

## Safe and courteous Driving Habits Essential to Good US-VN Relations

(Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted from the June 1 issue of the Saigon Sunday Post and provides four good examples of how utter disregard for human life and property can jeopardize the entire effort of the United States Army in Vietnam. Safe driving and proper conduct while behind the wheel or riding as a passenger are the responsibility of all Redcatchers. Be safe. Be alert. Be courteous.)

To a lady I know there are two kinds of enemies: pedicabs and American military drivers. I keep telling her that there are good drivers and bad drivers in every country. Agreed, she replied, but the drivers I am talking about display an obvious disregard for human life and feelings. I know they don't drive like that in their own country.

I quite understand her feelings. I know through personal experience how arrogant some Americans are. But I also know many good Americans. So the whole picture in my mind is not a dark one. Unfortunately fate has it that in a two-year period, my friend has been the victim of no less than four misdeeds involving US military

drivers, and an eye-witness in a large number of cases.

Four offenses that's enough to make an anti-American propaganda machine out of the sweetest individual anywhere.

One day, at a red light, a GI driving a large truck coming from behind damaged the right rear mudguard of her car. The driver did not bother to descend from his truck to take a look, let alone apologize.

Another day, a US truck damaged the left rear mudguard of her car under similar circumstances. This time it was at the red light at the Central Market of Saigon. One improvement here: the driver, this time, although not bothering to alight to look or apologize, gave her a big smile. How gracious!

The third time, as she was riding a motor scooter, a US soldier sitting next to the driver in a jeep stretched out his arm, put them around her bust, squeezed her while both the jeep and the scooter were in motion. It was only when he saw that the scooter rider was about to lose her balance and fall that he released her. She threw some insults at him. All occupants of the jeep laughed heartily, be-

fore they drove themselves into a well-protected alley complete with barbed wire and armed guard.

The fourth time, it was Saturday, May 24, 1969. A schoolgirl was quietly riding her Solex motorbike, no more than a yard from the edge of the right sidewalk. A US jeep driven by an American soldier, overtaking another car on the right side, caught the handle of the girl's bike in its motion and threw both the girl and the bike on the sidewalk. Continuing his way ahead, the jeep overtook another car the same way, this time, he engaged a motor scooter, my lady friend's. My friend lost hold of the handle of her scooter. Her hands waved desperately in the air for a while, and landed by chance on the headlight. From there, they worked their way back to the handles of the swerving scooter and put it back under control. The GI did not bother to stop. Neither he nor the two American passengers in the jeep bothered to look back to see what was happening behind them. He ignored all police whistle blows and cries from the other street users, until a US officer who happened to be driving behind them forced him to stop. He took the ID number of the driver and left.

My lady friend whose right ankle was bruised in the process, arrived on the scene in her anger, she paid herself the luxury of insulting the jeep driver in English. A few minutes later the Vietnamese traffic police arrived and told the GI to wait for the American MPs. At first, the GI tried to ignore the instructions of the Vietnamese traffic police, but since the notice was firm, he had to stay there.

The poor schoolgirl also finally found her way to the scene. She had a serious wound on the knee, and scratches on her hands and arms. Her torn and bare blood stains. She stood silently in front of the US driver. It was perhaps her first contact with an American. There was no anger, no animosity on her face or in her eyes. When the driver finally asked her if she was hurt, she replied in Vietnamese. There was no scorn or protest in her words. She did not say, "Look what you've done to me, GI!" "I know you are strong, well-trained and well armed." "I don't know whether you are brave, but I don't need any city heroes."

In a soft voice, the little girl said, "It hurts me so much to fall from that bike tomorrow, I won't be able to go to school."



PFC Steven D. McDowell, a dog handler with the Brigade's Combat Tracker Team, reads his mail as his dog, Shane, looks on.

## 'Warrior' Platoon Leader Is Lucky Three Times

CAMP FRENZELL-JONES—"I must have nine lives and I believe I used three of them today," declared 1LT. Casey D. Walker of Munroe, La., 1st Platoon leader with Charlie Co, 5th Bn, 12th Inf.

