

# Truly Professionals



Artwork by SP4 Lou Orsan

By 1LT John A. Doran

The northernmost regions of Kontum Province have always been of great tactical significance throughout the years of bitter conflict which have torn Vietnam for more than a generation. The infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail runs past the Tri-Border area where Vietnam is bounded by the neighboring countries of Cambodia and Laos. As a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) infiltration and supply route, the trail serves as the gateway to the population centers of Dak To, Poley Kleng and Kontum City in the Highlands, and as a staging area from which the NVA depart in search of targets in the south, particularly Saigon.

Until early 1969, the defense of this crucial terrain had been the responsibility of the First Brigade of the Famous Fighting Fourth Infantry Division. Today, however, soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) are safeguarding this region of country

and demonstrating to the world their ability to protect their own destiny.

Understandably, the ARVN takeover has not been an easy task. The shift from American to ARVN responsibility has been, of necessity, gradual and has required complex coordination and planning to insure success. As the world looks toward Vietnam, the recurring questions have been: "Can the ARVN someday go it alone? Can they handle it?" Despite skepticism and pessimism in some quarters of the world press, the ARVN in northern II Corps have of late shown the world through their decisive action at Chu Pa Mountain, on "Rocket Ridge" at Dak To, and more recently, at Ben Het, that they are indeed ready and willing to do the job.

As President Nixon decided in June of this year, United States units are being replaced by ARVN in those

ment. The eventual resolution of the conflict, Mr. Nixon has indicated, lies in the ability of the ARVN to take over gradually the responsibility for areas in which U.S. combat forces have operated.

Inevitably the mettle of an army is tested on the battlefield. In II Corps, the battlefield can mean a thickly forested mountain ridgeline, a strategic hilltop, a valley floor where streams and jungle undergrowth mingle in primordial tropical splendor, the commonplace Asian rice paddy, or the streets of a crowded city like Pleiku or Kontum.

The manifold difficulties of conducting sustained combat activities in such an environment will be readily acknowledged by American units which have fought with distinction in the Central Highlands. The 101st Airborne Division, the 173rd Airborne Brigade and, most significantly, the Famous Fighting Fourth Infantry Division have fought with enviable success in the Highlands, particularly in the mountains which ring Dak To. These Americans will attest to the physical stamina needed to fight in the Highlands. And they will also willingly credit the obstinate tenacity of the foe they have fought.

A large part of the responsibility in northern II Corps today has been assumed by the ARVN. How they perform and cope with this awesome responsibility is an indicator to the world—a reflection of Vietnamese progress in the face of adversity. The foreboding mountains



*ARVN soldiers, alert and ready to move out, south of Dak To*

and lush tropical rain forests are the Highland proving grounds for the ARVN. Attention to ARVN activities in the Highlands is constantly focused on the Kontum-Pleiku Province area, where the Government of Vietnam (GVN) has established the 24th Special Tactical Zone (STZ). It is both an operational area and a command, with headquarters centrally located in Kontum City. Here access to Dak To to the north and Pleiku to the south is readily available via Highway 14. Highway 511 connects Kontum with the strategic area of Plei Kleng to the west. As an operational area, the 24th STZ covers Kontum and Pleiku Provinces: as a command it exercises operational control of the ARVN forces in the area.

The man charged with this responsibility is Colonel Nguyen Ba Lien, the Commanding Officer of the 24th STZ. Forces under Colonel Lien's operational control include the 42nd ARVN Infantry Regiment, the 63rd ARVN Artillery Battalion (105 howitzers), and the 3rd ARVN Armored Cavalry Regiment, which secures Highway 14 from Ben Het near the Tri-Border Area

to Kontum City itself. There are also five intelligence platoons and three scout (recon) companies. During several large scale operations, Colonel Lien has also had the crack 11th, 22nd and 23rd ARVN Ranger Battalions under his operational control.

Colonel Lien operates a tactical command post at Dak To, formerly the command post of the First Brigade of the Fourth Infantry Division. In his more recent operations, he has been closely associated with the Division's Second Brigade—the Highlanders—since the First Brigade has moved its operations to An Khe.

The 24th STZ was created in June, 1965, when the 22nd ARVN Infantry Division moved out of Pleiku and Kontum Provinces, leaving behind the 42nd ARVN Infantry Regiment to provide security for the newly formed STZ. The mission of the 24th STZ is twofold—to defeat the enemy within the STZ and to stop Communist infiltration across the western borders.

The NVA has been dealt many significant defeats in the rugged terrain of the Central Highlands by the ARVN forces. In 1968, troops of the 24th STZ killed more than 4,600 enemy forces and captured 1,430 individual and 174 crew-served weapons. Friendly losses were put at 471, giving the ARVN a respectable kill ratio of almost 10 to 1. Operations Binh Tay (Sledgehammer) 48, 49 and 50 earlier this year accounted for over 400 enemy dead. These operations were conducted in the former Chu Pa Mountain sanctuary of an NVA regiment. Thousands of rounds of enemy ammunition and hundreds of weapons of all sizes, along with tons of supplies and foodstuffs, were captured by the troops of the 24th STZ. Operations Dan Quyen (Peoples' Rights) 38, 38A, 40 and 41 took place on the infamous "Rocket Ridge" overlooking Dak To and resulted in the deaths of 1400 enemy soldiers and the capture of a great amount of enemy arms and equipment.

