was the enemy.

In January, Nguyen left his VC unit and became a statistic on the GVN's Chieu Hoi charts.

What happened to Nguyen's world?

Nguyen Van Ngan was born in 1929, the youngest of six children. There were already three brothers—10, 12 and 30—and two sisters—10 and 15. Their mother died when Nguyen was six years old and he does not remember anything about her. His father was a farmer who rented one hectare (2.4 acres) of land on which he could grow 2,000 kilograms of rice each year. But he had to give 600 kilograms of rice to the landlord for the rent and sometimes Nguyen heard his father complain that the landlord charged too much. Sometimes there was not enough food to eat.

"My father was a very cheerful man," Nguyen said. "He would often tell us little jokes, but I don't remember any of the stories. He spent many evenings visiting with his friends, drinking Vietnamese wine."

When Nguyen was 12 years old, his father died, and Nguyen became an orphan. His older brothers and sisters were all married by that time and living in their own homes. Nguyen lived by himself in his father's house.

"I was very lonely and very sad," he said. "During the day I worked on the land. At night I would come home and cook for myself. My brothers and sisters did not take me in and I felt like nobody cared about me."

Nguyen could read and write, because he spent three years in school when he was younger. But this wasn't an education through which he could raise his position.

So he continued working his father's hectare of land and sometimes hired himself out to other farmers to make some extra money. He struggled through his lonely adolescense.

Sometimes he would visit his brothers and sit

quietly while they discussed politics. They talked about nationalism and said things against the French.

"It made me afraid when the French came to the village," Nguyen recalled. "Sometimes they would maltreat the people. Once they came and forced me to work as a laborer in the banana trees. They didn't give us any money and we had to go to nearby houses to ask for food. I was very small and couldn't carry the trees, so the French said I was lazy and beat me."

Sometimes, Nguyen said, the French took the people's chickens and ducks without paying for them.

When he was 16, the Viet Minh came for the first time to his village.

"There were about 40 or 50 of them," he said. "Many were from our village, but mostly from other hamlets. The Viet Minh told us to fight against the French, to take Vietnam back from the French. Everybody talked about this a lot when they left and thought it was a good thing. But we had no weapons.

"We helped the Viet Minh build road blocks and also made booby traps against the French. Once they were going to attack an outpost and offered me a rifle to come with them. But I was too afraid.

"Sometimes the Viet Minh and the French fought near the village and once the French came and burned the houses of the men who were Viet Minh. The Vietnamese soldiers who fought for the French, though, were worse. They raped women in the village."

But the Viet Minh grew stronger and stronger. "They killed the French and got their weapons," Nguyen said.

After independence, village life settled back into centuries-old routine. Nguyen had gotten married already, in 1952; he met his wife while working on the land of another farmer.

"There was peace and the people were happy," Nguyen said. The people had only one complaint, an age-old complaint, but one that was ready for exploitation: "The landlord got too much rent."

In 1960, the Viet Cong came for the first time to Nguyen's village. They told the people, "The landlord gets too much rent. We will try to get low rent for you." And they won many hearts and minds.

It was not until a year later, though, that the VC came back and asked for men. They did not talk of Ho Chi Minh and said nothing of communism. They only talked of "liberating the people." But the French were gone. From whom would the people be liberated?

The rallying cry of the VC was: "We will bring down President Diem."

"President Diem was very bad," said Nguyen. "There were high taxes of all kinds. The Viet Minh had talked to the people about getting lower rents on the land. Under Diem, rent was very high. (It was actually the same as before 1954, but the people were more demanding now.) The soldiers and police forced the people to work without pay, cutting trees and building outposts. Sometimes they stole from the people."

Later, Nguyen said, the people were to add the Strategic Hamlet program to their list of grievances against Diem. Under the defensive measure people were forced to move into the villages from the countryside.

Nguyen enlisted with the VC. "I thought we would bring Diem down and have a new government. I didn't know what kind. I hoped North and South Vietnam would be unified, but did not think about communism at all."

