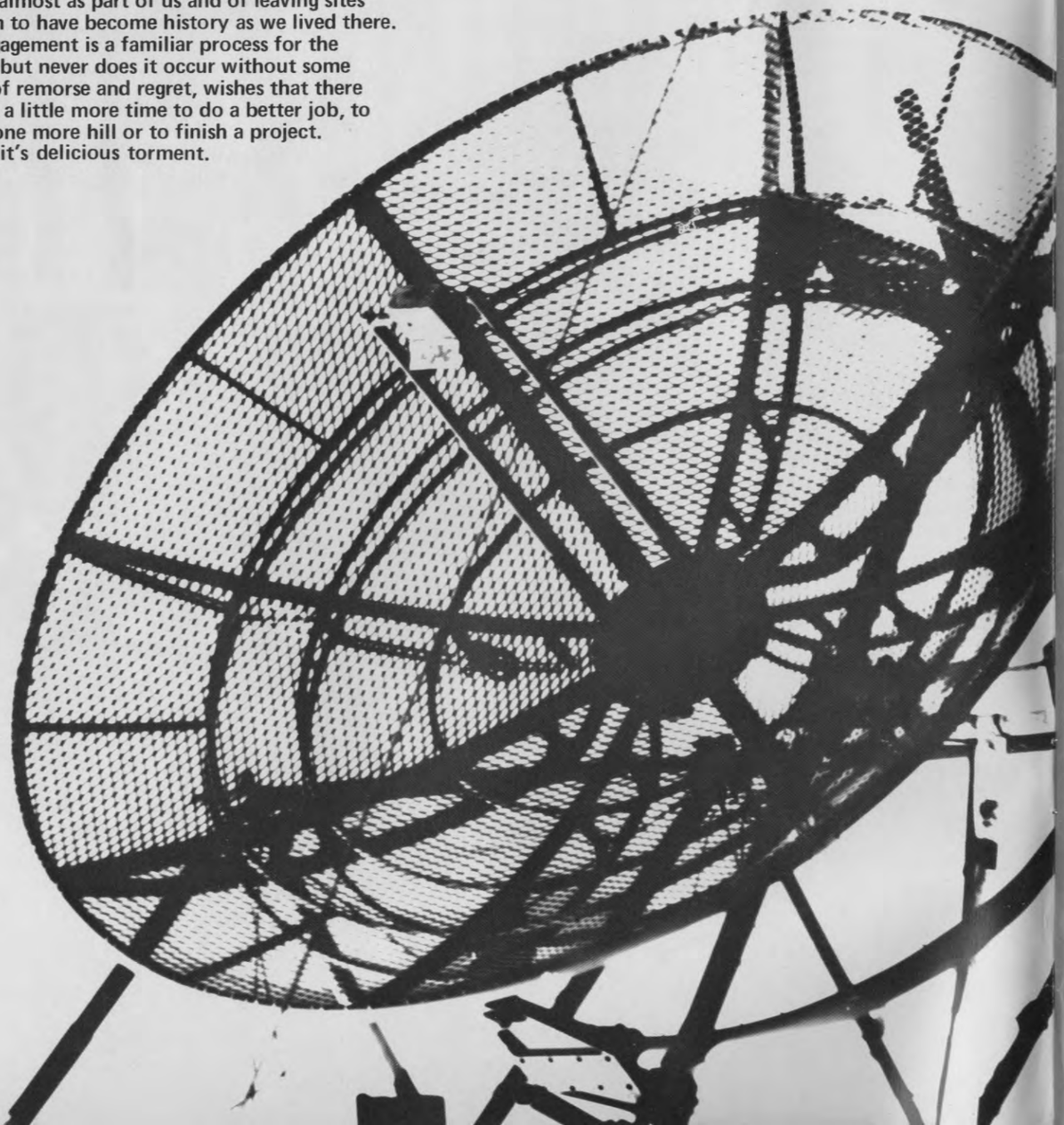

THE
JAGGED
SWORD
The Magazine of the 1st Signal Brigade
Fall 1971

e're going home; not all at once, not by
ping tools and leaving, but quietly though
ernibly, we're leaving.
ow, at just past midyear '71, a lot of units
been erased from the organization charts and
e are a bunch of empty beds where signalmen once
.
he brigade's job--as it always has been--is many
d though some of the planes and angles have
ed. New systems are installed now only to take
place of two or three old ones and more Vietnamese
es are taking over the airways.
's almost like trying to grow old gracefully
ough it hardly seems time for the brigade to be
ng its years. The process has developed into
of relinquishing machinery and jobs we have come
now almost as part of us and of leaving sites
seem to have become history as we lived there.
isengagement is a familiar process for the
tary, but never does it occur without some
ngs of remorse and regret, wishes that there
been a little more time to do a better job, to
erse one more hill or to finish a project.
ing; it's delicious torment.



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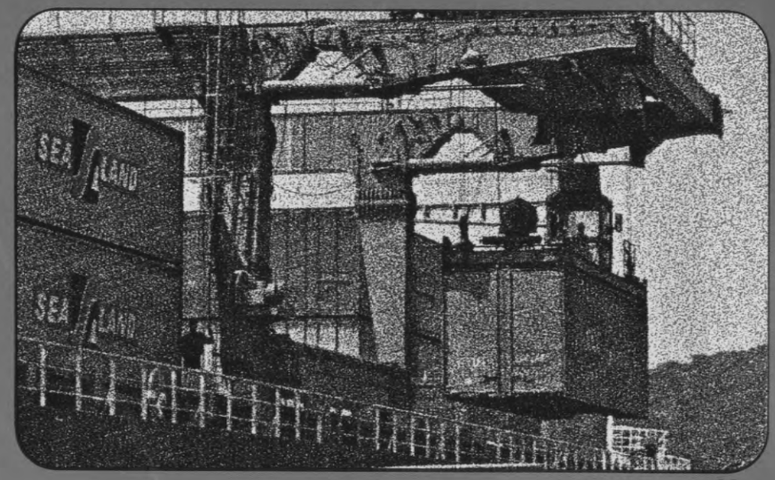

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KHE SANH

By SP5 Richard Wood

Quang Tri was really the base of it all.

Almost all the information coming from the Khe Sanh area came to the 588th Signal Support Company area. At first glance, it wouldn't seem so; the 588th appeared to be the typical signal company found anyplace in the Republic of Vietnam. Sandbagged hootches were in neat rows, each surrounded with its ring of rocket barrels.

But on closer inspection it was clear that something unusual was happening. Where there was once a clearing there were tents, each crammed with cots and sleeping equipment. Mobile commo vans competed with the tents for living space. The chapel bore little resemblance to a place of worship. There was still a cross in the chancel, but the pews had been converted into dormitory beds for pilots and other transients.

nething was always stirring, even in the middle
e night, as men came and went from their
-more centers were open 24 hours than
arily would be in a company this size. Chow line
lways extra long and there was always a hassle
to find a place to sit.

pping down into the half buried operations
, however, you saw the reason for all the
y. On the wall was a large map of the vicinity
en the Laotian border and Quang Tri City. Red,
yellow and black lines streaked across the map
ints near the border showing where signals
d.

conversations with various people in the
ed room a fairly coherent picture emerged
gave meaning to the abstract lines on the map.
vas the headquarters of Task Force 1-63 of the
gnal Brigade. TF 1-63 was the directing signal
y for the XXIV Corps which was in charge of
merican support of Republic of Vietnam Armed
s (RVNAF) cross-border operation (Lam Son
in Laos. This meant that it would be necessary
ovide communications support not only for
AF fighting units, but also for the American
rt units in the northwestern-most area of
ry Region I.

mmunications support for American activities in
Khe Sanh area was essential to keeping the
can defensive shield around the vital bases
tive. This in turn meant not only carrying
s for the movements of the 101st Airborne, to
rth and the 1st Brigade of the 5th Mechanized
ry to the west, but also for maintaining the
of supplies by road along QL9 and by air into
anh proper.

All of these varied 1st Signal sites were supplied as much as possible by choppers from the 12th Signal Group aviation detachment, under the command of Captain William Spaulding. The schedules of what was nicknamed "Teenie Weenie Airlines" were erratic–they flew in whatever equipment was needed most, and priorities could change in minutes. Cargo might have been generator parts or an entire generator, passengers or hot meals for the forward troops.

Sometimes there were delays in sending equipment, but everything eventually got there. Getting on a flight never did guarantee a good trip, or even getting there. The site to which you were going might be clouded in by the dense mist and fog that sometimes shrouded the tops of the mountains even in the middle of the day. Or the site might have been under enemy fire.

Flying out to the complex of signal sites located around Khe Sanh was just a short 20 minute trip, but the terrain varied from flat farmlands outside Quang Tri to mountainous wilderness near the Laotian border. Perched on one of these mountain peaks was signal site Romeo.

If Quang Tri was the hub of TF 1-63, surely Romeo was the key to the Lam Son 719 communications network. In its dominating position, Romeo was a relay site for VHF and microwave systems passing from Khe Sanh stations to Quang Tri. The only way to get up there was by chopper and as the mist there was sporadic but thick, temporary visitors often became guests for up to a week.

From Romeo the circuits connecting other sites spread out like a spider's web. Within sight of Romeo was another, smaller signal site. Here a VHF system

operated to coordinate the movement of men and supplies along QL 9 from Quang Tri to the most advanced posts beyond Khe Sanh. Here as elsewhere, as much of the complex as possible was underground. Rocket and mortar holes in the helicopter refueling strips near the site reflected the VC effort to damage the fuel dumps and other installations in the area.

A lively harassment and interdiction fire was being fired by artillery units near the site. Underground, the work of traffic coordination went on while on the surface life continued as normally as possible despite the engulfing red dust and repeated shock waves from the arty. Signalmen slept through the fire in hootches made of sandbags and tree branches while others shaved and washed–using the all-purpose device, the steel pot, as a washbasin.

In a way it was all curiously predictable. When several enemy mortar rounds burst nearby (near enough to be seen but far enough away not to cause damage), some of the men wore pained expressions. Not because they were being fired on, but because the shelling was early–it generally didn't start until around 6:30 in the evening.

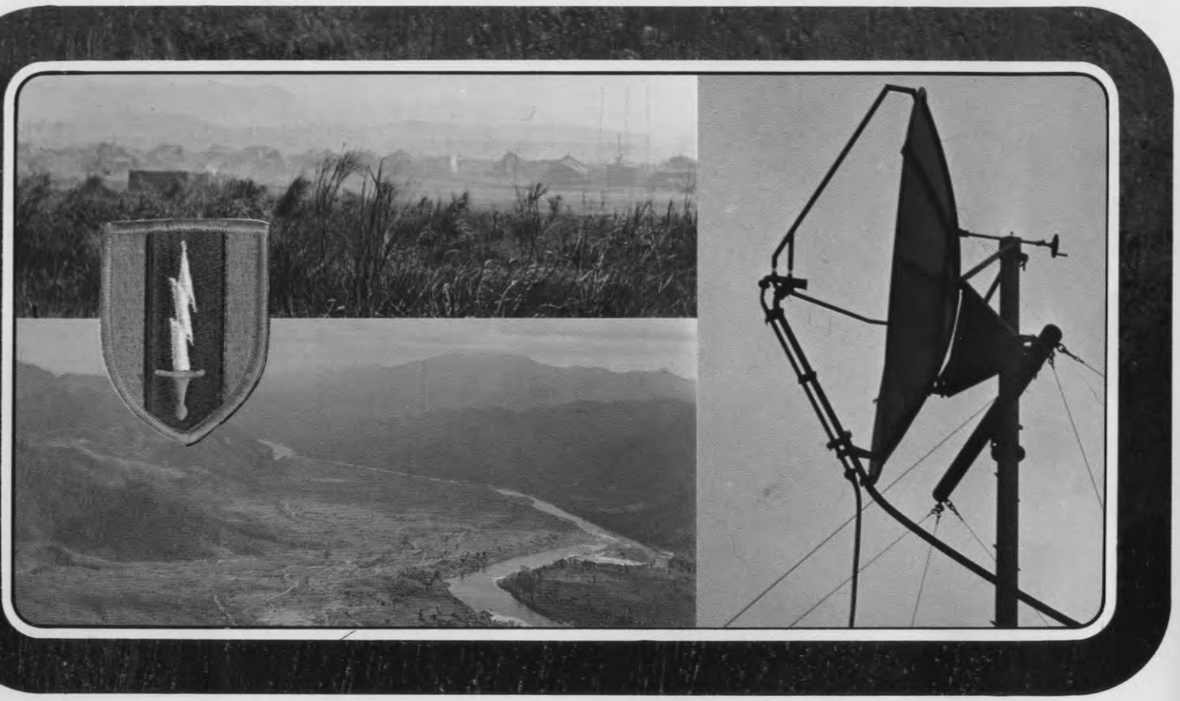
Life at Site 6–overlooking the sprawling Khe Sanh base itself–was a bit more hectic. Here, more than at any other signal complex, the men of Ham Nghi Signal Site could see the results of their work. The small area was crowded with the traditional flyswatters and troposcatter dishes that helped to provide communications support for American units in the Khe Sanh area–Air Force, the 1st of the 5th Mech and the 101st. The mere volume and variety of aircraft landing and taking off from the bordering airstrip–Hueys, Cobras, OH-58s and C-130 cargo carriers–was ample testimony of the job the men were doing in keeping communications flowing. But this was not their only job as they also carried signals for the RVNAF depot at Khe Sanh and their troposcatter shot to Phu Bai handled high priority messages between both American and South Vietnamese Commanders.