Presently, the 24th STZ is engaged in a continuing effort to thwart attacks on population centers and to expand its pacification program. In December of 1968, the 24th STZ resettled 2,335 Montagnards in the Plei Ia You resettlement area north of Pleiku. Prior to this resettlement, the Montagnards had been the victims of a Viet Cong terrorist campaign and had worked as forced laborers for the enemy. Colonel Lien himself took charge of the resettlement program. As a direct result of his initiative, planning and frequent consultations with the Montagnard leaders, Plei Ia You has become, in the words of a ranking U.S. advisor, "one of the best and most successful resettlement areas in Kontum and Pleiku Provinces."

Colonel Lien, a veteran of 16 years' service, is a graduate of the United States Marine Corps Officers Advanced Course at Quantico, Virginia. Before coming to the 24th STZ, he held a series of command assignments, including one as commander of a Vietnamese Marine Brigade. Colonel Alexander M. Weyand, Senior U.S. Advisor to the 24th STZ, praises Colonel Lien as "the man who makes the 24th STZ go—through accurate intelligence and sound tactics, he's the man who keeps the pressure on the enemy."

Colonel Lien is recognized by others as a thorough tactician and a hard taskmaster. A no-nonsense type of leader, he gets things done. He has shown himself to be cool under fire and patient when the situation requires it. A man of action, he exhibits all the favorable traits Westerners have come to expect in a military leader.

One leader does not make an army, and fortunately Colonel Lien has many able commanders. Lieutenant Colonel Dinh The Thoai, Commander of the 42nd ARVN Infantry Regiment, has made his unit into a hardened, combat-ready and battle-tested fighting force.



Colonel Nguyen Ba Lien, Commander 24th STZ

In the words of one U.S. officer, "The 42nd Regiment has become a top fighting outfit."

The typical soldier of the 24th STZ may find himself taking part in a combat operation, driving children to and from school, doing construction work on a Buddhist pagoda or Catholic school, or participating in local sweep operations. When darkness comes to the Central Highlands, he may be on a patrol or manning a defensive position. Since he does not spend much time in garrison, his time with his family is limited. Colonel Lien tries to rotate his troops so that the men may be with their families as much as possible. Responsible for more than 1,000 square miles of mountainous jungle and for the security of 200,000 Montagnards and 85,000 Vietnamese, the ARVN soldier is certainly a busy man. Here in the Highlands, the men of the 24th STZ are proving themselves formidable foes to Communist aggressors and infiltrators.

Colonel Weyend puts it this way: "The 24th STZ is a fighting force in its own right. With U.S. helicopter, artillery, and tactical air support, it has proven itself superior to every NVA unit it has come up against."

The men of the 24th STZ live with their families in dependent housing areas in Tan Canh, Kontum and Pleiku, and are working on dependent housing quarters in each of these cities. Crucial building materials—lumber, cement, and roofing—have been made available through the efforts of the Fourth Division. Con-

*ARVN redlegs on a fire support base in the Central Highlands. Ready...*



struction according to official GVN specifications is now underway for 120 units, similar to Western-style motels, with each unit housing 10 families.

The longer range plans for the dependent housing facilities include indoor plumbing, a feature non-existent in current Highland dwellings. Each home will have a bedroom area, kitchen, and living room as well. The houses are low-slung, almost ranch-type affairs that are a significant improvement over the make-shift houses the ARVN have used in the past for dependent housing.

The men of the 24th STZ so far this year have earned better than 300 Vietnamese valor awards and 25 U.S. awards. Colonel Lien and his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Bui Duc Tai, have both been awarded U.S. Silver Stars.



*...Fire!*

The ARVN troops have continued relentlessly in all phases of their operations to exert the maximum effort to get the job done. Continuous training in tactics, weaponry and communications procedures are the mainstays of an effort which is uncompromising in its dedication.

Progress is neither manifested overnight nor in single successes. Given the habit of success, the confidence of a victor and the technical know-how of a professional, the ARVN soldiers have shown remarkable progress and determination in the performance of their mission. They are truly professionals. They have to be. The future of the Highlands is in their hands. The men of the 24th STZ have taken great steps forward for themselves and their country. Here in the most critical terrain of the Central Highlands, they have proven that they have what it takes. After all, that's what this war is all about.



*Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 42nd ARVN Infantry Regiment, at work on dependent housing in Tan Canh, in northern Kontum Province.*



*Troopers of the 3rd ARVN Armored Cavalry intent on their mission of securing vital Highway 14.*

# MARIJUANA?



◦ Wouldn't You Really Rather Have a DEROS?