Nguyen left his family to undergo basic training in a sparsely populated area near the Cambodian border. For three months he worked from 4 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The first 30 minutes of the day were spent doing PT, including a half-mile run. Then they would leave the camp, a precaution against a GVN attack. If there was no trouble in the camp, they would return at 8 a.m., have a breakfast of rice and fish, and then attend a three hour political lesson.

"They taught us about the liberation of the poor people," Nguyen said. "They told us that at the end of the war, the farmers would own their own land and the workers in rice or saw mills would own the mills. They talked a lot, but I don't remember them saying anything about communism. They only talked about 'liberation.' "

After a two-hour period for lunch and rest, the men gathered again for a four-hour class in some aspect of military tactics. Their free time after that was devoted to sports.

Nguyen was given target practice only three times, firing 20 rounds each time.

After training, Nguyen returned to his own district to join a local guerrilla force unit. He would have been a private if the VC had ranks, he said, but the VC only have "positions." He was an infantryman. In 1963 he would become an assistant squad leader; in 1964, a squad leader; in 1965, a platoon leader, and; in 1967, an assistant company commander.

"We were promised that when peace came we would have rank," Nguyen said.

Those first years were good years for the VC. They controlled the area. "We did not worry about the GVN. We were the GVN," Nguyen said.

The Viet Cong seized all the land of the large landowners and each unemployed family or tenant farmer in Nguyen's village was given one hectare of land to work.

At first there was no rent on the land. Later the VC began collecting 1,000 piasters ($8.40) or 2,000

piasters ($16.80) a year, depending on the size of the family, Nguyen said.

By this time, of course, the United States, which still had only advisors here, was being dubbed by the VC as the new colonial power.

"We were told that first the U.S. would send advisors and then the advisors would become high military officers of the GVN. Soon they would have power over the whole country and be just like the French."

The year 1964 was a heady one for Nguyen. He was admitted to the outer fringes of the inner sanctum. He was finally tutored in the theories of communism. "They promised me I would be taken in as a member of the Communist Party." The promise was never kept. More than five years later, Nguyen was to say he "didn't care."

But Nguyen, at that time, was rising in military position, and getting additional satisfaction from the success of the "Cause."

"The people liked the VC," Nguyen said. "The villagers encouraged their sons and brothers to join the VC."

An interesting feature of the Viet Cong "pacification program" is the order, set down from high places, that the people must not be forced to work.

"We could ask people to help us do something," said Nguyen, "but if they refused that was the end of it." A curious corollary to this ideal of social justice, however, was added by Nguyen. "The people usually did what we asked. They could turn us down the *first* time, but if they turned us down the second time, there might be trouble."

This vague threat was unnecessary in those years, though, according to Nguyen, when the VC were popular rulers.

In February of 1967, Nguyen decided it was time for him to get back to the farm. The communists had promised they would take care of his family while he was gone, but as it turned out, his wife was having to work awfully hard to feed their children. "I got mad, so I quit."

Nguyen was gone on his "rest" until April 1968, when he reluctantly rejoined his unit. He refused at first, but a friend hinted to him if he did not return, there might be some trouble, and Nguyen himself might even be killed.

This rather drastic re-enlistment pitch was an indication of the trouble the VC were now in. During the year Nguyen was gone, the tide had turned. The 1968 Tet Offensive had taken place.

"When I left the unit it was very strong," Nguyen said. "When I got back it was very weak. I don't know clearly what happened, because I wasn't there, but I know we lost many men during Tet."

Many things were changed after Nguyen got back. For one thing, the NVA were suddenly a big factor in Nguyen's area. NVA were assigned with his company. And there were problems.

On the command level, said Nguyen, the NVA were often high-handed, ordering the VC to do things the VC did not want. On lower levels, Nguyen made the remarkable statement:

"The NVA and VC soldiers don't like each other."

Nguyen said the VC is a better soldier than the NVA and noted it is common knowledge that they were "very slow." He did add a liberal note, commenting that, "I've lived with NVA soldiers a long time and some NVA are very good."

There was another change that took place while Nguyen was gone—VC relations with the people.

"After Tet the people had to pay a high tax to the VC," said Nguyen, adding the significant observation that, "The people don't encourage the men to join the VC any more."