The digging in process was continuing at Site 6 with an added incentive–the base had recently taken more than a hundred rockets several times. Bulldozers built a trench for the signal vans but the men had to fend for themselves and their tents. They were busily filling sandbags and laying them atop the commo bunker. 1st Lieutenant John S. Lee, the officer in charge of the site, explained that the early afternoon was one of the best times to the work.

"See those clouds on the tops of the mountains (referring to the ridge that parallels the Khe Sanh airstrip)? When they drop down and cover the hills that's when the rockets start coming in. That ought to start about 1530 today."

Despite the urgency of finishing the job before the next round of rockets, some of the ordinary still remained. On one of their breaks the sandbag detail found an empty 55-gallon drum and were busy seeing if they could throw a dirt clod across the road and into the mouth of a drum.

No such rocket attacks were expected at Site 6A, the main site cooperating with the RVNAF in relaying communications back to Quang Tri from fighting units forward. The base, though not attacked, was well built up and sandbags and bunkers had supplemented a location that looked like a large pile of flyswatter studded sand in a child's backyard sandbox. Like most of the sites, 6A contained microwave and VHF. Unlike most of the sites, it had



re direct role in supporting the RVNAF (the site located next to an ARVN signal site and there South Vietnamese at 6A as translators).

Ve do our jobs here," said Sergeant Steven on, a microwave operator at 6A. He went on to that communications came through the ARVN m and then was relayed back to the rear on the pment at the American site. There was no rent difficulty in this potentially complicated m.

Ve get along well with the ARVN," continued Benson. "Most of them speak passable English, some are really good. I remember talking with an N lieutenant. I was saying things like 'same same or that' when he asked me in very polite tones to e speak better English. It turned out he had been ed at Ft. Monmouth."

he logistics involved in setting up such an ation was immense, both in terms of personnel equipment. Six hundred men from all over South nam were ultimately assigned to TF 1-63 in tion to the personnel of the 63rd Signal Battalion nally stationed in the Quang Tri-Phu Bai areas.

here was good reason for the additional strength. ew 24-channel troposcatter shot had to be lled to link Phu Bai with Khe Sanh, was well as a nannel microwave link from Quang Tri to points er south. Those were supplemented with eight i-channel UHF and VHF systems linking the us forward sites with the rear.

sk force personnel also installed equipment to ide communications within the immediate area e Khe Sanh sites. Encrypted teletype service was ded for all subscribers in the area who warranted it, as was point-to-point telephone and teletype service. Switchboards for local and long distance calls were installed and secure FM communications provided.

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Nelson, commander of the 63rd, and Major Michael Garcia from USARV's communications electronics systems division were the leaders and controllers of the operation. Lt. Col. Nelson turned the 588th into his forward headquarters and lived in a van next to the headquarters van during the operation.

"We did our job" might well stand as the summary statement of the 1st Signal Brigade activity in the Khe Sanh-Lam Son 719 operation. The number of men involved in the actual maintenance of communications was small-most sites did not have over 50 at a time. But they were backed up by men of the 12th Signal Group, 12th Group aviation, 63rd and 37th Signal Battalions. Nor was help limited to those signal units usually operating in Military Region I. Cooperation and help came from such Long Binh headquartered agencies as the Army Communications Operations Center (ACOC) and Southeast Asia Telephone Management Agency (SEA-TELMA).

The job of the signalman is not to close with and kill or capture the enemy (although he has on occasion done so), but rather to provide communications so that others may do so more efficiently and safely. Being a signalman at Khe Sanh and vicinity was not a glamorous job, only a necessary one. The job was done; support communications were maintained throughout all the underground living, the shelling, the dust and the newness of a strange place.

FISHER

The Khe Sanh Castle

By SP5 Richard Wood

Looking down from the helicopter flying through the morning mists of the mountains I rubbed my eyes and wondered if I had not stepped back in history 900 years.

Sitting on two peaks overlooking the valley is a modern version of a castle–not the romantic castle of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, but a fortification designed to be so strong it would dominate the area around.

Called Fire Support Base Sarge and signal site Romeo, it was manned by men of the 101st Airborne Division and the 1st Signal Brigade. Its mission was to help relay radio signals from American units in the valley and to aid in the support of the ARVN incursion into Laos. In short, to aid in providing the logistical and tactical support for the men in the field.

In the earlier history of Europe, such a structure would have been called a motte and bailey castle. The motte, a large mound of earth, held the headquarters of the local lord and was the strongest part of the structure. The bailey was a large open space at the foot of the motte, where much of the ordinary business of the castle was conducted. The entire structure was surrounded by an earthern embankment, a wooden stockade and a moat. A moat and a drawbridge sometimes separated the motte from the bailey.

The castle on the peaks follows this plan. The motte, formed by a peak of a mountain is indeed "a strong place" --the site of Fire Support Base Sarge. On the lower part of the castle, separated by a bridge leading over a natural moat, is the bailey occupied by signal site Romeo. Microwave antennas crowd the space, and from a distance it is not difficult to imagine them as the standards of knights about to go forth to war or crusade.

Certain items have changed. The wooden stockade and stone buildings have been replaced by endless strings of concertina wire, trenches and sandbagged bunkers built into the sides of the hill. Armed men are still present, but their job is no longer to sally forth, but to protect the base itself. Machine guns, 155s and M-16s have replaced the catapults, arrows and swords of the Middle Ages.

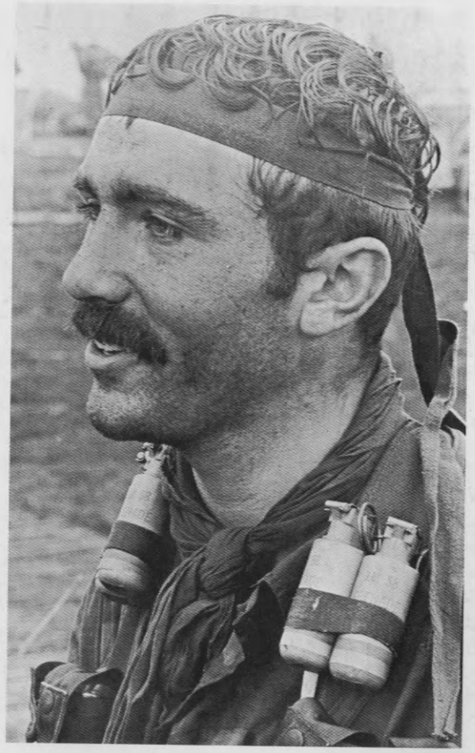
The protection the modern fort offers is not in the strength that it can offer (though this does play a part), but in the aid it can summon from afar through its communications setup.

And yet, the main job of the motte and bailey castles of the 11th and 20th centuries remains constant--to protect and aid the men in the district dominated by the site.

History does not repeat itself. But the more things change, the more they remain the same.

COMBAT PHOTOGRAPHY

Never in the conduct of war has so much of the action and even the daily happenings been recorded on film. Primary workers in the photographic record business for Department of the Army are the lensmen of the Southeast Asia Pictorial Center, part of the 1st Signal Brigade. These are some of their pictures.



This page by
SP5 AIAN ROCKOFF

AU REVOIR LANG BIAN

Story and Photos by LT James Eggensperger

Leaving a signal site isn't easy.

Slowly the functions performed by the signalmen at Lang Bian Mountain Signal Site are reducing. The mission briefing chart has paper taped across the obsolete portions (for lack of a draftsman) and in the vans the circuit charts are being erased or taken down. They no longer operated the switchboard for the Dalat area, the ARVNs do.

Vietnamese signalmen are on the hill and have taken over some of the VHF circuits, have established microwave channels paralleling the American circuits and are training with Americans on all equipment including the tactical tropospheric scatter gear.

The stage is set for ARVNization of one of the 1st Signal Brigade's oldest and best known sites. A date can't be set but the pattern is established, following Vietnamization throughout the country.

Lang Bian Mountain–as a signal site–began its history in 1965 when VHF and switchboard vans were established on the site. According to Ralph Abney, a technical representative from Collins Radio who came to the Dalat area about that time, he or another tech rep plus five GIs would drive to the site in a jeep carrying rations and water enough for a two-day stay. They would cook over a fire built in a pit and live, work, and sleep in the vans. They locked the doors at night and used a code knock for allowing visitors entrance.

Abney said, "We didn't have a perimeter. When there was some kind of disturbance we went to the edge of the mountain and shined our flashlights over."

"There was only one bunker, for the ammo. We could hunt squirrels in our spare time."

uring the first year or so there was a dispute veen the Americans and Vietnamese over the ership and property rights on the mountain. re was a great deal of jealousy and bickering ut who would have what parts of the hill until in 7 an agreement was reached and a group of erican engineeers moved onto the hilltop and dozed and blasted the top clear of rocks and blished the American site.

t that time, some of the signalmen drew olition pay in addition to their combat pay as were blasting rocks along with the engineers.

uildings on the site were a product of American nuity. There were no appropriations available for truction on the hill, so residents scrounged erials and Pacific Architects and Engineers built buildings under a maintenance contract. Quonset were brought up by the engineers and left.

bney reported only one incident of possible enemy activity. At one time, about 1966, commanders of the 362d Signal Company decided that a bevy of .50 caliber machine guns atop the hill would dominate the surrounding countryside and make the hill a fortress. Four guns were procured and brought to the top under wraps. After they had been established for about a week, lights appeared off the perimeter every night. There were no attacks or even probes, but lights were seen every night.

After the lights had been seen for almost a month, the hill commander decided that the guns were causing more trouble than they would prevent and they were taken down the mountain in full view. The lights disappeared.

Abney attributes the lights to curious enemy who were either waiting a chance to seize the guns or were trying to ascertain that there were .50s on the mountain. Helicopters were just coming into their own against the VC about that time, and .50 caliber machine guns were an invaluable weapon against the choppers.

"They'd give 80 men for a .50 caliber or an 82 millimeter mortar," Abney said.

One other time a mortar round flew, whistling over the hill and landed on the other side. The shot was soon after some mortars had been stolen from Pleiku, and a tenuous connection was made but never confirmed. Next day a patrol found no evidence of the tube or its firers.

As American involvement in Vietnam increased, so did LBM's role as a relay site. Two units have been on the hill the longest, a detachment of the 362d Signal Company A of the 43rd Signal Battalion which later became the 556th Signal Company and part of the 73rd battalion. At one time there were 12 30-foot signal dishes lined up on the edge of the hill where there are two today.

Abney had another story about the rivalry which grew up between the two companies in the early days of the site. For a while, the 362d Signal Company and Company of the 43rd Signal Battalion had NCOs running the site until the 362d sent up a 2nd Lieutenant to be the officer in charge. E Company sent up a Lieutenant with more time in grade and 362d then sent a 1st Lieutenant. The seesaw continued until E Company sent up the battalion executive officer who finally took possession of the hill.

Included on the hill are a detachment from the 61st Military Police Company which provides security around the site and people from the 518th Signal Company who run the microwave.

As with any other isolated signal site, LBM has developed a personality of its own and life is unique there. It's about 6,800 feet in the air above the Dalat valley and fog covers the peak at early morning, dusk and sometimes during the day. Blankets are a must on the beds and in one break room there is a working fire place which sees a lot of use during the monsoon season. They burn pine logs gathered nearby.

During the rainy season most of the time the only approach available to the hill is via truck or jeep up the winding, steep mountain road. Abney described winching jeeps from tree to tree and shoulder deep mud before engineers repaired the road. When the rains come, the road down the mountain becomes very much like a toboggan run; the technique is to put the vehicle in four-wheel drive and just try to keep the front tires on the road. A sliding deuce-and-a-half is a thing to be reckoned with.

Long skirted, dark skinned maids whose laughter continually breaks the boredom or defeats a fit of depression are also residents. They live in a special barracks since the nearest villages are too far for everyday commuting. Some of the signalmen have

nd wives among the local girls and it isn't ommon for some of the LBMers to go to the ge at the bottom of the hill to celebrate the ding of one of their number to a village girl.

aths along the mountainside give the appearance giant skein spread there to dry. Water buffalo, le and horses join their native masters in dering the hills in search of forage or wood and ause of all the grazing, the foothills look like a ng, well kept golf course.

aying goodbye to Lang Bian won't be easy, it has part of us for a long time. ARVNization is a task. It is tough. Too many problems come up can only be solved with time. Lack of nological background, lack of technical language in the learning process, almost a complete nce of translated technical manuals plus the uage barrier between students and teachers make ARVNization of signal equipment a slow job.

The smiling, gracious Vietnamese signalmen at Lang Bian are eager to display their equipment and explain where the shots go, but the conversation is limited after that. Electrons and waves are pretty ambiguous terms to most nontechnical Westerners who've grown up and gone to school with the concepts for years. Vietnamese are learning a whole new world and language.

But the future is not all bleak. VHF shots on the mountain are largely in the hands of the Vietnamese and they are getting better and better in microwave, the next step up the technological ladder and they are on the job and learning about tropospheric scatter.

In the foreseeable future, the last signalman wearing U.S. Army will relinquish his hootch on the hill and move on, leaving behind a mountain full of aspiration, accomplishments and memories. Lang Bian.

Teaching Your Buddy

SP5 Gordon Teifel

The hands on the radios are smaller, a little less certain, but increasingly there are more and more and the new ones are more capable.

"Buddies Together" is Vietnamization. At sites and places all over Vietnam ARVN signal units are paired with Brigade units with about the same mission and the Vietnamese signalmen are learning how to work the American equipment and, in some cases, taking over the communications chores.

