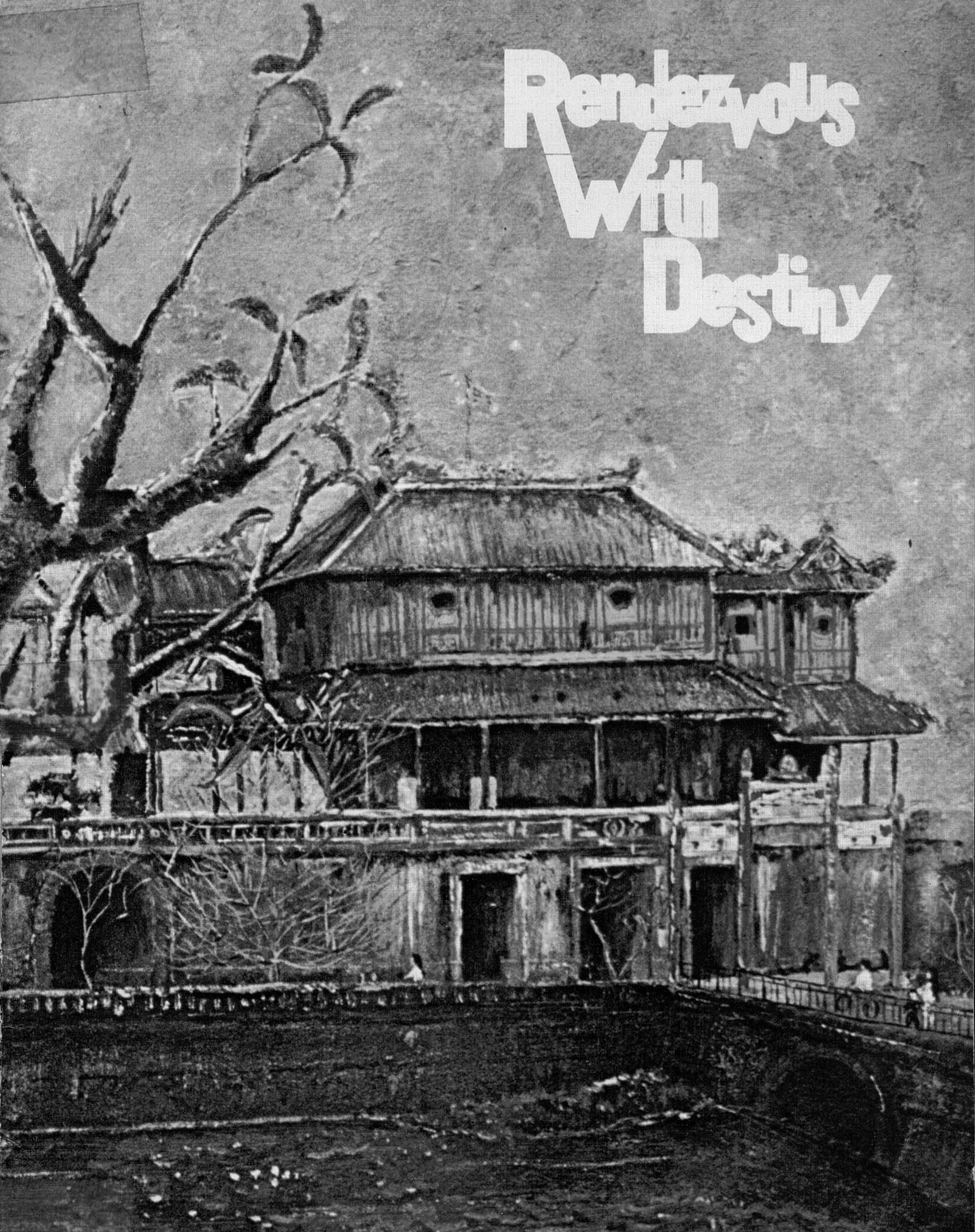
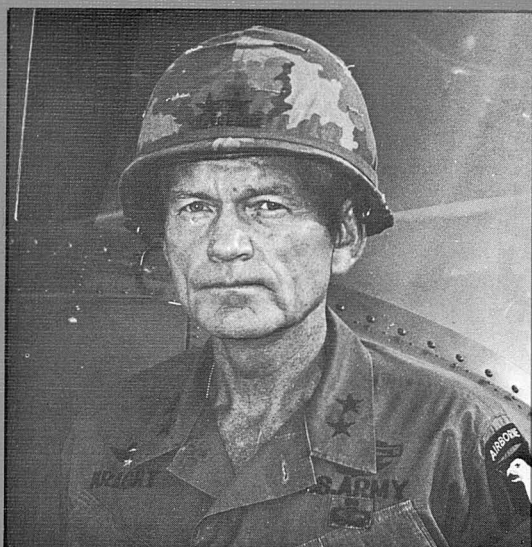