## his brothers' keeper

Sweat glazed the forehead of Specialist Four Roland "Jim" Jemerson as the noonday sun hung high above the dirt-packed road between Plei Mrong and Landing Zone Bobbie. Jemerson, a combat medical aidman assigned with Company B, 2nd Battalion (Mech), 8th Infantry, craned his neck. Through the dust being churned up by the resupply convoy he was able to see the two friendly villages in the distance. He had traveled the road before, and the villages always indicated that the convoy was nearly ready to close at LZ Bobbie.

As told to  
CPT David R. Fabian

Jemerson shifted his weight. The top of the track was like fire to his touch. Usually he rode in the cargo hatch, today his unit was carting extra supplies to Bobbie, so he rode atop the 'two-four' box. He could cope with the sun, he thought to himself; he had done so for the past four and a half months. But whenever his box drew drag—rear security element for the resupply convoy—the swirling Highland dust was sometimes blinding, always choking. . . .

Moments after Jemerson saw the villages in the distance the convoy ground to a sudden halt. The lead vehicle was struck by a B40 rocket fired from the left side of the road. Almost simultaneously the other Armored Personnel Carriers in the convoy moved to the berms, their caliber 50's ripping into the flanking woodlines not more than twenty-five meters off the sides of the road.

Jemerson heard the convoy commander's voice crackle over the radio. First Sergeant Odd O. Pedersen told the drag element to move up to the initial point of contact to lend fire support to the disabled APC near the front of the column. Judging from the heavy volume of fire, Pedersen, a native of Tampa, Florida, estimated that the convoy was up against a company-sized enemy force dug in bunkers alongside the road.

"Harry, our driver, raced the box up the road," recalled Jemerson, "and when we got close enough to the point of contact, he turned into the direction of the enemy's small arms and B40 rocket fire.

"We were blazing away when he stopped the box. Anytime we've been in contact before, Harry would always stop the box and jump out of his driver's hatch to help link the fifty. That's just what he did that day. He was on top of the box with his back to the enemy, linking like hell, when he was hit in the back of the neck by flying metal from a B40."

Jemerson grabbed his aid bag and leapt over the cargo hatch as enemy small arms fire chipped away at the side and front of the "two-four" track. He patched the driver's wounds and then pulled him down into the crowded cargo hatch.

Meanwhile Specialist Four Kenneth Lester of Crab Orchard, West Virginia, took over as driver and whipped the Armored Personnel Carrier around so that the crew could put out its firepower in another direction. Pedersen's voice came over the radio again, telling them to move a bit closer up the road.

"Lester reacted immediately. We passed 'Top' Pedersen on the road. He was now on foot, moving from one vehicle to the next, passing out ammo. He had already been wounded twice but refused aid. Then he started calling in artillery and air strikes over the enemy posi-

tions.

"We kept moving up, weaving in and out of the stalled deuce and a halfs, when I noticed that another box had been hit. I jumped off the 'two-four' track and headed for it. Inside there were two men injured, one very seriously. I dragged them out alongside their track, where I quickly dressed their wounds as best I could," Jemerson said.

"I saw two rounds just miss Doc Jemerson's leg by a fraction of an inch as he treated those two wounded men," recalled Sergeant William W. Rabun, Jr., of Detroit, Michigan. "But he kept right on giving aid," said the sergeant, who passed Jemerson on the road while driving his own track toward the head of the column.

After the men's wounds were dressed, Jemerson dragged them to the opposite side of the road and instructed them to return fire as well as they were able. He covered one of the wounded with his shirt. Then, ignoring the withering fire that kicked up dust around him, the medic scooped up his aid bag and ran over an open stretch of road to the next disabled vehicle.

Although the track had already taken one B40, it was not badly damaged. But just as Jemerson approached, the track was subjected to intense automatic weapons fire which wounded four of its crew members. Seconds later another B40 struck and set the track afire. Two of the wounded were caught in the open in front of the vehicle.

While Sergeant Warren D. Cartwright (Duncan, Oklahoma), Specialist Four John H. Bledsoe (Greensboro, North Carolina), and Specialist Four John S. Kraszewski (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) provided covering fire, the medic inched his way forward under fire and dragged the two men to the rear of their vehicle.

"Then we (Jemerson, Bledsoe, and Kraszewski) went to work freeing the two others from the burning APC. It was packed with artillery rounds and we knew it could explode from a cook-off any minute. Once we got the four men to the other side of the road to safety, I gave them aid while Cartwright, Bledsoe, and Kraszewski returned the enemy's fire."