Under the Buddies Together program with the 160th Signal Group, Vietnamese communicators are grasping new and varied skills and jobs to complement their transmitting and receiving knowledges.

The 160th works closely with the 65th ARVN Signal Group in teaching and producing functioning signalmen, and has helped to train over 800 men in the past year. Battalions and Agencies of the Group have been matched with similar ARVN units which have similar missions.

One area of the program is aimed at training entire units to take over whole communications systems. Signal Support Agency, Saigon assisted the 650th ARVN Signal Battalion in splicing some of their cables into a U.S. cable in Saigon. This gave the Vietnamese the use of telephone, teletype and voice circuits over the line. They must perform all maintenance on their portion of the cable.

ctual communications skills are produced ough another phase of the program. During the year over 450 ARVN signalmen have graduated n the Southeast Asia Signal School at Long Binh kills covering radar, radio, cable, and telephone ration and maintenance. The school is aided by a up of highly skilled Vietnamese interpreters who s train in other fields when not helping conduct ses in their specialty.

n addition, the only heavy cable construction alion in Vietnam, the 40th, teaches cable splicing pole lineman courses; the three-week courses vide invaluable training in the kind of work ded before the ARVN can take over the work of

st Signal Brigade.

uture ARVN instructors and technicians go to an eek training course in communications secure pment. Conducted by the COMSEC Logistics ort Center, Vietnam at Tan Son Nhut Air Base aigon, the course has been offered to ARVN ted men, noncommissioned officers, warrant ers and aspirants. The training includes operation maintenance of the equipment used in secure mission plus trouble-shooting techniques with oscopes.

nother 40th Battalion portion of Buddies ther is two three-week courses that have students spend their last weeks on site applying what they learned in the informal classroom situations. Pole linemen and cable splicing students work their last week with Company A of the 40th. This last week is an important transition from classroom work to actual operating effectiveness.

One man of the 650th received comprehensive training in another area needed by his unit. Corporal Le Van Ruong learned how to maintain one quarter, three quarter, two and a half and five ton vehicles. In addition he was taught how to maintain the vehicles' electrical systems, fuel systems and transmissions.

Since mission requirements do not always allow trainees to return to the rear, a mobile training team idea was developed to take the training to the field. Staff Sergeant Johnnie B. Green and Specialist 5 Richard Garcia have been members of the mobile training team of Signal Support Agency, Long Binh. Together they provided a couple of weeks of training for the Signal Company of the 18th ARVN Infantry Division at Tay Ninh West and the III Corps Signal Battalion at Tay Ninh East.

During the first week the pair taught operation and maintenance of VHF commo gear. The second week the mobile team helped the ARVN signalmen set up a new VHF shot. The mobile team also trained Vietnamese at Xuan Loc.

Another, more personal aspect of the Buddies Together program is the civic actions work. Signal Support Agency, Saigon and the 650th have worked together constructing the ceiling and roof of a school attended by the children of the 650th. SSAS donated the materials and both units supplied carpenters.

Dependent housing for the families of ARVN III Corps signalmen has been improved with the help of Signal Support Agency, Long Binh. Materials were donated for building 20 family dwellings at Bien Hoa near the III Corps headquarters. Two wells with pumps were also installed for the families' water needs.

Often Buddy units contest each other's superiority on athletic fields, developing friendly rivalries in basketball, volleyball and swimming. Buddies Together units gain the advantage of being able to celebrate both Vietnamese and American holidays.

This as much as anything, the personal relationship, is making Buddies Together a workable idea turned into reality. It is easier to learn from a man who you have eaten and drunk with than one you just see on the job. And likewise with the teaching.

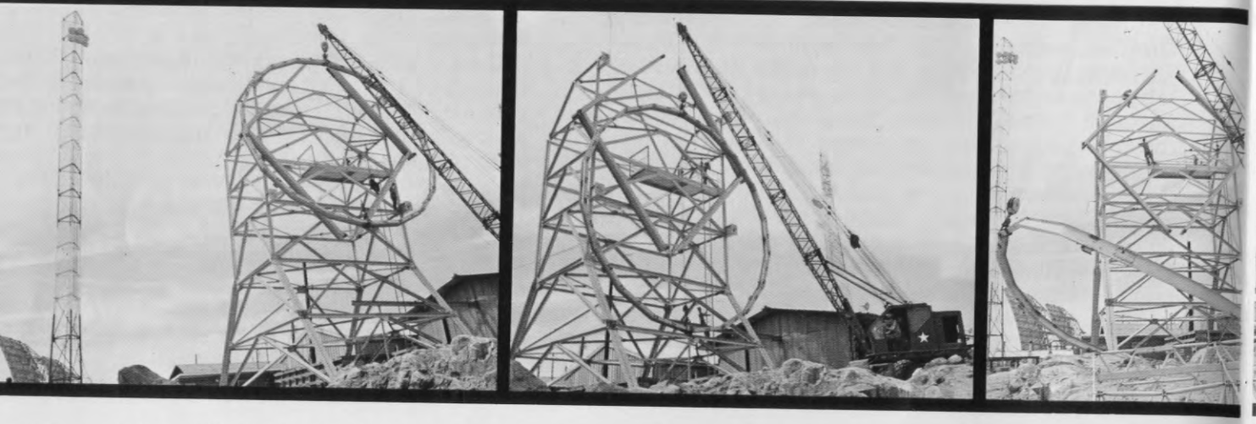
On the job training is another vital area of the program. Here the ARVN signalmen learn on operating equipment the ways and means of working the gear. Americans are working with them to explain the work, and the experience is as close as possible to actual operating conditions.

Two ARVN telephone men have been training on the job at the Long Binh dial telephone exchange, one of the largest manual exchanges in the Army, which is operated by the 160th's Signal Support Agency, Long Binh.

Lieutenant Doug Spencer, Buddies Together Officer for the 160th, is pleased with the program. "There were some problems at first, but it's going better than we expected it would. The operations in Cambodia (1970) and Laos (1971) certainly improved our estimation of the ARVN capability. Sports has also been a great help in making the program go."

"As for the technical aspects, the progress has really been great. You can tell how good they are by how much they have taken over."

Buddies Together is a two way street, leading Vietnamese signalmen to proficiency and ability and showing the way for Americans out of their signal chores in Vietnam.



Taking Down and Packing

was a minor phenomenon, just a logical nsion and expansion of what had been before.
oing the tremendous job of retrograding 1st al Brigade towers, radios, buildings, generators hordes of other assorted gear is why CARA was .

hen the redeployment of communications pment began, in midyear of 1970, an adjunct nization was developed under the Support ion of CSEMA (Communications Systems neering and Management Agency) to coordinate lend expertise to the packing, preserving and aging operations.

ARB (Communications Assets Recovery Branch) led its job using limited personnel and pment, depending primarily on logistics support the unit being deinstalled as well as borrowing le from the serviced unit.

en, around the beginning of 1971, CARB's asing workload suggested the need for a new unit more specialized people and deinstallation pment. Brigadier General Wilburn Weaver, then ty commanding general of the Brigade, suggested e CSEMA support branch that it was time to studying the retrograde structure and see if there a better way than CARB.

EMA personnel made a study and developed an of larger, more specialized organization based on ld CARB structure but still subordinate to the ort Division. After discussion of the plan, it was sted that an even better way of operating might ound in developing a separate organization, ct in its own right.

RA (Communications Assets Recovery Agency) into being as a provisional unit specifically ed to deinstall fixed communications-electronics and real property associated with them. The were labled retrograde assets to be used here in the Army.

e new agency fell under the 160th Signal Group dministrative control, but stayed under CSEMA perational direction.

the time of redeploying units and drawdowns, it have been difficult to establish a new zation with 224 people in it as CARA had, so were taken from five other units in the le. The official documents establishing CARA

By LT James Eggensperger

are still pending approval at Department of the Army, and Major Henry Biggs, commander of the agency, said it's likely that they may not be approved by the time CARA finishes its mission.

Major Biggs has been with the planning since the beginning and has had the unique experience of commanding a unit which he helped to design and create.

CARA is broken into five main elements, the headquarters, headquarters detachment, operations branch, support branch, and its own CARB.

Part of the need and idea behind CARA was to develop a unit which would be separate and take care of its own; whereas the CARB men were assigned to headquarters company of the brigade before going into CARA.

CARB team members in the field had trouble receiving mail and pay and experienced other administrative headaches because they were out of touch due to the uniqueness of their mission. These problems were tackled using the headquarters detachment of CARA which handles messing, billeting, morning report and normal unit supply functions for its people on Long Binh and in the field.

Operations branch is charged with developing plans of action for the sites or equipment to be deinstalled. Major Biggs said, "It is the branch that receives taskings from higher headquarters (assistant chief of staff, operations and commander of CSEMA) and implements the plans to the other CARA branches for completion. It's the control center."

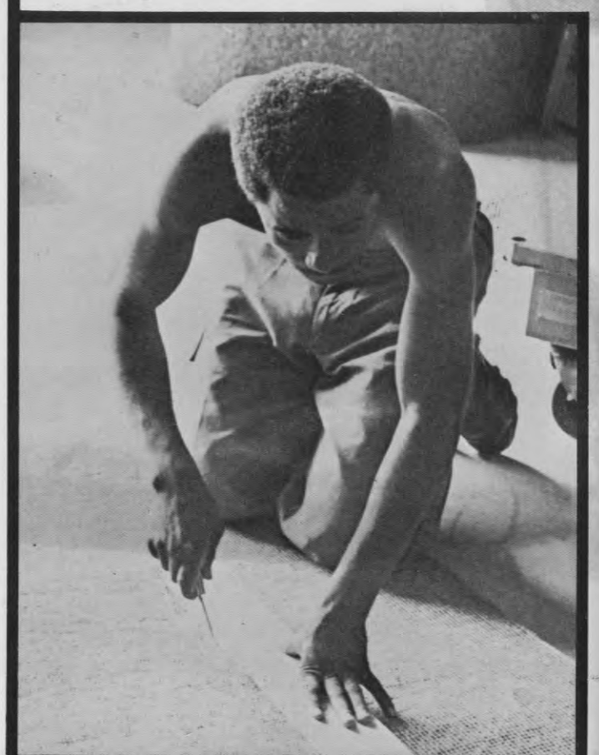
Transportation of reclaimed gear, but more often just advice on how to transport, is a function of the support branch. CARA has responsibility only for deinstalling and packing; shipment must be done by the unit losing the gear. In addition, support branch handles property accountability for unit and special mission supplies. This means it handles the supplies needed for the assigned jobs of CARA as well as supplies for the normal functioning of the unit.

However, CARA's working arm is the CARB. Its three mobile teams--with 42 people each--are built to be capable of "complete recovery functions" on site, including the recovery and packing of equipment. CARB teams receive the mission, move their men and equipment on site and start to work.

They go to work like a horde of ants, swarming over a site, tools in hand, and take down what they find there. At a site being moved by the "Brigade Van Lines," the movers set up their equipment and materials, and disassemble, catalog and pack.

The range of equipment varies from simple screwdrivers and pliers to such non-signal gear as six five-ton tractors, a ten-ton wrecker and 10 forklifts ranging between two-and five-tons, A whining table saw marks most CARA sites as do pallets of plywood, wooden boxes filled with reclaimed gear and GIs who are sweating in the sun. Most say they like their jobs, especially being out of doors and traveling.

First six months deinstallation projects included a satellite terminal, six complete ICS sites (high capacity radios, wire heads plus the assorted multiplexers and test equipment), 12 buildings, 24 150-kilowatt generators, six complete antenna assemblies, five dial telephone exchanges (none with



less than 1,000 subscribers), 10 radio terminals plus antennas, four UNIVAC 1004 and three IBM 360-20 computers; a remarkable divergence and collection.

Operations on site fascinate a student of efficiency and complete planning. A veritable assembly line is established for each portion or piece of equipment and it goes through the assorted stages of packing, wrapping, protecting, foaming and boxing.

Dessicants are wrapped with the gear to take out the moisture and each piece is sealed in special barrier paper which then has the air suctioned out and is heat sealed to be air tight.

A portable foam machine envelopes plastic wrapped gear in a mass of goo which hardens into the shape of the equipment and bars damage from any sort of jar.

Some projects took special measures, such as when CARA had to deinstall four generators at the Nha Trang automatic switching center. Each of the generators weighs about 20,000 pounds and the team found its crane wasn't strong enough to do the job.

At Vung Tau, where CARA took out two LRC-3 high capacity microwave systems, tearing down the 60-foot parabolic towers called for borrowing a rough terrain crane from local engineers so the CARA tower team could lower the exceptionally heavy antenna sections safely. The tower pieces were too heavy to be unbolted and lowered using a conventional block and tackle.

Through all the turmoil and unexpected flaps, Maj. Biggs, a blond, smiling man with a quick sense of humor but an air of expediency and efficiency around him, remains proud of his unit and especially his men. None of the officers and few of the NCOs of CARA had any redeployment or deinstallation experience, save those who were carryovers from CARB.

But, "Maj. Cara", as he sometimes is called, said, "We are trying to make the unit operate like it is supposed to. According to our finished jobs (in mid-May) even without the required equipment, it is proving to be more efficient with more coordinating ability than we had before because its sole mission is retrograde."

He remains a staff officer of CSEMA and coordinates closely with other brigade sections. His organization has contact with practically anyone and everyone in the Brigade, including sending advisors to Thailand for retrograde projects in 29th Signal Group. In April he sent a team of four carpenters to help out a signal unit in Okinawa.