Rendezvous With Destiny



A Publication of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)



A Year of Progress

On 25 May 1969, I began the most challenging assignment of my Army career—command of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). On that day I was keenly aware of the magnitude of the task that lay ahead and dedicated myself to carry on the proud tradition that the Screaming Eagles have established through the years.

Looking back over these past 12 months, I am filled with satisfaction and pride when I reflect on the myriad of challenges that you, the troopers of the 101st, have met so well. You have distinguished yourselves in every battle and every endeavor as brave, dedicated members of the finest division in the Army today.

Through your efforts, great steps toward lasting peace and freedom have been made in Thua Thien Province. Your sacrifices and hard work have allowed the Vietnamese people of this area to enjoy an unprecedented measure of security and prosperity. You have given them a new lease on life. I share with you a deep sense of accomplishment, and I realize that progress has not been easy.

In the year ahead, new goals will be set, and new challenges will face each of you. I am confident that this great division will overcome all obstacles and will successfully complete the job that remains to be done.

John M. Wright, Jr.
JOHN M. WRIGHT, JR.
Major General, USA
Commanding

Rendezvous With Destiny

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KAAUA

Spring 1970

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Contents

Le Van Than, Province Chief	2
<i>Spec. 5 Gary L. Pitchford</i>	
People's Self Defense Forces	8
<i>Sgt. Timothy Coder and Spec. 5 Joel Bean</i>	
The Street Without Joy	12
<i>Spec. 5 James Greenfield and ILT Kenneth Strafer</i>	
Hue University	16
<i>Spec. 5 Terry Smith and Spec. 4 Thomas Jensen</i>	
Screaming Eagle Vietnam Diary	20
<i>Spec. 4 Thomas Atwell</i>	
Eagle Eyes	21
Task Force 3/506	22
<i>Spec. 4 Nicholas G. Kobe, Jr.</i>	
2/17 Cavalry	24
<i>Spec. 4 Roger Higle</i>	
Ayutthaya- A Bangkok R & R	27
<i>Capt. Allen J. Dines</i>	
Kit Carson Scouts	30
<i>Spec. 4 Thomas Jensen</i>	

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The helicopter flew low over the coastline, the crackling rotor blades whirling just under the overcast. Below were broad bands of white coastal sand stretching inland from the South China Sea. Inland still, patches of green began to appear, bits of vegetation struggling for dominance over the arid sand. These islands of green became more dense and merged into a rolling green plain bordered in turn by the symmetry of newly plowed rice paddies, appearing from the air much like a patchwork of broken bits of mirror which reflected the aircraft's passage overhead. Finally, surrounded by the fertile rice fields, the village appeared, the new houses clustered together in the Asian way. The aluminum roofs caught the light of the now emerging sun.

Colonel Le Van Than, province chief of Thua Thien and mayor of the city of Hue, moved forward on his seat and studied the shifting scene below. Even leaning forward his posture reflected a certain erectness in bearing that often seems the mark of a man of authority. At 38 years of age his thick black hair had begun to gray slightly at the temple, adding to the effect. He appeared to be taller than the American sitting next to him although he was not. Between his fingers twirled the shaft of a short walking stick which bore at the top a rough semblance of a dog's head.

This ironwood shaft, capped at the bottom by a .50 caliber round, came from a blind canyon west of Hue where the bleached skeletons of several hundred citizens of Hue had been found, victims of the 1968 communist massacre. That had been the Year of the Monkey. This was 1970, the Year of the Dog.