There are many people who still like the VC because they have VC relations, Nguyen said, and others who support the GVN because their sons are ARVNs.

"But many people like the GVN now, because of the 'Land to the Tiller' program, the building of schools, and dispensaries, and road repair. The people think the GVN and the U.S. help them. The life of the people is very good now."

Nevertheless, Nguyen said, the people want the U.S. to leave, "...so the war will stop."

The increasing comfort of the people does not do much for the morale of the increasingly beleaguered VC.

"The VC can only operate in small units now," Nguyen said. Supplies are harder to get. We have enough, but not for big operations.

"Vietnamese units are the VC's main target now and if an ARVN force was very small we would attack it. The RFs and PFs (Regional and Popular Forces) make it very difficult to get into villages to get supplies and see one's family. The men are also afraid now that somebody in the village will show the government soldiers where they are.

"Some of us did slip into villages still under our control during the day, but most of us stayed in bunkers. We would rest all day. We had plenty of time."

Nguyen Van Ngan cannot go back to his old village. He plans to attend a GVN mechanics training school and then settle down in a nice, secure province town. He says he doesn't know when the war will end and he doesn't know who will win.

Nguyen Van Ngan is 41. He is tired of fighting. Nine years ago, when he joined the Viet Cong, the insurgents controlled his village and most of his province.

What happened to Nguyen's world?

My Woes Began with a Woman

Short Story

by Specialist 4 Phil Schieber

AS USUAL, all my troubles started with a woman. In this case *she* was an anopheles mosquito, who one dark night planted a feverish kiss on my lip as I lay snoring in my hootch.

She was rather flighty, as all mosquitoes are, so she loved me and left me. Of course, at the time I was unaware of her passion, and awoke the next morning with a small swelling on my lower lip. Since I look and talk like *Demothenes* with his mouth full of pebbles, I thought nothing of it at the time.

Several days later, though, I began to suspect that my white corpuscles were having a navigational dispute with some unfriendly elements that had infiltrated my blood stream. The Vietnamese sun was frying eggs on the pentaprime pavement, but my teeth were chattering away like a Spanish dancer's castanets. I was freezing to death in the tropics. How ironic, I thought, to die of frostbite so near the equator.

My body was a bowl of olive drab jello when I went vibrating off to the aid station in the middle of the night. I was a bit apprehensive about the trip. Army regulations are a bit hazy about enlisted men getting sick in the middle of the night.

I staggered into the aid station, where a medical specialist was sitting behind a desk, thoroughly absorbed in a medical text, the title of which, I think, was *Case Histories of Social Diseases and Other Problems of the Heart*. It was the only hardbound book I had ever seen with foldouts, which the specialist was devoting much time to studying.

I stood there in front of his desk. The only other sounds were my chattering teeth, the monotonous hum of the fluorescent lights, and his heavy breathing.

After a few minutes, he acknowledged my existence with the usual question.

"Whatsa matter?"

"I think I'm sick," I cleverly replied.

"What makes you think that?"

"My teeth are chattering like a typewriter," I said impatiently.

"So, we'll give you a bell and change your MOS," he laughed.

"If it's not too much trouble, I'd like to have my temperature taken."

"Okay. No sweat. Can't you take a little joke?" he said getting a thermometer.

The first thermometer revealed nothing that would indicate a high temperature since my teeth kept shaking it out.

"It looks like we'll have to take it the other way," he said with a fiendish glint in his eyes. "Or are you going to stop shaking?"

I forced my teeth to stop clacking long enough for the medic to conclude that I had no fever.

"You could use a couple of quarts of anti-freeze," he chortled, "but you don't have a temperature. . . yet."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"I guess we better send you to the hospital. I'll wake up the ambulance driver."

En route to the hospital, the ambulance driver gave me some reassurance.

"No sweat," he said, "We see your type come in all the time. Why, in a few weeks, you'll laugh when you think about how close to death you were tonight."

"Thanks," I said glumly.

Soon the ambulance pulled up to the hospital entrance, and a jovial emergency room NCOIC instructed me to change into my hospital dress blues. While changing, he advised me of my rights as a malarial suspect.