A special unit for a special job. Conceived and put into effect with the mission: Retrograde.

Amidst the SCRAP —Savings

By SP4 John Garfield

What do you do with 100,000 feet too much telephone cable?

If you are a member of the 1st Signal Brigade, you have a unique chance to redistribute it worldwide. The Brigade is in a better position to utilize its excess resources than other commands in Vietnam because its facilities will operate long after the Brigade leaves.

Also, the 1st Signal Brigade is a member of the Stategic Communications Command (STRATCOM) team, a worldwide organization capable of using any property considered excess.

Operation Thrift and Disposal was begun by Major General Hugh F. Foster Jr., former commanding general of the Brigade, in August 1970. Designed to search Property Disposal yards (PDO) throughout Vietnam and reclaim discarded equipment, the program has found and recovered more than $2 million worth of assets which had been declared excess.

There are four PDOs in Vietnam that are surveyed by Brigade men for useable materials and equipment: at Da Nang, Phu Tai, Cam Ranh Bay and Long Binh. Each yard has a detachment of 1st Signal Brigade people whose purpose is to expedite materials out of the yard. Known as Materiel Release Expediters (MRE), their job is to screen everything that enters a PDO, decide if it's useable and put a hold on good equipment.

Materials and all kinds of equipment get to the PDOs for many reasons. Perhaps a crate of pipe is damaged in transit. Though some is good, the entire crate is considered a loss and sent to PDO. Or, a unit is standing down and turns in some used equipment which was not accounted for and therefore excess. 1st Signal Brigade MREs grab equipment sent from any Armed Forces unit in RVN, including Air Force and Navy. Much is still good.

Captain James L. King, commanding officer of the Property Disposal Company at Long Binh, mentioned that even his own vehicle was picked out of a yard by one of his MREs.

"An entire shipment of light bulbs was brought here last week because one of the crates was damaged. We opened it up and found about 100 bulbs that were broken–out of a shipment of 5,000... so you can see how we are saving money," he said.

Once good materiel has been segregated from the scrap, an expediter can start the paperwork necessary to get the supply system to be responsible and accountable for it. It is then only a matter of days before trucks arrive at the PDO to pick up whatever has been found and place it into Brigade supply channels.

From the Long Binh PDO, the equipment is sent either to the 2nd Signal Group supply office or "Hernando's Hideaway" an annex to the Communications Systems Engineering and Management Agency's cable supply yard.

1st Lieutenant Walter James is in charge of the 2nd Signal Group end of Operation Thrift and Disposal. Working with the material sent him by his MRE, he has sent off 15 Sea Land vans (a van fits the back of a 10-ton truck) to STRATCOM headquarters at Ft. Huachuca, Ariz. All this equipment is slated for use in a construction project underway there.

When the 2nd Group men receive the equipment from PDO, they put it in vans, seal them and have them trucked to the Saigon seaport. From there the vans are loaded onto ships and sent to the states or some other location. This operation alone has sent over 500,000 pounds to Ft. Huachuca. Vans are readily available as they are used to ship many kinds of supplies to Vietnam and previously often returned empty.

"Hernando's Hideaway" entails another aspect of Operation Thrift and Disposal. Sergeant First Class Bernard Permar of Rainy River, Ontario, Can., the yard chief, distributes materiel he receives within the Brigade in Vietnam or Thailand.

"You name it and it comes through here eventually," said SFC Permar. "From pots and pans to clock radios to jockey shorts to baseball bats and mine detectors, we've had'em."

The system at this yard is different since shipment outside the combat zone is not the prime purpose. Monthly, SFC Permar distributes a computer print out of what is in stock. When the program first began, the brigade's PDO sent about $230 worth of materials to units. In March this year, the figure was approximately $128,000. The monthly average though, is closer to $60,000–definitely nothing to scoff at. Also, if a Free World Forces unit comes to the Hideaway needing parts to use for repairs, it won't be turned away.

To aid the shipment of equipment throughout Vietnam, 2nd Group has sent a small detachment of men to Tan Son Nhut Air Base near Saigon. Under the supervision of Staff Sergeant Victor Johanson, the men act as a "transportation and shipping center." They are responsible for receiving and shipping signal equipment needed somewhere else in a hurry.

If a priority item is needed somewhere, SSG Johanson can have space reserved on an Air Force flight well before the item arrives at Tan Son Nhut. Thus, there is no delay in getting the gear to the men who need it.

Though a small aspect of the operation, it definitely makes for a much smoother operation in shipping and expediting. And, the detachment is not exclusively concerned with in-country shipment.

"A good deal of the stuff we handle goes to STRATCOM units outside of the 'Nam," said SSG Johanson.

The situation is quite different at the Phu Tai PDO outside Qui Nhon. During the period between January 27 and March 15, the yard packed and shipped 56 Milvans (The military equivalent of a Sea Land van) and Sea Land vans. 1st Lieutenant Kevin O'Rourke, Yonkers, N.Y., headed a team from the 41st Signal Battalion which effectively stripped the Phu Tai PDO of all equipment and materials that could be used by signal units worldwide.

Upon completion of the project, the Phu Tai yard stopped accepting signal equipment. The main reason for this is that the Qui Nhon area is now in a period of strength reduction and the PDO has begun to dispose of its on-hand assets.

During a recent tour of the PDO, Lt. O'Rourke pointed out the areas where large shipping containers had been stacked two tiers high.

"This area over here had over 10,000 lengths of good pipe. It took us three weeks to clear it out. It was back breaking and time consuming. Each 15-foot length had to be hand carried into the van. At 250 pounds a length, it is a credit to the men that they were able to load almost four vans a day."

1Lt. O'Rourke went on to explain how he got his men: "These men all came from various units of the 41st around Qui Nhon. At one time there were over 30 working on loading these vans. When we were finally able to use fork lifts, the number was drastically reduced."

Pipe was not the only material shipped out of the yard. The list looked like a hardware store's inventory sheet: electrical fittings, plumbing fittings, sinks, toilets, reels of cable, electric motors, radio tubes, switch boxes, an entire crate of over a million rubber bands, towel holders, flood lights, transformers, 8-inch gate valves; the list seemed endless.

And 56 vans, once loaded, had to be braced for sea shipment and then double sealed shut. When each was ready, Sea Land men took them to the Qui Nhon port seven miles away and had them manifested for ships to the states.

Operation Thrift and Disposal has also gotten tactical gear to field units. Specifically, the 12th Signal Group PDO operation supplied much needed equipment to units involved in Operation Lam Son 719 last February and March.

Calling themselves the "Ragpickers", they trucked everything from tactical radios to sandbags to the men working out of Quang Tri. 1st Lieutenant James C. Cron, the officer in charge, and his men screened all equipment coming into the Da Nang PDO and anything they knew was needed was sent to the operation's signal headquarters at Quang Tri. For their efforts, the Ragpickers won the first 1st Signal Brigade Property Disposal Award for the month of January. They repeated this distinction in March.

In addition to tactical support, the Da Nang PDO team has also packed 16 Sea Land vans totaling over half a million pounds of equipment. These vans are shipped out of Da Nang.

The Cam Ranh Bay PDO operation is basically the same as at the other yards. This yard has segregated and shipped 25 vans full of this equipment ultimately destined for the Ft. Huachuca construction project.

Brigade units and Ft. Huachuca are not the only beneficiaries of Operation Thrift and Disposal. Other places receiving assets through this project have been STRATCOM units in Okinawa, Japan, Hawaii and Korea.

The success of this money saving program has already been guaranteed. Through this April, Operation Thrift and Disposal has saved the 1st Signal Brigade a total of $2,167,913 in assets that would otherwise have been scrapped or sold for a small fraction of their worth. The Brigade has looked to find materials that were slated for obscurity and given them to units and places that need them. In this way, the STRATCOM idea of interchangeability and interconnection has been proven and come through with flying colors.

COMVETS RAISES UNEMPLOYMENT

In March something began in the 1st Signal Brigade that a lot of GIs wish would happen more often: Civilians started taking away the soldiers' jobs.

Keeping in step with Vietnamization and removing American soldiers from Vietnam, COMVETS--Contractor Operation and Maintenance, Vietnam Engineering and Training Services--was developed to eliminate about 2,500 members of the Brigade from communications chores in the combat zone. Replacing them were about 1,600 civilian workers hired by Federal Electric Corporation.

The work takeover occured in dial telephone exchanges, Integrated Communications Sites, Area Maintenance and Supply Facilities and assorted engineering and maintenance jobs plus a program of training ARVN communicators to work in all phases of the operation.

Although there have been civilians working with Brigade signalmen at sites for years, the COMVETS contract represents the first time in the history of Army communications that a civilian contractor has been given responsibility for operating and maintaining communications in a combat area under tactical situations, according to Major Stephen Luster, the Administrative Contracting Officer for the Brigade.

Federal Electric, a subsidiary company of International Telephone and Telegraph, won the more than $12 million contract on a cost plus awards fee basis. This means that the company each month will earn portions of the allotted money according to how it meets performance standards established by the Brigade.

Between the 10th and 15th of each month the Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) convenes a performance Board of eight members which evaluates the contractor's performance according to the established criteria and written reports submitted by on site contract evaluators (OSCE) who accompany the contractor personnel on the job and evaluate their work.

In addition to the inputs from evaluators and Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR), the ACO prepares a report to give the board.

Members of the board include three representatives from the newly formed Contract Management Agency, Vietnam (CMAV), one each from the Southeast Asia Telephone Management Agency, Brigade Operations, Plans and Training and Logistics plus the deputy commander of the Brigade. They discuss the performance and finally give a grade for the month.

The grade determines how much money above operating costs the contractor will be awarded for the month. FEC is contracted to get up to 6 per cent of its operating costs in award fees for superior performance or to lose up to 2 per cent (money returned to the government) for substantially substandard work. Operating costs are those which are incurred getting the job done, made up primarily of salaries, but including some parts and supplies.

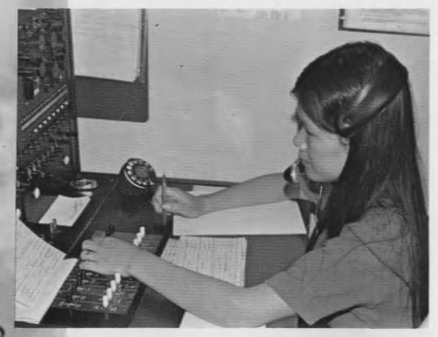
A computer program for collecting, ordering and recovering the data from the sites has been developed to aid in using the mass of figures processed each month. The program is run using the Brigade Data Processing Division which provides the ACO a complete printout containing figures and percentages for each site at the end of every reporting period.

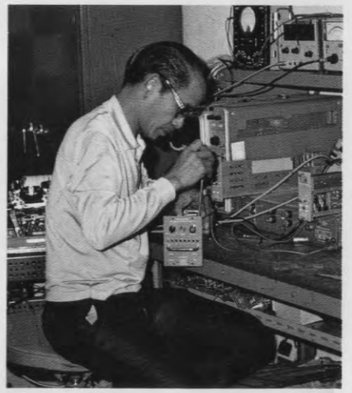
The work done by the many new CORs and OSCEs is done primarily by people assigned to CMAV. CMAV has a collective strength of about 350 as compared with the 2,500 formerly in Regional Communications Group which formed the basis for CMAV. The new agency is divided into four detachments, one in each Military Region, which will do most of the work of gathering and transmitting the evaluation information from the sites under their jurisdiction.

Reg Comm Group was the logical choice to be turned into the agency overseeing the contractor as it had the experienced personnel available who could evaluate the civilians' performance. Formerly RCG operated the Army portion of the ICS network in Southeast Asia which is a series of tropospheric scatter and microwave systems which carried the majority of the long range communications from one end of Vietnam to the other.

In addition to the ICS, Federal Electric took over most of what could be called the "utility" services of the communications provided by the 1st Signal Brigade. Its workers man the dial telephone exchanges, those automatic switching and connecting centers which are the heart of the automatic dialing network in Vietnam; the AMSFs located at Long Binh and Cam Ranh Bay, special shops to provide electronic repair and parts for signal gear not ordinarily available through Army supply and maintenance channels. The AMSFs are also organized to have troubleshooting teams on call

By LT Patrick Jones





to travel throughout the country on short notice to keep outages to a minimum.

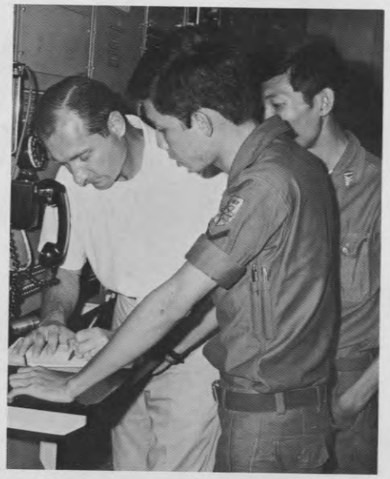
Additionally, the FEC men must provide technical help to the Army men who run the secure voice telephone network which connects major commanders in the Southeast Asia area and the AUTODIN switch located in Vietnam.

Besides these missions, FEC has another major task, that of on-the-job training for Vietnamese signalmen. The Vietnamese trainees are graduates from microwave and tropospheric scatter courses at the US-RVNAF Vung Tau Training Facility (another contractor operated function overseen by the Brigade), the Army Signal School at Ft. Montmouth, N.J., and the RVNAF Signal School also at Vung Tau.

The COMVETS contractor will rain each OJT candidate for a minimum of 800 hours at an operating ICS site or DTE. Contractor education experts developed a program of OJT nstruction which was reviewed and pproved by the Brigade training fficer and then put to work.