The village below was new, a resettlement of people of Huong Dien District who had been displaced by the carnage of Tet 1968 and the following months of battle along the section of QL-1 known as *La Rue Sans Joie*, the Street Without Joy. And it was, in its way, both symbolic of sweeping changes occurring in Thua Thien Province and, at the same time, an insight into the nature of Col. Than, the author of these changes.

Van Than

By: Spec. 5 Gary L. Pitchford

Early in his career, Le Van Thanh was recognized as a potential leader of worth and in 1957 he was sent to Hawaii to study American artillery methods. When he returned, then Capt. Than assumed command of an artillery battalion, the first of many such commands. Since, he has seen duty as artillery commander in several units including the 1st Infantry Corps and the 1st ARVN Division. In 1963 he was assigned to the General Staff of the Defense Ministry and promoted to the rank of major the following November. There followed a succession of positions and promotions with the General Headquarters in Saigon and a course of study at the Army War College in the United States.

Col. John W. Chism, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, senior province advisor for Thua Thien, termed Col. Than "...a man of exceptional worth. Col. Than was one of the most respected and sought after men in the General Headquarters. It's not surprising that he was selected for the extremely challenging task of rebuilding Thua Thien and the City of Hue after Tet Mau Taun (1968)."

The task facing Col. Than in March of 1968 when he assumed the dual titles of province chief and mayor was truly an immense one. Tet of 1968 had been a severe blow to all of South Vietnam, but Hue had been hit harder than any other city.

Of Hue's 160,000 residents, 115,000 qualified for refugee relief. Seventy-five per cent of the city's buildings had been destroyed. Ruined and burned-out buildings and homeless people were everywhere. But most tragically, hanging with the pall of death and terror over the city, was the reality of the massacre of thousands of people by the communists during their 25 days as the masters of Hue. No one knew at first how many had been killed, but everyone knew already of the hundreds buried alive—eventually to total 600 in all—and the hundreds led away for "political indoctrination." In the final assessment 3,500 were slaughtered by the VC and NVA. The people of Hue were in a state of mass shock.

Col. Than assumed the dual role of Province Chief of Thua Thien and Mayor of Hue shortly after the 1968 Tet Offensive.

At the time, the province and the city of Hue were in chaos. Thousands of people had been killed in the communist attacks and much of the city had been razed by the communist forces.

The job facing Col. Than was overwhelming. It was his task to establish order where there was none, create faith in the government out of the people's bitterness and sorrow and reestablish the workings of government which had been destroyed in the communist onslaught.

Than's career has led from his birthplace near Hanoi in North Vietnam to the South in the early 1950's for study at the Dalat National Military Academy. There followed a series of promotions, first to 2d Lieutenant in 1953, 1st Lieutenant the next year and then accelerated promotion to Captain in 1955 for superior performance.

Col. Than's entire career has been marked by excellence. This is the story of the man who has authored the rebirth of Thua Thien Province.



PITCHFORD

The damage done to Hue and Thua Thien was not merely physical destruction and loss of life. The region also lost leaders, village chiefs, teachers, the dynamic core of government and social life. The danger of famine and disease was also very real. Leaders were necessary to avert the potential second and third disasters waiting in the wings. Col. Than was called upon to fill this void.

Mr. Earl L. Thieme, a former Army Major and now deputy province senior advisor for Thua Thien, has been with Col. Than since he arrived in the province and has seen and lived through the period in which Col. Than almost single-handedly began the job of reconstruction.

"Col. Than is sometimes criticized for being too strong a leader," Thieme said. "But during the early period after Tet of 1968 it was vitally necessary for him to assume control of the situation. As a result, the city council and province council have little real power. Col. Than is a strong leader and does not delegate authority readily. Thus he carries a heavy load and works too hard. You wouldn't believe the hours he keeps."

Thieme emphasized, however, that because Col. Than is a strong figure does not mean he is an overbearing leader or unwilling to return the workings of government to the people. On the contrary, Col. Than has arranged to hold province elections in 1970, the first since Tet of 1968. Thieme added that Col. Than places a great deal

of emphasis on local village and hamlet leaders.