"You secure your valuables in this brown paper bag, then go down to Ward 6 and give 'em this slip of paper along with your health records."

I trudged off to Ward 6, and presented myself to a medic who was watching the cubes melt in his glass of ice water.

"Hello," I said. "They sent me down here. What do I do now?"

"Well, first of all you can button up your pants. We've got women lieutenants in this ward, you know."

I looked down in amazement and discovered that in the misery of my illness I had neglected to batten down the hatches. Promptly doing, correcting this oversight, he led me off to what would be my home for the next few weeks.

We walked down the wing of the ward, past silent forms laying in rows of bunk beds, until we reached mine, which was a lower berth.

He tucked me in and said tomorrow morning they would begin a series of tests to determine my ills. I had the feeling that this place was going to give me the screaming meemies.

I worried no more about freezing to death. My main fear now was that my brain was going to explode. Now I know how a head of cabbage feels sweltering inside a pressure cooker. The pupils in my eyes were expanding and contracting, like a camera freak working his zoom lens, and reality slowly began to fade away.

I wasn't in the Army anymore, I wasn't in the hospital, I was home, back in the land of the free and the home of the brave. Walking through the house, I recalled that I had spent my childhood as a kid, which was a pretty good way to spend it. Just as my mother was telling me to take out the garbage, a medic came bouncing down the aisle of the ward, saying "Good morning, good morning, time to get up and eat a good breakfast," in a voice that would curdle milk.

The first thought that crossed my mind was the penalty for justifiable homicide, but thinking better of it, I allowed the medic, whose name was Chirpy, to proceed unmolested.

However, Specialist Chirpy stopped directly in front of my bed. "What's your name?" he inquired.

I told him, and he looked at his charts.

"Oh yeah," he observed. "How are you feeling now?

I told him I felt pretty good. "When does the next choo-choo leave this place?" I asked him.

"Not so fast, there. Remember you're supposed to be sick, right?" he said. "We'll, run some tests on you the next couple of days. If you pass, you've got malaria."

"Malaria?" I gulped.

A few hours later I was whisked off to the laboratory where blood samples were to be taken.

My memories of the laboratory are vague, as are all traumatic experiences. Inside there was a vivid color picture of Dracula, fangs glistening in the sun, and the medic at the desk spoke with a foreign accent and had a suspicious odor of garlic about him.

"Com een, com een," he said. "I am the blood specialist," he continued. "Please be so kind as to sit right here," he said invitingly, as he rubbed his hands gleefully. Bela Lugosi himself could not have been more charming.

"I think maybe we prick your index finger and see wot koms out," he said casually, "and if the count is satisfied, maybe. . ."

"What a minute!" I screamed casually. "Who's this count you're talking about?"

"Blood count, my friend, blood count," the blood specialist said calmy. "Now sit still, this won' t hurt at all," he said, lying his head off.

With a deft movement of his hand, he pierced my finger, and I whispered ouch under my breath.

"It's all in the wrist," the blood specialist said proudly. "Now we draw some blood from one of your veins, and you can go back to the ward, Hokay?"

By now I was talking like Porky Pig, and by the time I managed to stammer out my objections, his intention had become a deed. Admiring the vial of my blood in the light of the fluorescent lamps, he asked when I was born.

"1946."

"Ah yes. 1946. A good year," he reflected. "But not a great year. You know, you can tell so much about people from their blood. I can't wait to see how your white corpuscles are doing, they're such brave scrappy little fellows you know."

Since I had never talked to one of my corpuscles, the rest of the conversation was lost on me. I left him there on his fantastic voyage and returned to the ward.

I lay down in my bed, as was my habit when I wished to sleep. I was just about to tumble into slumberland, when suddenly there was a great stirring in the bunk above me. I heard the bloodcurdling cry of "Airborne!", and a blue-pajamed patient thudded to the floor by my bed.

Not knowing what to say I kept my mouth shut as he introduced himself. "I'm Jack Brown," he said, "and on behalf of the patients in this ward I would like to welcome you to the dawning of the age of malaria."

I wasn't exactly thrilled to be here, but it was gratifying to see a friendly face again. "Thanks," I said.