It all happened while the Charlie Co infantrymen were sweeping an area 13 miles southwest of Saigon with elements of the Brigade's Delta Trp, 17th Cav. The Redcatchers were moving cautiously through the area searching for enemy booby traps and emplacements.

Upon reaching a nice palm line, the platoon left the Delta Trp ACAVs and began searching the area on foot. After moving 100 meters down a dike, the infantrymen encountered their first obstacle.

"The point man must have stepped right over the trip wire because I felt a small tug on my leg and immediately I realized what I had done," said platoon leader Walker.

Looking down he saw, wrapped around his leg, a thin wire leading to a Chicom grenade. The pin was completely pulled out. "I was really lucky that it didn't detonate," added the lieutenant. The dud booby trap was immediately blown in place.

Further down the trail another booby trap was discovered. While checking to see if it could be disarmed safely, Walker saw that the pin was partially pulled out.

Quickly latching onto the handle and grenade to prevent an explosion should the pin fall, the lieutenant removed the booby trap from its camouflaged position. Movement of the grenade caused the pin to jar loose. After several anxious moments, the pin was replaced and the infantrymen continued their search of the area carrying the grenade with them.

With all eyes on the alert for more booby traps a suspicious wire was spotted hanging between two poles off the beaten path. The platoon leader and another member of the patrol were walking over to examine it when the third man in line spied a trip wire across the path. The two had just taken the third trap was also identified as a Chicom type fragmentation grenade. This one was easily disarmed and the unit

moved out again.

Receiving word to load back onto the ACAVs, the lucky lieutenant and his men mounted the tracks and headed for home.

"Somebody up there was really looking out for me today," exclaimed Walker.

### WARNING—PIRACY AND EXPLOSIVES CONVERSATION

The Air Force Inspector General has asked all major commanders to insure all personnel are aware that light-hearted reference to explosives or piracy aboard civilian air carriers, no matter how innocent they may be, can result in heavy fines and imprisonment.

Civil air carriers are requested by Federal regulation to report immediately to local police and the FBI any comment pertaining to bombs, explosive devices, weapons or piracy in connection with a flight. The Air Force said this policy is strictly enforced.

## Combat Tracker Welcomes Unusually Large Mail Call

FSB HORSESHOE BEND—Every GI likes getting letters, and some can't get enough of a good thing.

PFC Steven McDowell, Kirkville, Mo., a dog handler with the 7th Inf Det., Combat Tracker Team, returned from a mission recently with his dog, Shane, to find 35 letters waiting for him.

The letters all came from sixth graders at the Graham School, Florissant, Mo. They were an assignment from Mrs. Thomas McDowell, the youngsters' teacher and PFC McDowell's sister-in-law.

"You always hope that there will be mail waiting for you when you get back off an operation," McDowell said later, "but nobody, least of all me, expects

to find 35 letters at once." It didn't take long for McDowell to read all 35 of them.

"I was surprised and delighted," he said when he was finished. "The kids really took the assignment seriously and asked a lot of questions about Vietnam, the war, and what I'm doing."

A few minutes later McDowell started writing thank you letters to each of the kids who wrote, answering all their questions.

"One little girl wanted to know if I was lonely," he explained. "She said she would keep an eye out for some cute girls and box them up and send them to me."

"One of the boys asked a lot of questions about Vietnam, how I like it over here, and wanted to know what do you feed your dog, or does he have to hump for his food?"

"I have a lot of work to do answering all those letters," McDowell added, "but each kid that wrote will get a letter from me with all his questions answered."

## Report All Accidents

All traffic accidents should be reported immediately to the nearest Military Police station. You are protected because immediate reporting insures the facts will be gathered while they are still available.

If serious injury, death, or property damage results from a traffic accident involving local citizens, the vehicle should not be moved until a Military Police accident investigation is completed. The Military Police must act in close coordination with ARVN Military Police and/or National Police in constructing a combined report representing the true events leading up to the accident. Your cooperation is essential.



Warm sunshine, warm water and a warm smile make a tantalizing team as our young Redcatcher miss sends her well-wishes to the Redcatcher men.