Replacement of leadership at the village and hamlet levels was, of necessity, one of Col. Than's first objectives. There were more than 200,000 refugees in the province, the great majority of whom were located in 37 refugee centers set up through joint effort of the province and central governments. Village and hamlet elections were held to elect new leaders, new chiefs to aid in the problems of reorganization and resettlement. But problems were enormous. "It is difficult to fathom the chaos that existed here," Col. Chism said. "Just about the entire city and province organization was destroyed. The only intact organization left was the 1st ARVN Division."

Adding to Col. Than's difficulties was the proximity of the enemy. While the communists had been driven from Hue, NVA and VC troops were entrenched in the coastal areas, especially the Street Without Joy and Vinh Loc Island areas. The 101st Airborne Division had arrived to help and fierce battles raged all around the population center. One of Col. Than's most notable achievements at this time was the pioneering of one of the most extensive combined unit operations in Vietnam. Troopers of the 101st joined with the elite members of the 1st ARVN Division and Regional and Popular Force groups to sweep the communists from the lowlands. This operation proved so successful that the combined allied force developed a 49

Col. Than is greeted by a nun as he prepares to begin his day's work. A great deal of his success is due to the fact that Col. Than has made himself available to all of Thua Thien's citizens.



JENSEN



Maj. Gen. Troung (far right) and Col. Than look on as the commanding officer of MCB-10 opens a bridge which will connect fertile rice land with the markets of Hue and Phu Bai—and another dream becomes reality.



to 1 kill ratio as they systematically destroyed the backbone of the 7,000 man communist force surrounding the city. By May of 1968, the majority of the major battles had been fought and reconstruction could begin.

Col. Than's office in the Province Headquarters reflects the story of this reconstruction. Photographs on the wall depict early resettlements and the slow work of the pacification of existing villages which were under the influence of the communists. Col. Thanh himself sits behind a large desk made from one of Thua Thien's native lumbers and greets visitors and citizens seeking help with polite intentness. His eyes are steady, intelligent and his gaze is unflinching, almost in contradiction with Asian traditions. His manner is polite but firmly assured and, standing to greet visitors, he is a startling figure in spite of his simple, black suit.

The ironwood walking stick serving as a pointer, Col. Than points to charts around the room that graph the progress of the last two years. "We first had to provide adequate security for our people," Col. Than said. "This was our first consideration. Through the pacification effort we managed to turn Thua Thien into an extremely secure area. In 1968, more than 50 per cent of the people were under communist control, and almost a third of the villages were hard-core Viet Cong centers. Today, 99.4 per cent of the people are under government control and more than 90 per cent of the villages are considered pacified."

"Large areas of Thua Thien are considered class 'A' villages, which are considered safe even at night," Col. Than added.

The pacification of Thua Thien actually

progressed much more rapidly than authorities originally hoped. In 1968, the Ministry of Revolutionary Development in Saigon designated 33 hamlets in the province which were contested or insecure to be brought up to a level of relative security. Col. Than thought, however, that this number was a conservative estimate of what could be done and added an additional 11 hamlets to the list. By the end of January 1969 not only had the original government number of 33 and Col. Than's 11 hamlets been pacified, but an additional eight hamlets had been made more secure, bringing the total of relatively secure hamlets to 52. As a result, 35,000 refugees were able to return to their homes.

"During 1969 we were able to relocate more than 88,000 refugees," Col. Than said. "This reduced the number of official refugees to about 15,000. Our goal is to return all the people of Thua Thien to their homes."

As important as the return of refugees to their ancestral homes is to the people of Thua Thien, it is also of critical importance from other standpoints. The "Vietnamization" of the war, the assumption by the South Vietnamese of the major portion of the battlefield struggle, hinges on the people's ability on the hamlet level to protect themselves. Only then can Vietnamese line combat troops and Regional Force and Popular Force groups be freed for aggressive military operations. This is one of Col. Than's major concerns.