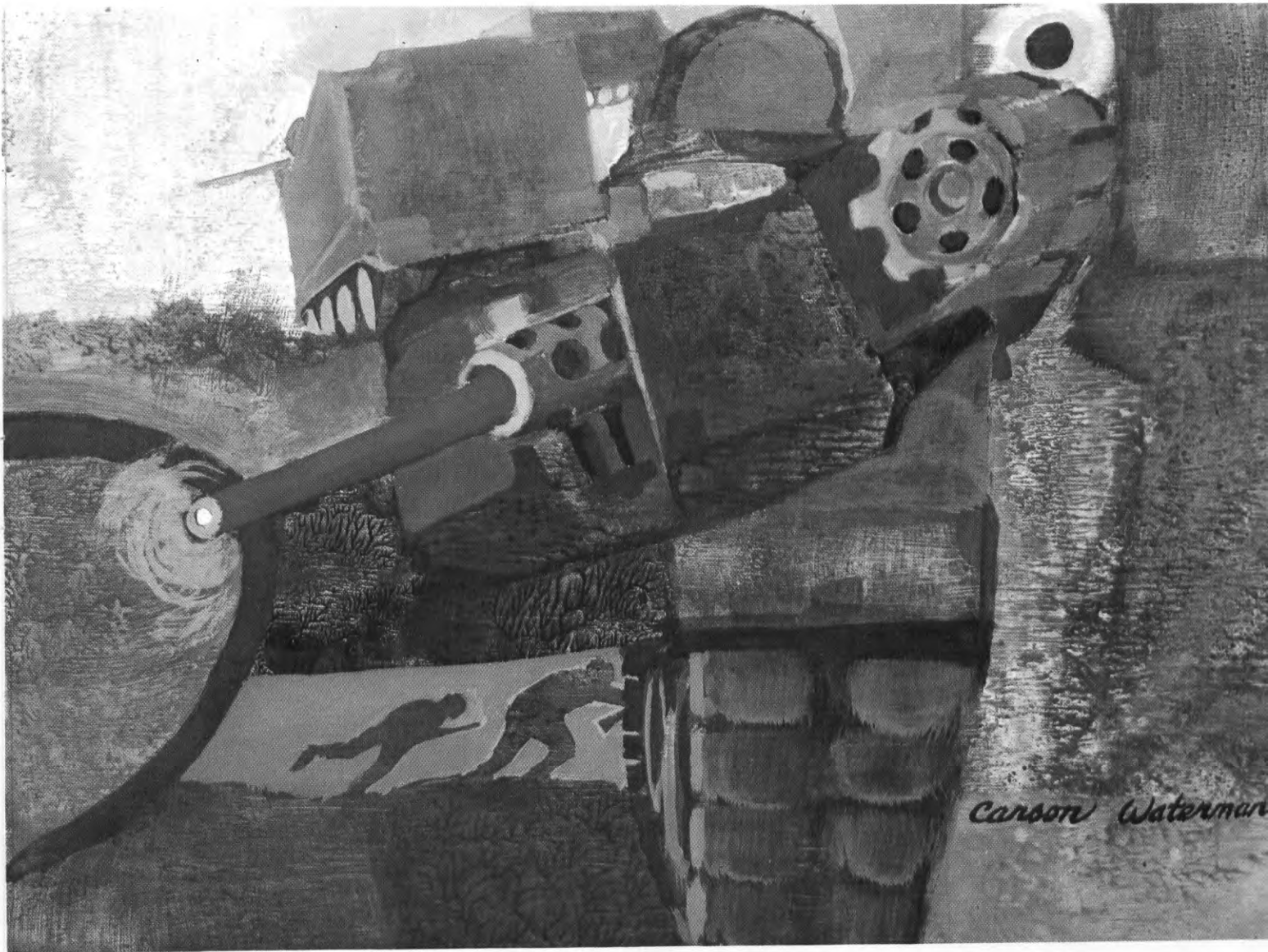
The burning track exploded minutes later, spewing fragments of armor plating over the roadway. The left side of the APC, according to Jemerson, oozed and blistered into a pool of useless metal.

"After the explosion contact became sporadic," said Jemerson. "It didn't seem like it, but we had been fighting for over an hour. A Fourth Aviation gunship, Blackjack 400, had been overhead about twenty minutes after the fight broke loose. 'Top' Pedersen was directing the runs, but the pilot couldn't pick up the wounded because the fire along the road was so heavy.

"'Top' Pedersen, a really brave guy, knew it wouldn't be safe to put down on the road, so he waved the pilot off a couple of times. When things eased up after the explosion, though, the chopper pilot set down."

Pedersen, already wounded twice during the battle, still continued to direct friendly fire as the chopper set down. He had Sergeant Rabun move his track up near the evacuation site to provide security. Jemerson, meanwhile, began supervising the evacuation of the wounded. As Jemerson, Cartwright, Kraszewski, Bledsoe, and Pedersen loaded the wounded onto the aircraft, the enemy opened up again with small arms fire. Pedersen was hit in the leg, so when the chopper began to lift off he jumped aboard with the other evacuees.

"The chopper wasn't more than ten feet airborne when a B40 slammed into it and sent it falling to the ground," said the medic. "Pedersen managed to jump clear and then he, I, Cartwright, and Kraszewski ran to the burning aircraft to help free the pilot, copilot,



door gunner and one of the wounded litter patients before the ship exploded. During this time Bledsoe laid down a murderous base of fire. Then everything was quiet, except for a whirring track engine. . . .”

The battle had lasted almost ninety minutes. The enemy, however, had been denied a victory; they had not been able to overrun the convoy. The convoy escort from Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion (Mech), 8th Infantry withstood the attack and drove them back into the woodline.