Interesting to note also is the act that the contract specifically rovides for training those ARVN ignalmen who have been trained at t. Monmouth and turning them nto instructors at the sites after eriods of OJT lasting six to nine nonths.

At the end of each student's OJT e will be tested for proficiency nd capability by Brigade personnel efore he is certified as being site ualified. Site qualified ARVN



soldiers are capable of doing the same work and working a shift with his US counterpart.

Tom Pendergast, sector superintendent for FEC in Military Region IV, said he feels FEC is merely "a transition force between the military leaving and the local nationals taking over."

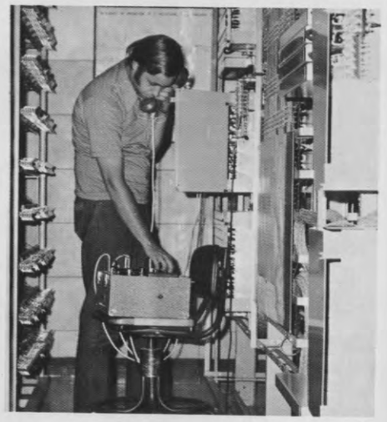
The Vietnamese who go through the stages of OJT and become site qualified and finally assume site operating jobs will form the nucleus of the ARVN signal units which someday must take over the works from the GIs and the civilians. If FEC does its training job well

enough, it should work itself out of a job.

Indeed, the contract was let for a year, renewable at the option of the government, but the document specifically states that the total term of the contract is for no longer than five years.

It is not so easy to understand why many Americans and other foreigners have decided to come to Vietnam to work. Workers for FEC are probably not unlike many other civilian contractor employees who are working in Asia and many other countries outside the U.S.

The 1,500-odd men employed by FEC present a wide divergence of backgrounds and homelands. The company is basically American run, but after that the common denominators are much less apparent. In terms of nationality, the majority are Vietnamese, but there are numerous Americans and third country nationals. There are Koreans, Thais, Filipinos, Canadians and British working in COMVETS.



The Americans have some noticeable similarities in background. Most of them have worked in the Far East before, many as civilians, and some as military and some as government employed civilians. Some had been working on similar contracts for other communications firms and joined FEC when the COMVETS contract was let.

With the departure of the military from many of the sites, many non-military activities seemed doomed, but FEC here too has taken up the slack. Civic action programs will not suffer under FEC. Already being planned are programs to collect toys, clothes and miscellaneous useful items for distribution to needy children.

Collection points have been set up in Paramus, N.J., the home of FEC, and Los Angeles which will coordinate the channeling of donations. FEC's goal is to support schools and orphanages currently not receiving support from anyone else.

Soldiers being replaced by civilians who will be looking to be replaced by Vietnamese in time. COMVETS is happening.

Steel on Target

Story and Photos by SP5 Gordon Teifel

"Battery adjust! Azimuth four-three-hundred!"

"Gun One, aiming point identified, sir."

"Roger that. Number one, deflection one-niner-three-four."

"One-niner-three-four. Zero mils, sir."

"Number one is laid!"

At Fire Support Base Nancy, 155mm towed howitzer crews can easily give artillery support to a radioed request within two minutes of the initial call, day or night.

FSB Nancy, 40 miles from Bien Hoa, is located near Dinh Quan in one of the richest provinces of Vietnam. Large forests of teak and rubber trees make Long Khanh province both a profitable and desirable military objective.

The Popular Forces of Long Khanh are given direct artillery support by batteries of 5th Battalion, 42nd Artillery, a part of the 23rd Artillery Group and the newly formed Third Regional Assistance Command. II Field Force Vietnam, which reorganized on May 1, was formerly the major command of 5th Battalion, 42nd Arty.

The men and six guns of Alpha Battery are split between FSB Michelle, 15 miles from Bien Hoa, and FSB Nancy.

Teamwork and training are required to put steel on target consistently with accuracy and speed. "Bullet", officially known as Staff Sergeant Charles Mulcahy, is Nancy's chief of firing battery and responsible for keeping the men up on their jobs. He said "as long as we have one mission a day, it keeps the crews alert."

If a day goes by without any targets, a dry fire mission is held to keep the crews at optimum efficiency.

"Shell HE (high explosive)."
"Contact lot, white bag."
"Charge seven."
"Fuze quick."
"Battery three rounds."
"Deflection two-seven-four-six."
"Quadrant three-eight-four."

A radio-telephone operator (RTO) at each gun calls out information that gets the crew to properly fire the rounds on target.

The three gun crews at Nancy are on call 24 hours a day, but most firing occurs at night.

The men are busy in the morning pulling maintenance on the tubes and equipment. "Bullet" said the normal routine each day is to pull "maintenance on the guns if you've fired the night before, get the ammo squared away and police the area."

Men avoid the hot afternoon sun by napping in their bunkers, writing letters or just trying to keep cool. Since guard duty comes every night for nearly everyone, the "gun bunnies" have the afternoon for themselves.

"Fire mission!" Everything else stops. Each man pops out of his bunker to man his assigned position on the gun crew.

"Battery adjust." Within seconds every man is doing his thing on the team. Firing data is called from the fire direction center (FDC) over the field telephones to each gun crew's RTO.

The FDC converts coordinates of the target into azimuth and elevation based on recent weather data. The RTO relays the data to his crew.

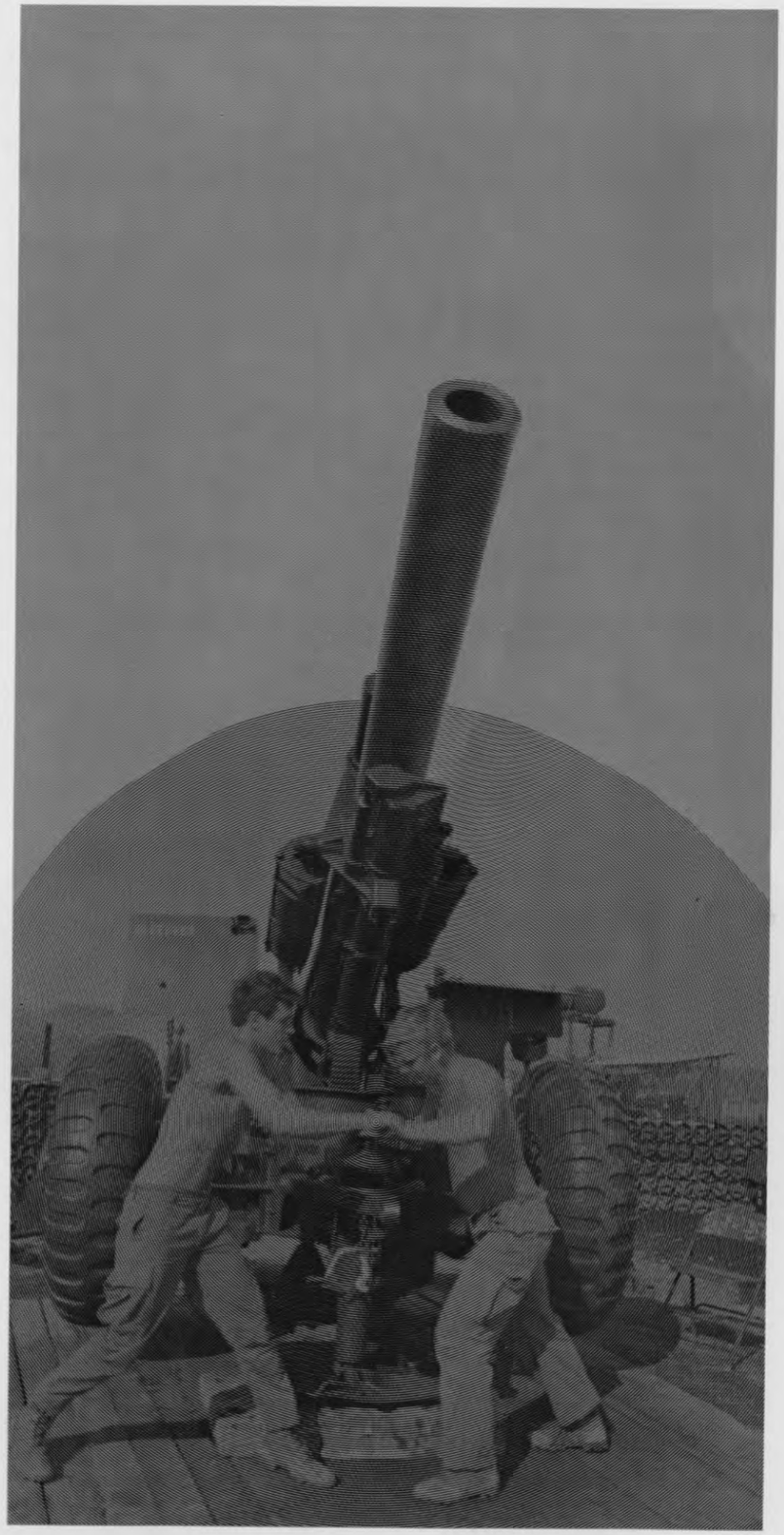
At the same time the gun is being loaded and rammed with a high explosive round, then charged with powder and primer.

"Standby!" That's the signal to cover their ears and open their mouths to relieve the pressure from the concussion caused as the round is fired. A quick yank on the lanyard by the assistant gunner and the round is soon downrange on target after a deafening blast.

Sergeant Reuben L. Saenz, "Hawk" to everyone at Nancy, compared Vietnam to duty back in the world. "Well, down here people let you work at your job." The native of Tucson, Ariz., is the gunner of Gun One and responsible for correctly laying the tube.

Life at Fire Support Base Nancy has its small conveniences and hardships. A new shower room was recently installed to replace the makeshift shower buckets formerly used. Each day a vehicle hauls water in for cooking and showers.

Electrical power is supplied by generators that runs 12 hours a day from noon to midnight. A movie is shown each night and a modest club is available.



Even though fire missions often occur at night, the "gun bunnies" enjoy their duty. Morale and esprit-de-corps at Nancy are good.

The men have a healthy competition among gun crews. Staff Sergeant Arthur R. Stoehr, section chief of Gun One, said to a man in another gun crew, "Get your money together and we'll see who's the best gun crew."

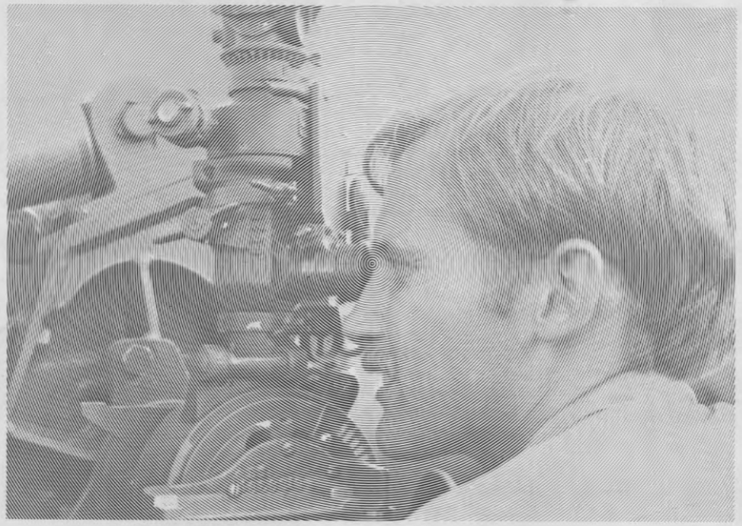
"End of mission." The crews put away their equipment, pull the required maintenance and resume their interim activities until the next targets are called in.

"Keeeping the shooters talking" is the job of the signal corps. Two signal officers and over 20 NCOs and enlisted men are assigned to the battalion to facilitate the job of internal communications. Units in the field are kept in radio contact with the rear battalion headquarters at Camp Frenzell Jones with FM gear. In addition, a liaison team at Xuan Loc utilizes both land lines to the battalion headquarters and FM radios to the fire support bases. The team, a captain and several RTOs, coordinate with U.S. and Vietnamese headquarters to obtain clearances for firing artillery.

Units of the 1st Signal Brigade operate the essential commo support to aid the 5th Battalion, 42nd Artillery in accomplishing its jobs. Dial telephone exchanges are necessary to keep the rations and petroleum flowing smoothly to the battalion's units in the field. Messages are transmitted over 1st Signal Brigade teletype lines from the higher headquarters of the 5/42nd directing the missions of the battalion.