"Don't mention it," he answered. "Oh, you'll love it here. See that guy next to you?" he whispered, indicating the prostrate form in the bed next to me.

"Yes," I said.

"Well, he's been here for three weeks with malaria. Only one more week,and he's

going back to the world. No more Vietnam, no more c-rations, no more Charlie. He's got it made if he can just hang on for another week.

"Do you have malaria, too?" I asked Jack.

"Yeah," he said, jogging in place like a prize fighter. "I got it all figured. Twelve more days and a throwup and I'll be leaving this place for good. Back to the world, zoom, zoom, zoom."

"Would you say malaria has affected you in any way," I asked. "No," he said, rolling his eyeballs decisively.

Leaving Jack to his wall climbing and ceiling walking, I tried to go to sleep. My fever was returning. I was hungry, but I felt nauseous. Now I knew what it was like to be a diabetic on Big Rock Candy Mountain.

I lay in a modified stupor for three days and three nights, and on the fourth morning, a nurse approached my bed and tugged on my leg in an attempt to wake me up.

"You're pulling my leg," I mumbled. Even in the face of adversity I try to keep my humor.

"Go ahead, be a wise guy," she said. "But I've got some news for you. You've got malaria."

"Are you sure?" I asked, hoping that there was some mistake.

"Well, we can ask the ouija board again if you think it would do any good."

From his upper berth, Jack's head swung down, and he said, "Congratulations. You re on the way now, baby." What kind do you have, vivax or falciparum?"

"You're lucky," the nurse said, "You've got vivax."

"Gee, that's tough kid," frowned Jack. "Here I was almost hoping you had falciparum. Look at me, I've got it. Only nine more days, and back to the world."

"Yes, thank goodness," the nurse said.

"That's okay with me, sweetie," Jack said intimately. Then with a bloodcurdling wheeze he yelled "Airborne", thudded to the floor and limped off to the latrine.

"That crazy kid," the nurse said quietly. She was near tears. "If he'd only understand that malaria is nothing to joke about. Why he can have recurring attacks the rest of his life, and all he can think about is getting out of here even if he is a bag of bones." She was sniffling now. "Sometimes I wish I'd taught kindergarten like mother wanted. At least there the kids don't get malaria and go around yelling airbone all the time."

She was a beautiful girl, and her moist eyes sparkled.

"There, there," I said. Extending my hand, I said, "Here, you can take my pulse if that will make you feel better."

"Thanks," she said gratefully.

As she sat there on my bed, her delicate fingers resting on my throbbing artery, I studied her. She was truly a phantom of delight—dark brown hair done in a French pixie cut, naturally curly eyelashes that fluttered when she spoke, sky blue eyes (What other color of blue can you call eyes that pure and noble?).

The Vietnamese sun had been kind to her, skin like that of a bronze goddess. She was a Venus de Milo with arms.

Looking into her eyes, I said, "Let me take you away from this."

"Yes," she nodded, "But where?"

"The snack bar," I suggested. It was a lousy suggestion, but there was a war on, and you just have to make the best with what you have.

"Yes, that sounds wonderful," she sighed. "Let me slip into something more comfortable," she said seductively. "I'll be right back."

"Warm up the leftovers, Lord, I'm a coming home," I thought to myself as she walked away, her smock flowing behind her.

She returned without the smock, nattily attired in tropical fatigues and petite jungle boots. "Shall we go?" she offered.

Clad in my baby blue papamas and gun boat slippers, I offered her my arm, and off we went to the snack bar. We found a secluded spot in the corner, between the jukebox and a combat tracker team, complete with scout dogs.

The fan overhead moved in slow circles, and the jukebox was playing some selection by the Credence Clearwater Revival. It was just too much for words.

Regretting that I had not smuggled a bottle of fine wine or cognac into the hospital, I offered her a soft drink.

"No thanks," she said. "I'm trying to stop."

Trying to stop, I thought. A woman of the world, a woman with a past. I was so intrigued that I failed to notice the scout dog was chewing on the leg of my pajamas.