Although contact was broken by 3:30 p.m., Jemerson’s job was not finished. He returned to tend all of the wounded, and it wasn’t until that evening that he got to LZ Bobbie.

For their heroic actions Bledsoe, Cartwright and Kraszewski were presented Bronze Star Medals with “V,” while First Sergeant Odd O. Pedersen was awarded the Silver Star. And on July 2, 1969, General Creighton W. Abrams presented a Silver Star to Specialist Four Roland Jemerson, of Flint, Michigan, the heroic aid man who was credited with personally saving the lives of twelve of his fellow soldiers on March 22, 1969.

Story and photos by 1LT Robert Janosko

Mini—

# BRUTES



The enemy in the Famous Fighting Fourth Division's area of operations is painfully learning not to tangle with the 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry's "minibrutes." The "minibrutes" are small, agile, Light Observation Helicopters (commonly referred to as LOH scout ships) which pack a deadly minigun and a sharpshooting air observer who mans either an M16, CAR 15 or M60 machinegun.

Working in hunter-killer teams consisting of two LOHs and two Cobra gunships, the "minibrutes" skim close to the treetops, ferreting the enemy out of hidden positions and cutting him down as he attempts to escape over open terrain.

Generally, the "minibrutes" work sections of a specified area, calling in periodic spot reports to their Cobra teammates flying above. When a target is spotted, the "minibrute" marks the position and makes a quick engagement. If the target is a small group of enemy soldiers in the open, the pilot positions the ship to give the observer a clear field of fire. If the scout is receiving heavy ground fire from a hidden position, the pilot rakes the area with minigun fire. After the scouts have made several quick passes at the target, the Cobras drop down and hit the area with rockets and more minigun fire. When it appears the target has been eliminated, the scouts assess the area and report the results of the strike.

"Just the whining sound of the minigun has a tremendous psychological effect on the enemy," said CW2 Paul Redhead of Hinsdale, Ill., an ex-scout ship pilot. "We've learned from detainees that they have standing orders not to fire at scouts unless they know for sure they've already been spotted."

Even then, however, Charlie has little chance, for the scout's minigun





**“The observer gets two-thirds of minibrute kills, but it is really a team effort.”**

fires at a selected rate of either 2000 or 4000 rounds per minute. Three-second bursts are regulated automatically; the trigger must be released and then squeezed again for another three second burst. Each “minibrute” carries 2,100 7.62 rounds of minigun ammo—which is quite an arsenal! The firing position of the gun can be controlled by the pilot, but usually the ship’s attitude is used to direct the stream of fire.

“You get used to sighting over a certain point on the front of the ship with the gun set in one position. Then you simply point the ship at the target,” explained veteran “minibrute” pilot Captain Mark Holbrook of Sheboygan, Wis.

Sergeant Robert Evander of Minneapolis, Minn., serves as a prime example of the “minibrute’s” second team member. As an observer with Alpha Troop, Evander has over 70 kills to his credit after 16 months in Vietnam.

“I suppose the observer gets two-thirds of the ‘minibrute’s’ kills, but it’s really a team effort. The pilot has to position the ship just right for the observer to fire accurately,” commented the sergeant. “Then the observer has his choice of weapons—M16, CAR 15 or M60. While an M60 has more fire power, I prefer an M16 because it’s more accurate and easier to handle.”

The ship carries 700 rounds for an M60 or about 40 magazines of M16 or CAR 15 ammo. In addition, a “minibrute” carries smoke grenades to mark targets, white phosphorous and incendiary grenades for destroying burnable targets such as camouflaged enemy storage bins spotted along routes of infiltration, and a stockpile of grenades to drive the enemy out into the open and to soften up bunkers and fighting positions.

The little choppers will often drop down to where they are hovering

only a few feet off the ground. Very little escapes the trained eye of the observer at that height. It is not unusual for a scout observer to spot a well-camouflaged rice or weapons cache or enemy soldiers on the move from his vantage point in the air. After that it’s Goodbye, Charlie.

The nimble little helicopters hovering at tree top level must be tempting targets to a new enemy recruit, but the old veterans have learned that they can get badly stung when they swat a hornet’s nest.



*Minibrutes drop incendiary grenade on an abandoned rice storage hootch.*

# “Thanks, Guys

For taking those groovy malaria pills.

The big orange ones every week. And the little white ones every day.