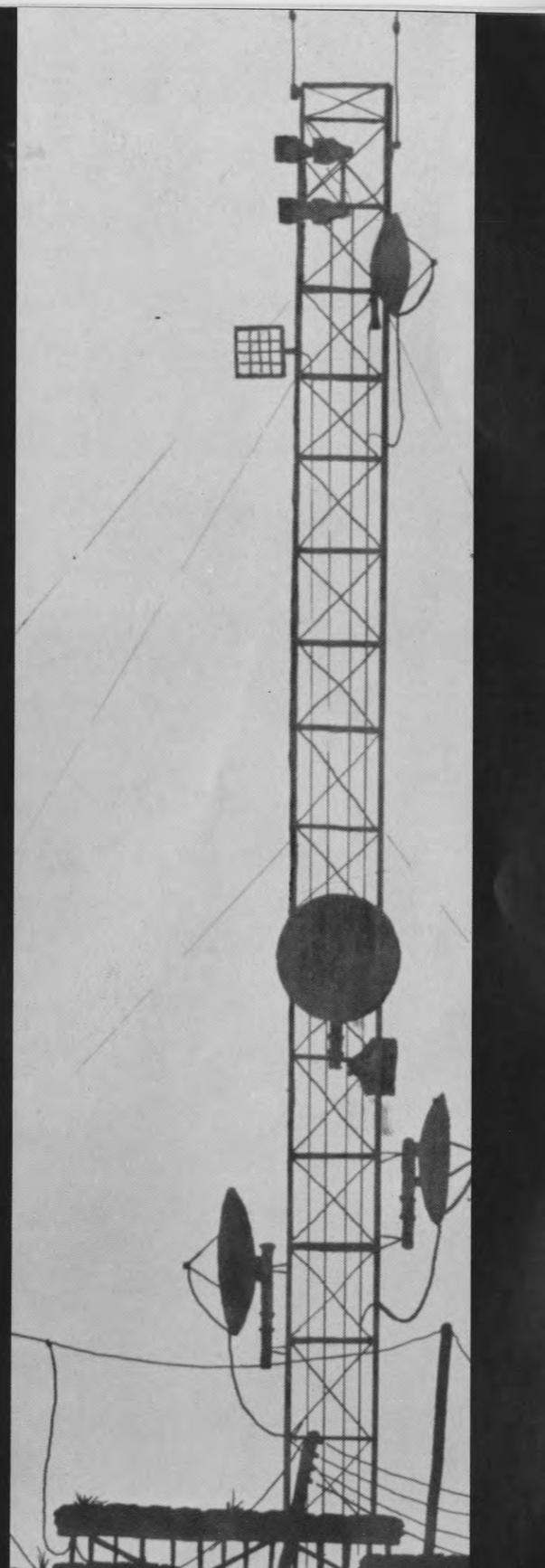
Secure communications gear from the Communications Security Logistics Supply Center, Vietnam, a unit of the 160th Group, enables the battalion to communicate securely with the 23rd Artillery Group.

From headquarters to the firebase commo is vital. To get the steel shot, there must be steel to shoot, food for the troops and gas for the vehicles. All possible through signal circuits.



A new dimension in communicating the scenes of conflict has developed in Vietnam, combat art. The 1st Signal Brigade has its own team of combat artists and a graphics section included with the Southeast Asia Pictorial Center which also produces artwork about the war. These are the work of Specialist 6 Eric Chandler, Specialists 4 Gerald Sorenson, Ronald Weiss, Stephen Forbes and Chester Satkamp.

SATKAMP

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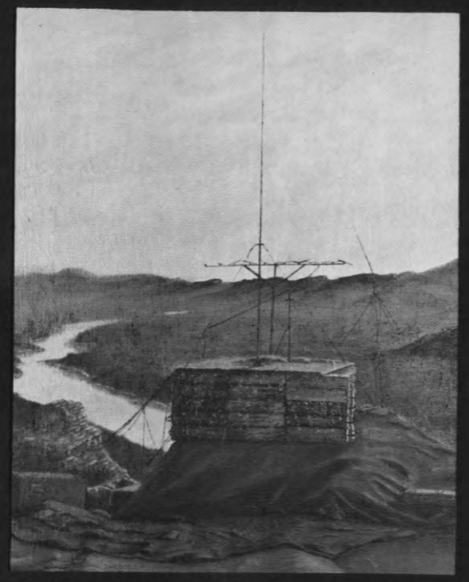


Banda'id Bunker Medic

Story and Photos by SP4 John Garfield

Mention a Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) and immediately one thinks of doctors and corpsmen descending on a beleaguered village with bags full of medicines. With the aid of interpreters, they gather all the people in the village who need medical attention, give them the prescribed treatments, then pile back into a waiting helicopter and fly to the next village.

There is a MEDCAP program that is not run on such a grand scale at 12th Signal Group Headquarters. On China Beach outside Da Nang, Specialist 4 David E. Zrake is on call all day, every day treating the people of My Khe village.

My Khe is adjacent to the 12th Group compound. Most of the villagers are fishermen and many of their children do not attend school. There are no medical facilities in the village, and the people do not bother to walk the two miles to the nearest facility to get treated. But, since the inception of the 12th Group MEDCAP program, villagers have started to take advantage of the treatment offered.

The project began in October, 1970, when Master Sergeant Wayne L. Defenbaugh and Specialist 4 James G. Schroeder started holding a daily sick call for local Vietnamese. The number of patients rapidly grew to more than 50 a day. In February of this year Spec. 4 Zrake was assigned to the 12th Signal Group as its only trained medic and immediately assumed the responsibility of treating the villagers. Spec. 4 Schroeder was allowed to return to his assigned duty as a chaplain's assistant and MSgt. Defenbaugh has since returned to the States.

Since taking over the program, Spec. 4 Zrake has seen the number of patients increase to over 100 a day. David Zrake is a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., where he worked for a brokerage firm on Wall Street before entering the Army. As he says, "It is quite a change from working in New York City to being a medic for these kids."

Zrake has nothing more than a refurbished bunker to call a dispensary. All the sandbags and reinforced concrete have been removed and replaced with a tin roof and screen walls. The structure is sitting close to the main gate, and right on the edge of the compound's main chopper pad. The cry of "Chopper coming in" causes a mad rush to lower the canvas tarps that hang under the eaves of the roof in an effort to keep as much of the flying sand and dust as possible out of the bunker. It is mostly an unsuccessful effort.

There is no running water or electricity in the bunker. Zrake, however, has managed to scrounge a gas operated ice box and some bottled fuel for it. The shortcomings do not slow Specialist Zrake from performing his primary function, that of giving whatever aid he can to the people who come to him. As he says, "Anyone who walks in here will get treated, no matter what. If it is too serious for me to handle, I'll commandeer a vehicle and take him to a hospital."

Usually when the medic gets to the bunker around 7:30 each morning there is a good sized crowd of kids outside the gate waiting for him to open up. The gate guard lets them through a few at a time, but no matter how carefully they are regulated, the bunker is soon overflowing with people.

Zrake quickly gets down to the business of cleaning, bandaging, taping and controlling all the people who come to him. With the assistance of interpreter Sergeant Tran Van Gia, an ARVN assigned to the 12th's civic action office, Zrake manages to take care of 60 to 70 people in the morning.

The popularity of the program has continued to grow as more people realize how painless the treatment can be. This is especially true among the children. At the beginning, the braver older boys would go in and return with fresh, white bandages. This became a status symbol to the younger children, who were soon coming in droves wanting to get a bandage.

Perhaps it's coming in through the back door in terms of reasons for seeing a doctor, but it's effective. Another method Zrake uses to keep his patients returning is to use peroxide instead of alcohol in treating and cleaning small cuts and sores. Peroxide does not sting the way alcohol does, and thus the kids are not so easily scared away.

There is one little girl, about 13-years-old, who scalded both legs with boiling water. On her own accord, she came hopping and crying into the bunker, where Zrake started the long process of treating the severe second degree burns. Now, the girl comes in each morning, gets rebandaged, and sets about taking care of some of the younger children who only need a band-aid.

One 76-years-old man has been coming in for weeks with an infection on his foot. Every morning he limps in and has it cleaned and rebandaged. Since he started coming, many more of the older people have appeared for treatment.

In the afternoon Zrake treats about 30 to 40 more people. Again, most of those treated are children who come straggling in to get a band-aid or a bandage wrapped around an arm or leg. But, for the most part, they get what they need. The kids have started to trust Zrake. Sometimes they bring him a cold soda which they buy themselves.

Whenever there is a case where a doctor is needed, Zrake closes the "dispensary" and grabs the first vehicle leaving the compound. He takes the patient to either the XXIV Corps Dispensary or the 95th Evac Hospital, both in Da Nang. If the patient is a child, he can also be taken to the nearby German Hospital. Zrake does have the skills to suture the more serious cuts, but as his facilities are so basic and he has no sterilization equipment, he cannot risk the chance of infection.

Older children are now bringing in their younger brothers and sisters. They are quite different than their American counterparts, who dread with all their might any trip to the doctor's office. Because they return time and time again, the children are soon able to understand what is happening. Some of the older ones actually help Zrake dress the wounds. In this way a basic knowledge of first aid techniques is given to the children. Zrake hopes that the people will understand how to keep cuts and scratches clean so they can have chance to heal.

The program that Zrake has inherited is small when compared to some MEDCAP programs in Vietnam, but in the eyes of the people he treats it is quite important. The villagers of My Khe have not only gained a "doctor", but more important, a trusted American friend.

AWAY FROM IT ALL

Story and Photos by

SP5 Richard E. Wood

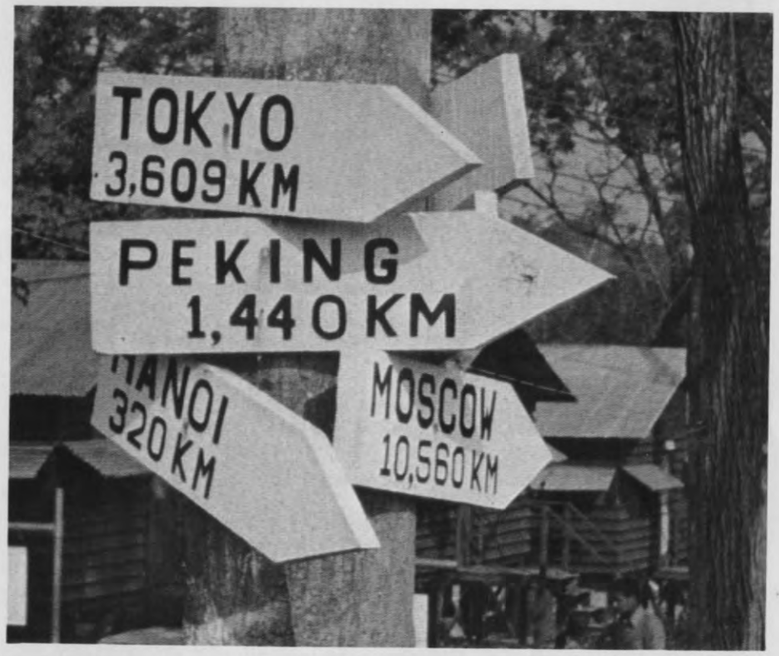
Welcome to the Land of Smiles.

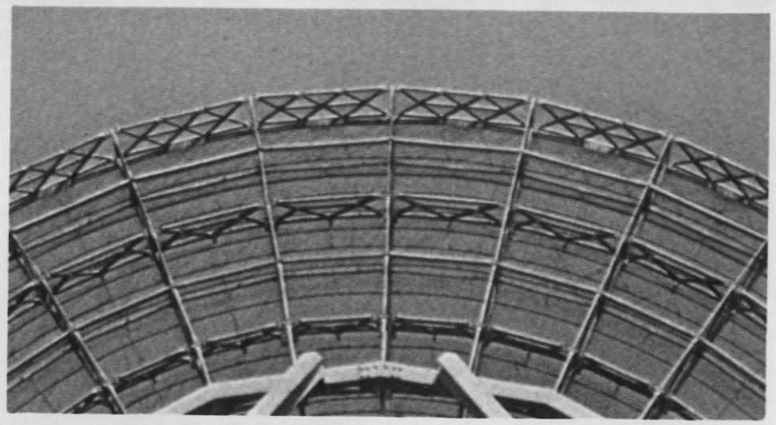
This is the conception that most GIs, fresh from Vietnam and ready for R&R, have of Thailand. Five days and six nights of Bangkok, with hardly a bunker or string of concertina wire to be seen.

But there is another side to soldiering in Thailand, a side which can best be described as isolated. For the men of Companies C and A of the 442nd Signal Battalion at Phu Mu and Green Hill signal relay sites, the isolation is as much a part of life as it is at the most advanced fire base in Vietnam. The physical setup is better, but life basically remains dependent on interaction between the small number of Americans at the sites; and finding something to do to occupy the non-duty hours.

Phu Mu is the most isolated of the two sites. Located some 16 miles from the Laotian border and reached by a long, winding road from the main highway, Phu Mu at first strikes one as a neat little group of buildings set in a park. Trees shade the barracks and the neat concrete walkways. There is a well equipped bar and club where movies show frequently. The mess hall serves some of the more tolerable food in the Army, and to counteract any tendency toward gaining weight there is a swimming pool and a screened weight room.

But all this seeming luxury only heightens the fact of isolation for the men of Company C. Everywhere there are indications of this isolation and the most obvious are the signs. They state that the compound is 533 kilometers from Bangkok, 308 from Korat – and only 320 from Hanoi. The swimming pool overlooks the compound perimeter with its bunkers and sandbag revetments. Beyond that is jungle with a few subsistence farms scattered in clearings.





Isolation is felt in other ways. Supplies are trucked in over a three to four hour ride from the nearest American installation. Once at the site, the trucks and other vehicles are maintained in the motor pool by Specialist 4 Gary Denney, a book turned motor sergeant. The maintenance facilities are not extensive, but as Denney's NCOIC states "He does wonders with a wrench."

The water and medical facilities also accentuate the fact that, except for unusual circumstances, Phu Mu is on its own. Water is converted to potable form by means of an on site chlorination plant and then fed by gravity to the barracks. It is the responsibility of the medic on site to check the chlorination level of the water as well as to treat the minor illnesses that arise on site. Any major case must be taken to the nearest American doctor at Ubon Air Base, about 80 miles away.