When I felt his hot wet tongue against my leg, I was immediately snatched from my reverie. "Leggo," I said. Apparently the damned dog didn't understand good English, so I said it again, hoping he would get the idea.

By this time, the dog's master had gotten his laughs and he called the cur back to his side. He apologized not too sincerely: "Sorry, bub, guess he thought you was a VC in those spiffy pajamas of yours! Yuk, yuk."

Keeping the little cool I had left, I ignored the ruffian and turned to my beautiful nurse. "If not a soft drink, what would you like?"

"A glass of orange juice," she said provocatively, "and a hot dog with mustard and onions."

As I was heading off to get the food, she pulled me back. "On second thought," she said with a wink that wrinkled up her cute little nose, "forget the onions."

Returning with the hot dogs and orange juice, we talked and dined.

"I'm really sorry that you have malaria," she said. "It's such a terrible illness, and I can just imagine how much you're suffering."

My eyes narrowed as I tried to give the image of one who is bravely enduring unspeakable pain. "Yes," I said, "but if I was healthy I never would have met you."

She sighed. Taking my cue from that, I continued.

"Yes, these are difficult times, but suffering does increase one's appreciation of all those little things that one usually takes for granted."

"But why didn't you take your pill?" she asked with obvious mental anguish.

"It was one of those little things in life I took for granted," I said. "Besides that, the little orange things always gave me the, ah well," I said, stumbling for the right words. "The pills always made me go to the bathroom."

"I know," she said glumly. "They do the same thing to me."

"Then we have something in common," I said in a manner that I hoped Charles Boyer would have approved of.

Our hands touched. She was taking my pulse again.

"I think we'd better get back," she said.

The days passed, and every morning she would sit at my bed and talk to me. My health was rapidly improving, and I began to dread the day when I would have to leave.

There was not much to do in the hospital on the days she didn't work. My airborne companion had departed one night, leaving me this note: "They've been trying to get me to re-up so I can get out of the hospital. The only way I could get out was to re-up. Instead, I put in a 1049 for another ward. Sick people drive me crazy. That's the trouble with hospitals these days. Too many sick people." And that was all I ever heard from him.

As I knew it must, the fateful morning came all too soon.

My nurse sat by my bed, and while taking my pulse said: "You know we can't go on meeting like this. You're cured. You'll be leaving this afternoon." She was near tears.

Trying to be brave, I said, "Tut, tut, my dear. I can always come back and visit you."

Biting her lip, she whispered, "No, I'm afraid that's impossible. "You see, I ETS in three days."

This was shocking news, but I tried to salvage the situation. "But I can come for you when I return to the States."

"I'm afraid that's impossible, too. In four days I'll be married."

"You mean the hot dogs, the orange juice, the pulse taking all that meant nothing to you?"

"They did," she said, "and I'll always remember those good times we had."

"Thanks," I said. "May I ask who the lucky fellow is?"

"Oh, you don't him. He was in this ward with malaria about a month before you arrived. Now he's back in the world, waiting for me." She looked at me sadly for a brief moment, then said, "Take care of yourself, and don't forget to take your malaria pill." And she walked out of my life forever.

Did I say all my troubles started with a woman? Well, they ended that way, too.