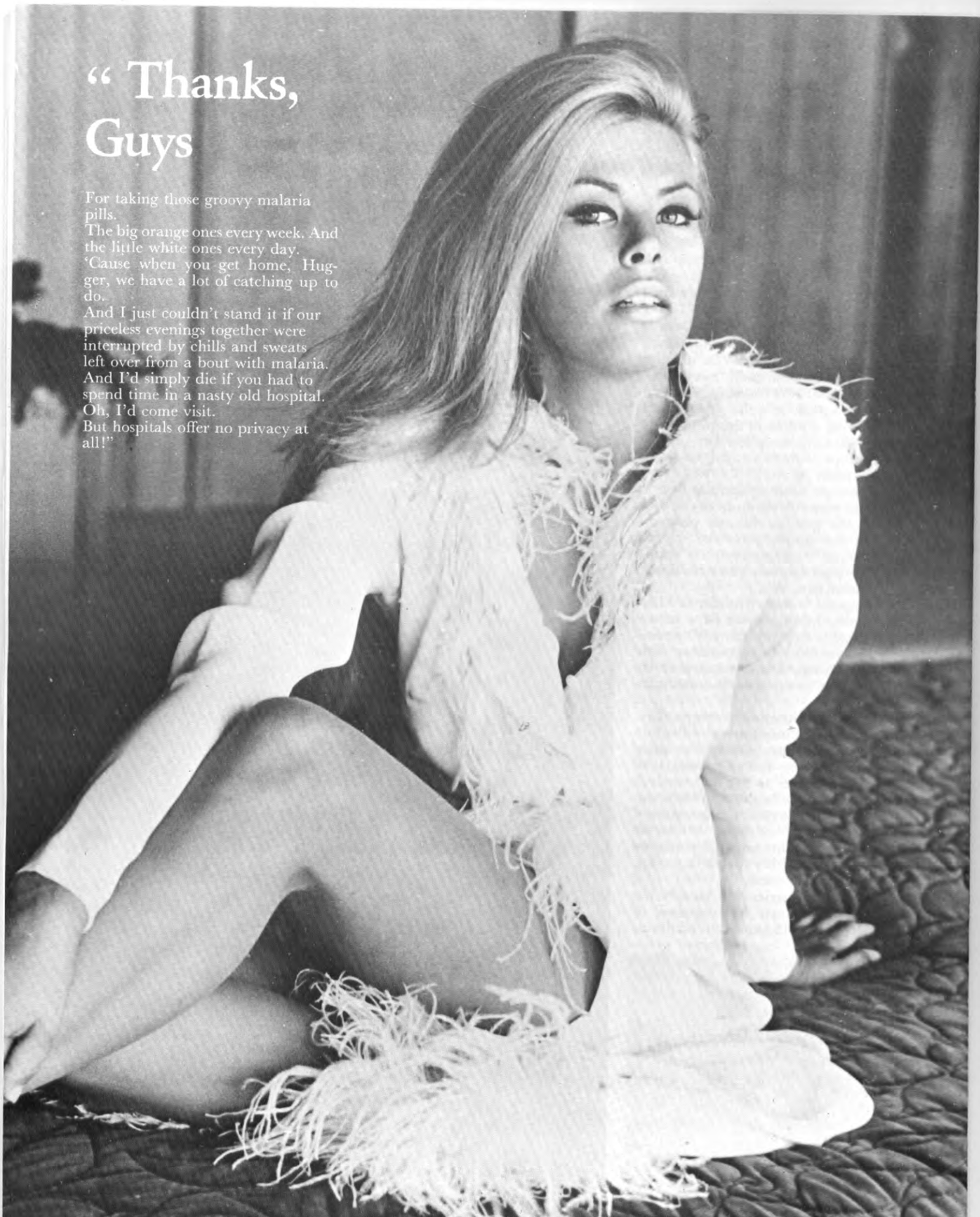
'Cause when you get home, Hugerger, we have a lot of catching up to do.

And I just couldn't stand it if our priceless evenings together were interrupted by chills and sweats left over from a bout with malaria.

And I'd simply die if you had to spend time in a nasty old hospital.

Oh, I'd come visit.

But hospitals offer no privacy at all!”



They tell it like it is...  
and was!

# Division Two- Timers

A feeling of being dangerously near history occurs as a new arrival to the Famous Fighting Fourth flies for the first time over a scarred and abandoned mountaintop fire base that was once the sight of heavy fighting. A combat vet leans over toward the new man, gestures to the landscape below, and says very knowingly, "that's where your new unit fought off a regiment in '66." Looking down at the confusion of old shell holes, scattered timbers and torn sandbags, you think to yourself, "It must have been some battle."

Your mind spins and you find yourself imagining what it must have been like then. But the next thing you know, you're with your new unit, and the company commander or a senior NCO is briefing you for the first time. You wonder what he means when, during the briefing, he says, "Last time I was here things were different."

There are several men with the Fourth Division today who can say just that. Always ready with answers concerning the war in the Central Highlands, their experiences are sought by the new arrival and are accepted as a source of lore to the fighting man. These are the two-timers, the dedicated soldiers who add just a little more know-how when it comes to soldiering in the



*"Living conditions... have improved a great deal."* —Mikutaitis

*"Now... we are able to pinpoint the enemy, fight him and shag him right out of the country."*—Scott



Highlands. These are the men who are able to offer valid comparisons and contrasts as to how the war was fought "then," and how we and the enemy are fighting it now.

One such man is First Sergeant John J. ("Mike") Mikutaitis, of Columbia, South Carolina. Between October, 1967 and December, 1968, Mikutaitis was assigned to Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry. At that time the Golden Dragons were placed under the operational control of the Americal Division and operated along the coastal plains. Shortly afterward the battalion was reunited with the Fourth Division and sent to the Dak To area.