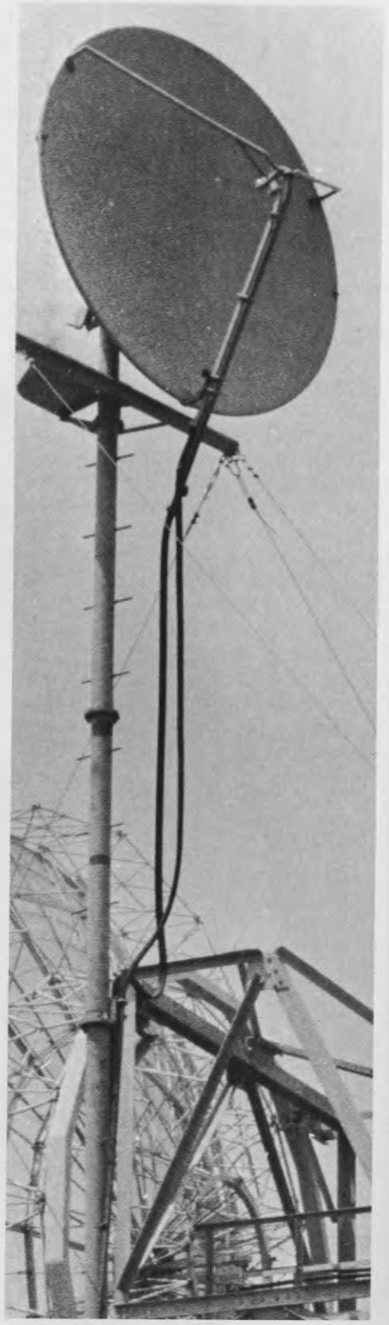
To Specialist 4 Ralph Woods, one of the medics at Phu Mu, the isolation is more real than to most. "We had a man here bitten by a snake." he said. "We didn't know whether it was poisonous so we called and asked that he be medevaced. But the chopper was delayed and it took about as long to get there as it would have to drive him to the doctor. Fortunately the bite wasn't poisonous. If it had been, we'd be speaking of him in the past tense."

About a mile up the road from the living area is Phu Mu signal site proper. Here the small American crew works 24 hours a day in the buildings which sprout the commo so distinctive of signal sites. Their tactical and long line troposcatter equipment helps to connect the communications web in northern Thailand consisting of the signal site at Warin and stations at Phu Khieo and Nakon Phanom.

There are few dropoffs from the system at Phu Mu – it is first and foremost a relay station. The major job here is to insure that the signal frequencies are of sufficient strength and on the proper wave length for further relay. This requires a great deal of equipment. It is a vitally necessary task, but one which is not noted for frequent periods of excitement. Indeed, the measure of success is how smoothly the telephone and teletype and tone pack data is flowing.

The smooth operation of Phu Mu signal site thus does not contribute to the break in routine. There is your duty shift, but after that there is the same problem of finding something to do. At Phu Mu you can swim, lift weights, go to the club or watch movies. But after a while it becomes too routine and only solution is a trip off the compound. Each man gets a turn to go with the truck to pick up mail and supplies. The reason was stated by Spec. 4 Woods during his conversation. "You have to get off the site every once in a while. After a while staying here begins to get to you."

Isolation is also a fact of life at Green Hill signal site, operated by men of Company A of the 442nd. Like its sister station at Phu Mu, Green Hill is far from the nearest American support. Sixty miles from Korat and 70 from Bangkok, the



site is physically located in a Thai national park of surpassing beauty, and in order to drive to the station, the Thai park rangers have to open the gate. Once inside the park, the driver is liable to run across many types of animal life abounding there-deer, porcupine, snakes or even tigers.

The approximately 20 men who live at the 4,200 foot high site have, like the men at Phu Mu, made the most of their isolation. There is one barracks, and each man has a relatively roomy cubicle of living space. Many rooms feature furniture not expected so far from the United States. There is a small combination day room, club and card room where much of the off duty activity takes place. The library although small, has a wide collection of books ranging from the *Burden of Southern History* to *Mad Magazine.* A favorite pastime is watching cartoons on Saturday morning television (with the elevation of the site, reception is no problem).

At Green Hill the major job also is communications, this time between Bangkok, Korat and Phanom Sarakhan in central and southern Thailand. The air conditioned building full of machinery switches signals from AM to FM, changes frequencies and boosts signal power. There used to be more work to do when a shot originated at this site and was sent to Vung Tau. But that has been taken over by an undersea cable and the antennas were to be taken down. Nevertheless the men spend plenty of time on the job. They work 12-hour shifts–four days on and two off. And at the same time they work the equipment that keeps them in touch with the outside world they are again reminded that they are in many cases alone. Neat rows of M-16s line the wall supplemented by machine guns, grenade launchers and the carbines of the Thai guards. And right off the main operating room is a smaller area where a chart is kept–stating how much supply is on hand in case the area should be completely isolated for any reason.

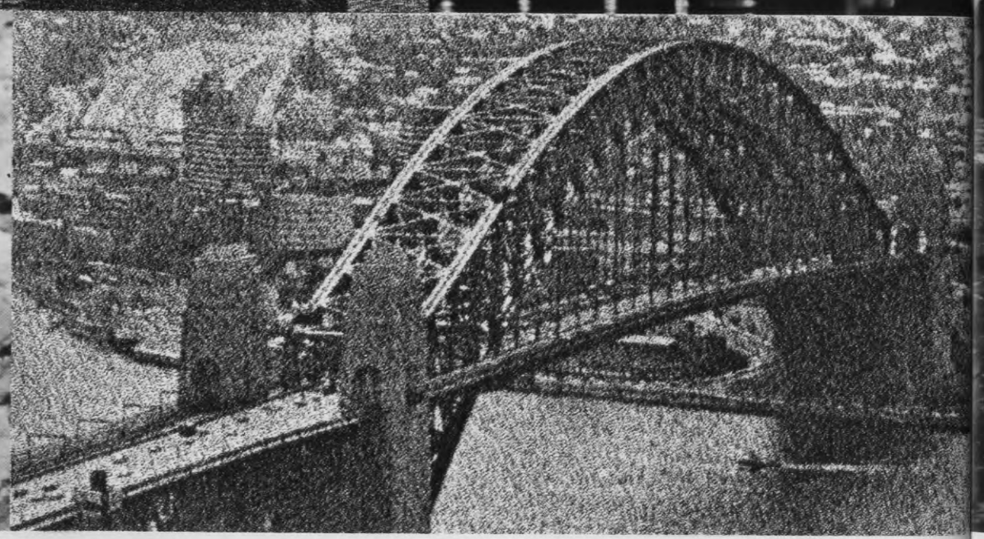
There is isolation at both Phu Mu and Green Hill. There is no extensive military activity in the area, but there are guerillas in the vicinity of Phu Mu. "It's not recommended you travel at night," says Sergeant First Class Thomas S. Broos, the NCOIC at Phu Mu. "But if you do, keep going and don't stop for anything."

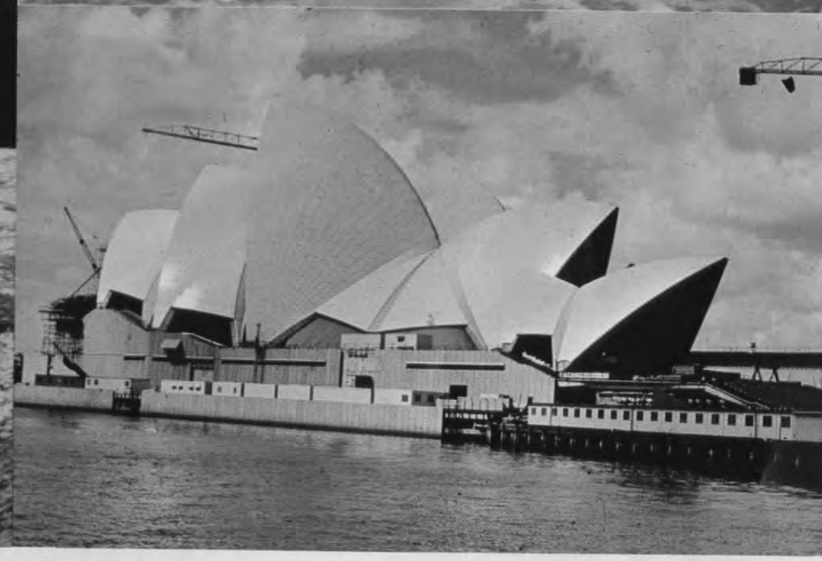
But it is not danger that brings the men at Phu Mu and Green Hill together. It is the fact that they are all there to do a communications job, and they are all specialists. And being as dependent on themselves as they are, they have come to depend on each other.

"The people up here are really great," said Private First Class Thomas Novosel of Company A. "I could spend the rest of my tour here." Company A Staff Sergeant Willis R. Hofler, acting NCOIC of the Green Hill site agrees. "It may sound like a cliche, but we're just one big happy family." "We have no problems, disciplinary or otherwise here at Phu Mu," said SFC Broos. "The men are high caliber and you can see problems coming in such a small detachment and head them off."

Phu Mu and Green Hill Signal sites are isolated, and by and large far from military activity. Staff

Sergeant Raymond Gelewski, a technical control supervisor at Green Hill neatly summed up life at these two relay sites. "Sure it's away from everything, but between the work and the facilities here we do OK. The work gets done and people can go to Korat or Bangkok occasionally, if not frequently. Under the circumstances I've never had anyone come to me and say 'I'm bored, I can't stand this place.'"





A Little Touch of Home

Wouldn't it be nice to see a onde, blue-eyed English speaking ick who isn't wearing OD?

Or wouldn't it be nice to put on coat and tie, walk into a fancy staurant and hear the words "May help you, sir?" Even if you aren't officer?

This list of "wouldn't it be ces" could go on for pages, but e question, "where can I find ese little things that mean so uch to me?" still remains.

Well, friends, there is a place, her than the United States, where ost all those intricate little desires yours can be fulfilled in only six ys. That place is Sydney, ustralia.

From one point of view, Sydney offers all the luxury of home, if not more, and it has a lot of extra spice (Aussie style) thrown in as an added bonus.

OK, you don't want to spend a small fortune on an R&R, because you've still got to buy that stereo equipment, or you're saving for a new car. For a week in Sydney, $300 isn't too much to spend and that's about all you'll need. And besides, it's cheaper than flying home.

But let's start at the beginning of a week's R&R – Camp Alpha at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, for me, anyway. My flight left at 10 p.m. and after a five hour flight, stopped in Darwin for refueling and changing crews. While the plane is there, you'll have just enough time to indulge in a couple of bottles of Australian beer, even though it's 4 a.m. Remember, I said bottles, none of that tangy canned stuff we get in Vietnam.

By 9 you've arrived in Sydney and have been met by a friendly group of customs inspectors. You may think this is a hassle, but it's not. The officials are extremely courteous and efficient. Just don't have contraband or illegal drugs in your possession. Australian immigration and import rules are strict about bringing in tobacco, pornography or even film. They're very touchy about things like that.

Customs cleared, it's just a short bus drive to the downtown R&R center. There you're met by several blonde, blue-eyed Australian hostesses employed by the tourist agency and who will give you a short introduction to the customs and traditions of Sydney and a rundown on the high spots of the city. After seeing these beautiful young "birds" (a local term) you're eager to put that dormant American charm to work.

If a buddy hasn't already recommended a hotel, the R&R center will. There are a wide variety of choices, but you'll find that the going rate for most is around $69 for the six nights. Not bad, huh?

Room service is excellent (if you're too lazy to go down to the bar), and there is usually only a 25 cent service charge for any order of food or beverage.

Most people prefer to stay in the Kings Cross area of Sydney. About six blocks long, the Cross is made up of quaint pubs, strip shows, poster shops, mod clothing stores and souvenir shops. If you stretch your imagination, it could be compared with New Orleans' Bourbon Street, less the blues, jazz and French influence.

The Cross is nice, but you will soon realize that it's primarily for tourists and that you're not seeing the real Sydney. For less than a dollar taxi fare, you can be in the downtown business district of the city. Secluded in the basements of hotels like the Carleton Rex or the Wentworth are numerous drinking pubs--no juke boxes or floor shows, just drinking and people. Try the Winyard Train Station, also.

After 6 p.m., admittance to these places is with coat and tie only, and for my money, they are the best places to meet that special kind of girl, the Aussie Chick. After all, don't all GIs have one track minds? It's best that you use your own finesse in this instance, so there's no need to go further into the subject.