THE ORIGIN OF BA RA AND BA DEN

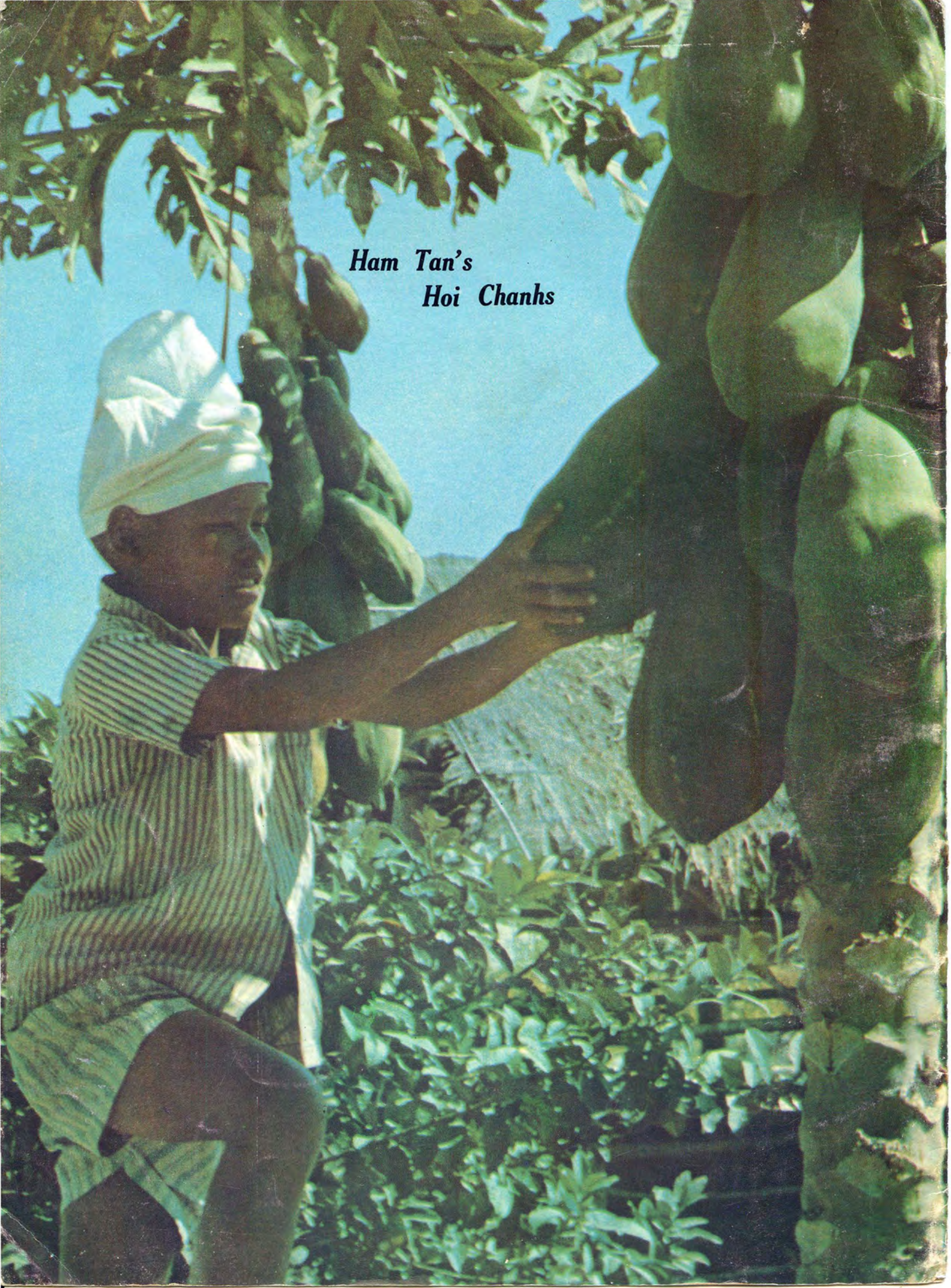
A Vietnamese Legend

MOST EVERYONE IN VIETNAM has heard of Nui Ba Den (Black Virgin Mountain). Fewer are aware of Nui Ba Ra. Both, according to legend, are linked and got their names in this way.

Long ago, there was a Montagnard god named Giang. He had two daughters, Lom and Gieng, both of whom married and led completely different lives. Lom could not get along with her husband and after a few years of fruitless marriage he mysteriously died. Lom lost her reputation among her people and was sent by Giang to a mountain in Tay Ninh. The people nicknamed her mountain Nui Ba Den (Black Virgin Mountain).

Gieng, on the other hand, loved her husband and had many children. Her husband became a very great warrior and, to help ward off possible enemy invasion, both he and Gieng were sent to a mountain in Phuoc Long, as lookouts. The people called their mountain Nui Ba Ra (Mr. and Mrs Mountain).

Today, though Lom, Gieng and her husband have all died, their spirits remain, in the clouds and mist which engulf both mountaintops. Their spirits are said to guard Vietnam from enemy invasions and are the chief reason why the people still believe these mountains to be sacred.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