For "Top" Mikutaitis, now with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, one of the biggest differences between his first tour and his present one is the relative stability of the battalion. "In 1968," commented Mikutaitis, "we were moving from one fire base to the next; we were never in one place very long, and nothing was permanent. Since I have rejoined the battalion during this tour I couldn't help being impressed with the concern shown for division troops in the field. Living conditions have improved on landing zones (LZs) a great deal. Someone back at division recently made

little things like this matter, and the division is taking care of us real well."

Mikutaitis, an experienced combat leader and recipient of three Bronze Stars for Valor, all earned while serving as a Golden Dragon, was also quick to point out that the young American soldier is doing an outstanding job. "Improved training in CONUS and the 4th Replacement Detachment certainly is paying off. These men are really prepared," said the First Sergeant.

Another former member of the Golden Dragons, Captain James T. Scott, remembers a time when everyone was new in country. Scott came over with the battalion from Hawaii in the Spring of 1966. "At that time we were a part of the Third Brigade, 25th Division. We moved into what is now the traditional Third Brigade area, and the battalion operated with the Fourth Division in the central plains along the Ia Drang River and south near Ban Me Thuot. I was assigned as an Assistant Operations Officer and later commander of Bravo Company. The heaviest battles we fought were in the area north of Duc Co while the brigade was based at Landing Zone Oasis."

Scott rotated back to the U.S. before the Third Brigade of the 25th Division officially became the Third Brigade of the Fourth Division in

volunteered for his second tour, he made it known that he wished an assignment with the Division's Third Brigade. He rejoined the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry as S3 and has since been assigned S3 of the brigade.

For Captain Scott the most noticeable change since his last tour has been the enemy's situation and tactical deployment. "Last time I operated in this area the enemy was either here in force or not at all. We were either fighting an NVA battalion or we couldn't find anybody. I honestly feel that when we were here with the 25th we spent too much time looking for the enemy. Now, owing to the Fourth's superior intelligence - gathering techniques, we are able to pinpoint the enemy, fight him, and shag him right out of the country within a week or two after detection. Our success definitely rests on our improved ability to find the enemy and keep track of him at all time."

Scott, of Coleman, Texas, also observed that most of the fighting now has been against the local Viet Cong—the infrastructure and the cadre. During his prior tour not much time was spent on the trail of local guerillas.

"I came back to the Highlands because there is a unique challenge here," said Scott. "The Fourth



Hughes

*"Before, it was common to run into enemy battalions... they were trying to move large units."—Brauer*

responsibility of any division in country. Under the circumstances, I think we have managed to compile an enviable record which few units can equal."

Captain Vaughn D. Brauer, another member of the brigade S3 section, echoes Captain Scott's observations on the enemy's changing tactical situation. Brauer is a veteran platoon leader and company commander who spent his last tour with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry.

"Before, it was common to run into enemy battalions in the Duc Co and Ia Drang Valley area. They were trying to move in large units and when in contact, they employed regular infantry-type tactics. And it was just as common to find multi-battalion sized base camps occupied by the enemy in areas just south of the Oasis."

Brauer contends that the division's constant operations have forced the enemy to operate and maintain their supply bases at relatively long distances from their objectives. But he also concedes that more sophisticated weapons also contribute to the change in enemy tactics.

"During my first tour the largest enemy weapon I remember encountering was the 82 mm mortar. Now

*"Their infrastructure has deteriorated... the Division has them on the run..."—Burr*



Hughes

they have at their disposal more of an arsenal—including the B40 and 122 mm rockets that characterize their attacks by indirect fire."

Captain Brauer also notices that more and more of the fighting is now directed against local VC forces. He feels the division has been successful in routing the NVA regulars. By keeping them at a distance, Brauer, of Twin Falls, Idaho, feels we are now better able to concentrate on the pacification program.

Brauer has also been in a position which has allowed him to observe the ARVN forces. He feels that they are much better trained and much more aggressive than ever before. "They are just plain better fighters," he said.

Captain Jacky A. Burr, commanding officer of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, is another returnee to the Fourth Division and a man with a wealth of experience in the Central Highlands. Captain Burr began his first tour with the Cacti Green as a platoon leader with Company A. He subsequently became S2, S3 and commanded Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Companies. The Tulsa, Oklahoma, native recalls vividly his battalion's operations in the coastal plain area during the early months of 1967. "We fought strong, main-force Viet Cong units coupled

with backbone NVA who were trying to solidify the infrastructure in the coastal areas. Our battles were close-in, village-type fighting where there were many bunkers and trenches. Our job was to occupy and maintain strongholds in those areas."

During his second tour with the Division, Burr has commanded Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, and has served as a Third Brigade Assistant Operations Officer. In Captain Burr's opinion the outlook for the Viet Cong is not as bright this tour as it might have been during the last. "Their infrastructure has deteriorated. They are not as strong and they are definitely having problems with recruiting.