By SP5 John Moore

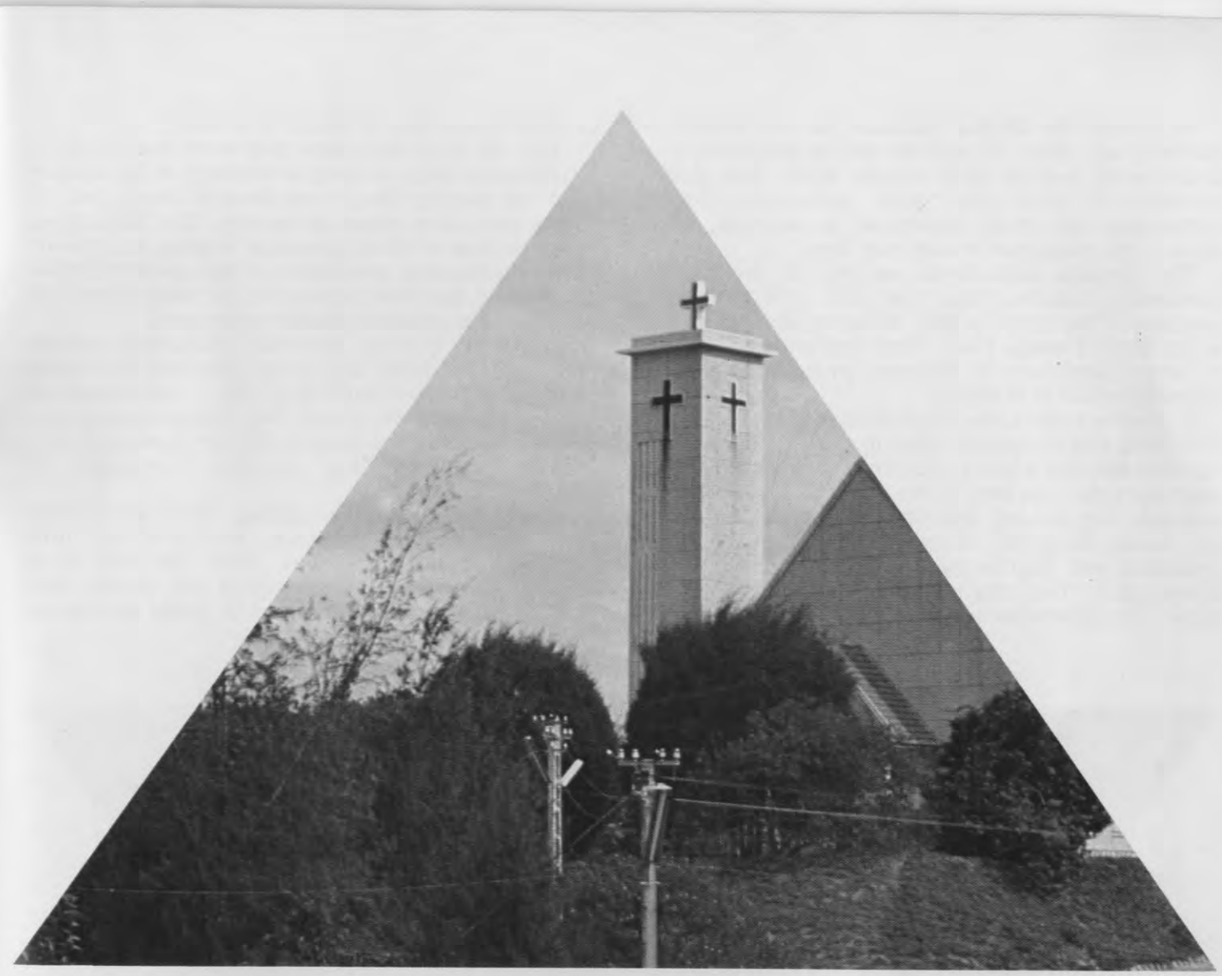
Should you care to indulge in re-planned activities rather than triking out on your own (no pun ntended), the people of the roscenia Tourist Agency in the &R center are the ones to see. kindiving, golfing, tennis, sailing, ild boar hunting, trips to the outback"– they're all offered for ominal fees. At night, there's a loating discotheque, horseback iding by moonlight and other ctivities. In most cases, female scorts are provided who are the ick of the crop.

If you're a shutterbug, there are mple opportunities for pictures nd an overwhelming variety of ubjects. The Sydney Opera House, though still under construction, is a classic piece of architecture and can best be photographed from the hydrofoil ferry or one of the slower, steam driven ferries crossing Sydney's harbor to Manley Beach.

But wait, if I go any further, I'll take all the pleasure and excitement out of exploring and discovering Sydney. We all have our own particular tastes and though it's advisable to listen to people who've been there, don't be afraid to venture our on your own and try someplace or something you've never heard of. You might be surprised and pleased with what you find.

One highlight of your stay in Sydney will be just meeting and talking with the Australian people. American soldiers are regarded highly by the Australians and the Aussies don't fail to show their friendliness. It's very seldom that you find anyone trying to con money or pull something over on you.

For a taste of Western culture at a price you can afford, I recommend Sydney.



A Place of Tranquility

By SP5 Steve Cummings

New, almost shining buildings, landscaped paths and walks plus an air of tranquility and peace are almost unknown in Vietnam today, but at Paradise Point they are the way of life.

At Paradise Point, a peninsula separating two bays of the South China Sea overlooking Nha Trang, the Christian and Missionary Alliance supports a seminary training men and women to serve churches in Vietnam.

Sixty years ago Protestant missionaries from the alliance came to Vietnam to convert and educate the populace. They started in Da Nang, teaching workers who were off on lunch or supper breaks. In 1921 the Biblical Institute of the Evangelical Church officially began. Although originally staffed and financed primarily by Americans, the institute has come to have greater Vietnamese support over the years and today the American alliance is responsible for only one third of the expenses of the seminary and allied programs at Nha Trang.

The present location–called originally Hong Chong (pile of rocks) because of the huge boulders that once were strewn about the landscape -- became home for the institute when increasing hostilities forced it to leave Da Nang in 1961.

The boulders once reigning at the site proved to be a disguised blessing, but one that was not freely given. Huge rocks were chipped by hand into blocks and used for the roads and buildings of the institute. And when the building requirements were finished, remaining blocks were sold or traded to provide funds for masonry, interior furnishings and hardware. Thus, the new school was financed partially through self support.

Two coeducational dormitories for married students, a main classroom and administration building, an impressive chapel and several staff homes give the institute the appearance of an ivy covered seminary or small Protestant college in the United States. But here the ivy is replaced with palm trees. This is enhanced by winding lanes, landscaped yards, wrought iron and stone gates.

At present the Biblical Institute has 107 resident students and about 93 who are serving pastorates or churches as part of their course work. The staff consists of seven full time instructors, four Vietnamese and three Americans. In addition, the wives of the missionaries teach part time.

The Spencer Sutherlands are one of the three missionary families who live and work at the seminary. They live in a three bedroom home located at the tip of Paradise Point. Their four children, three of whom were born in Vietnam, go to the church's boarding school in Malaysia.

California natives, they have been in Vietnam since 1957 and will be assigned here until they quit being missionaries, not a likely occurance at present. Every four years they are sent to the states for a year long furlough, but the last time Spence didn't even move his books from his office. They are completely dedicated and find everyday a challenge. In fact, Spence said, "Everyday is different and busy. I don't think I can remember an uninteresting day, and when a slack time comes, it is kind of a relief."

For the first two years they were busy studying Vietnamese and becoming accustomed to the country and the people. They have lived in Saigon and Da Nang and other places in country. The Sutherlands have become so fluent Spence is working as a checker for a Vietnamese translation of the modern English version of the New Testament. He reads Greek and checks the translation against the original.

His soft spoken, obviously dedicated attitude inspires confidence and trust. Freckled, red-haired Barbara is bouncy and full of life, a real pleasure to meet, especially for lonely GIs. Together they have built a rich and meaningful life for themselves in a foreign land, and they say they have never felt deprived.

The work has been satisfying. "What we're trying to do is what the military is now doing--Vietnamization. But what we call it is indiginization. To make progress the people must take over. As educators we feel so happy because we

are now instructing the future leaders of the church in this country. Our greatest satisfaction is to meet our students several years after their graduation, when they are pastors. Especially to see the programs and projects set up by them," Spence said.

The school has three educational programs. One is a five year schedule leading to being an ordained minister. The second is a four year schedule which earns the student a bachelor's degree in theology. The third lasts two years and is designed to enable girls to gain knowledge making them capable of teaching in church schools.

Among the courses offered and required are church history, English, Greek, Vietnamese and Hebrew. As the school is supported by contributions, students pay no tuition but they must pay for board.

Many of the students attending are married couples who are studying to be employed as pastoral teams in churches throughout the country.

Government and administration of the school is designed to give students practical knowledge in the workings of the committee system which governs Christian Alliance Churches. The administration is organized into a system of committees rather than bureaus or student councils. There is, however, a Dean of Men and the president of each committee to represent the students much as a student council.

Professors at the institute and especially the Sutherlands, often host men of the 21st Signal Group who have been introduced to Paradise Point through Chaplain (Major) Francis Marks. It is not uncommon to see soldiers playing football in the Sutherland's back yard or ecstatically partaking of home cooked meals at the dinner table.

And the relationship is reciprocal. Offerings from the 21st Group chapel are periodically donated to the scholarship fund and men often lend a hand to the various projects of the missionaries.

A "milk run" organized at group headquarters which takes surplus milk to several orphanages in the Nha Trang area often stops at an orphanage supported by the mission. The institute also operates

a medical clinic which handles approximately 200 patients every day and which includes a tuberculosis ward and a nursing school. Class work for students often includes teaching and assistance visits to both facilities.

An anonymous donor from the 459th Signal Battalion, part of the 21st Group, recently gave $250 to enable one of the Vietnamese students at the institute to finish his education.

A good example of the kind of changes and improvements being made through the institute is Sui Wing, a native of the Jarai tribe near Pleiku. Sui Wing is a five year student at the institute. He earned his high school diploma at a public school in Pleiku before coming to the school to study to be a pastor and taught himself English by studying privately from books and with some help from American missionaries at Pleiku.

Before entering the institute he worked as an assistant translator for Special Forces troops based in Pleiku. Working as a researcher for an American major doing a study of the Jarai tribe, he saved enough money to send himself to college. Before his conversion to Christianity he believed in a Montagnard religion similar to Buddhism. Eight years ago he became a Christian and upon meeting someone for the first time his first question is likely to be "How long you believe in God?"

His schedule is much like college students' anywhere: when there are exams he gets little sleep; he lives in a dormitory room with three roommates sharing the small space.

At the place called Paradise Point, the upheaval of war is felt, but the peacefulness and fulfillment of religion supplant the fears and trepidation encompassing much of the country.

The hope for the future is that the spirit of Paradise Point will be the way of life for Vietnam.

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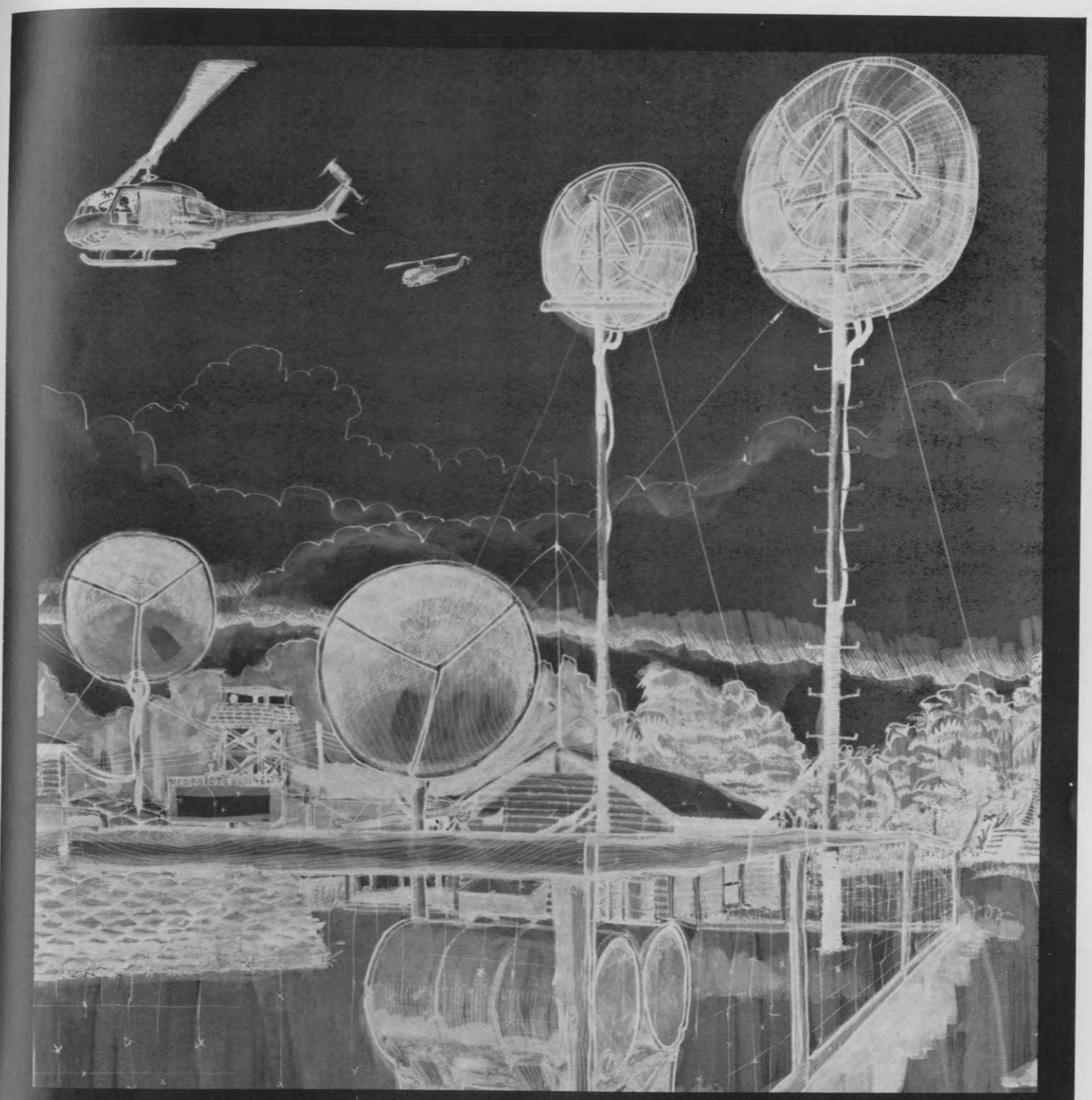

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