"The Viet Cong are making use of indirect fire attacks more often than in the past. Their tactics are becoming more evasive and similar to their old methods. The Division has them on the run."

Mikutaitis, Scott, Brauer and Burr. They are only four of many. They are your experts on soldiering in the Highlands. Things were different last time they were here, and that's what makes them so valuable now. So listen and observe and put their experience to use. They're the two-timers—and they're proud of it. And they're the kind of men who help you make it through your tour.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 4TH INFANTRY (IVY) DIVISION  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96262

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE FAMOUS FIGHTING FOURTH INFANTRY DIVISION

It is a pleasure to extend to the officers and men of the Famous Fighting Fourth Infantry Division my heartiest congratulations and best wishes as we near the conclusion of our third full year of combat operations in the Republic of Vietnam.

We can indeed look back with pride on our continued success over the past three years. We have engaged in several of the most significant battles of the war and have defeated the enemy at every turn. Between battles, we have conscientiously devoted our efforts toward pacification programs which are destined to bring peace, security, and progress to the Central Highlands.

The esprit displayed by the soldiers of the Famous Fighting Fourth Infantry Division is, to my mind, matchless. You are members of a fighting combat division, and you are deserving of every tribute paid you over the past three years. For you have served well and nobly-- you have been unwavering in your devotion to the division's motto, STEADFAST AND LOYAL.

As we move toward our fourth year of combat operations, I take this opportunity to salute you. I am confident you will fulfill future missions with the same esprit and professional competence which has characterized our proud Division's past achievements.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Donn R. Pepke", is positioned above the typed name.

DONN R. PEPKE  
Major General, USA  
Commanding

# A salute to the INFANTRY

*continued from the front inside cover*

"How did you spend your year?"  
Humpin' the boonies, that's how.  
Finding, fixing, and fighting Charlie.  
Whipped his \_\_\_\_\_!

You and your buddies, the guys in  
your outfit. Black, white, Spanish-  
American or American Indian—  
Same-same. All for one and one for  
all. The only way. You teamed up  
with that colored kid from Pittsburgh  
and, after he DEROSSED, with  
the white guy from Atlanta.

Remember when Harry took a hit  
and that medic nearby got killed  
trying to get to him?  
A man's a man. You'll never ques-  
tion that again, even if you did before  
the war.

You'll never forget their faces, or  
the kind of guys they were. Most of  
them were really great.

And some won't be going back.

You'll remember a million other  
things too.

The incredible dust during the dry  
season. The relentless monsoon rains  
that turned the dust to a sucking,  
goeey mud. You wondered, some-  
times, whether you were still in the  
Highlands, because everything  
looked just like the pictures you'd  
seen of the Ninth in the Delta.  
Whadda hellhole. Sunshine or down-  
pour, dust or mud. No matter what,  
you stayed miserable.

You'll remember your CIB, too. You  
earned it. Fighting the nastiest,

some college clowns back home were  
protesting the war. Burning draft  
cards. It really bugs you; they know  
so little, but make so much noise.  
Really burns a guy up some times.  
Stupid.

You'll remember your officers, too.  
The Old Man wasn't really so old.  
He just looked that way after trying  
to keep a hundred or more of you in  
line and get you all home in one  
piece.

An impossible dream.

And the lieutenant. Not much older  
than you. Or maybe not as old.  
OK, he made some goofs, maybe  
some bad ones, and maybe you  
hated him for a while. But it didn't  
take long for you to see he was doing  
his best with a big job, and he took  
a lot of risks trying to keep track of  
everything and everybody during  
those firefights. He was a pretty  
terrific guy after all, you'll reflect,  
and you wouldn't have taken his  
job for a million bucks.

Too bad he didn't make it. He was  
really Number One.

A year's worth of memories. Enough  
for a lifetime of reflection. Food  
for new ideas, new opinions, conver-  
sation over a beer. You'll forget  
some of it, but not much. Blood-  
stains are nearly permanent.

You did some pretty heroic things,  
but you don't want to be called a  
hero. You only want to forget the  
hell you lived through and return  
to normal. Pick up where you left

at all. Not like the movies or comics  
or games you played as a kid.  
A lousy way to settle anything.  
But it's a lot better than sitting on  
your butt while somebody clobbers  
the hell out of somebody else who  
can't hit back. Like the women and  
kids who died in the cities during  
Tet, or whenever some terrorist  
felt like chucking a bomb in a res-  
taurant or church or school. Maybe  
we can't save them all, but we can  
make Charlie pay so he'll think  
twice the next time.

That's what it's all about.

It wasn't your war alone. There were  
a heck of a lot of guys—non-Infantry  
types—who fought, sweated, and  
bled there. But never so consistently,  
so courageously, so decisively as you  
who wear your CIBs and crossed  
rifles so proudly.

You were on the perimeter when the  
sappers hit; you spilled from the  
first slick into a hot LZ. And in a  
bunch of other places you'd never  
wish on anyone.

And now home.

How can a plane ride mean so  
much?

Thank God.