Daily the colonel travels from his office by jeep, helicopter and sometimes precariously perched on the back of a sputtering motorbike, to visit his people and check on the progress being made out in the field.

"Col. Than is definitely not a desk man," Col. Chism comments. "It's rare to find him in his office for more than an hour or so during the day. He is out there with his people. They know him and trust him. He has great empathy and understanding for their suffering."

Thieme termed Col. Than the "...best known province chief in Vietnam. I don't mean that in the sense of a national figure—although he is known in that sense—but that he is well-known to the people of Thua Thien."

So when Col. Than speaks of the current level of communist activity in Thua Thien, he does so as the man closest to the problem and the most well-informed. The people trust him and tell the truth when he questions them on his daily travels.

"During Tet of 1968 the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI), the shadow government, surfaced and tried to assert itself," Col. Than said. "At that time there were approximately 3,000 VCI in the area. Since 1968 we have destroyed 1,252. Many have fled. Now, perhaps, there are 200 to 300 left in the entire province, primarily in the Phu Thu area. It is very difficult to weed these guerrillas out, but we will do it."

Col. Than stepped to a map in his office and pointed to the mountains and jungles southwest of the city. "During 1967 and 1968 the guerrillas had many local force companies at full fighting strength," he said. "Today there are fewer and they must hide in the mountains. They are very weak, with 40 to 50 men in a company."

"They try to sneak back to the coastal plain to steal rice," Col. Than said, smiling slightly, "but we won't let them do that."

Part of the reason why the communists cannot return to the lowlands is the strengthened Regional and Popular Forces (RF/PF). Since 1968 the Regional Forces have grown from 23 to 42 companies, almost a 100 per cent increase. Popular Forces have expanded from 120 to 186 platoons.

"The RF/PF are equipped with new weapons and are better trained than ever before. Their spirit in fighting is very good," Col. Than said.

As the RF/PF continue to improve, more and more emphasis is being placed on the

Col. Chism (background) and Col. Than examine plans for another building project in Huong Dien District as Dai-uy Bien, the district chief looks on.



JENSEN



PITCHFORD

New programs are discussed and the effects of previous efforts are weighed as Col. Than conducts a question and answer session at a district meeting.

training of the thousands of Vietnamese who comprise the People's Self Defense Force (PSDF). Composed of those either too old or too young for duty with the ARVN, members of the PSDF provide village and hamlet security, guard roads, bridges and even conduct ambush patrols under the leadership and guidance of MACV Mobile Advisory Teams and Mobile Training Teams from the 101st. In the three districts that comprise metropolitan Hue there are more than 18,000 volunteers under arms.

As one city official put it, "If the communists try to attack Hue again, they won't get very far before they are shot at!"

In Huong Dien District, where much resettlement has been successfully completed, there are no regular ARVN troops at all. Security is entirely in the hands of RF/PF groups and PSDF forces.

Lt. Lester F. Frawley, mobile advisory team leader for the district, speaks proudly of the proficiency of the district's local forces. "Around here, we don't call these men Ruff Puffs or PSDF's," he firmly states. "We call them *soldiers*!"

Frawley went on to say that the district seldom has trouble with VC or VCI. "Our last contact was in October of last year, five months ago," he said. "And in that instance we killed two VC without losing a man ourselves."

In March, quarterly district meetings were held throughout the province. At Huong Dien, the meeting illustrated Frawley's point. Although security is rated top on the list of district priorities, it did not rate as a topic of conversation. For the people of this district, as in many of Thua Thien's 13 such districts, security is not a serious problem.

The local village and hamlet officials gathered in a large room in the Huong Dien District Headquarters to hear the district chief, Dai-uy Bien, discuss the

progress made in resettlement during the last quarter. Col. Than and Col. Chism sat up front, listening carefully. These meetings provide an important forum for airing problems and testing the feelings of the people as reflected through their leaders. The period of question and answer following the presentations can foster valuable interchange of ideas.

One problem was graphically illustrated when one village official complained he couldn't get cement needed for a local project. This point provided Col. Than with the opportunity to make an important point he wished to stress.

Addressing the council, Col. Than emphasized the "multiple nature" of the problems facing the people of Thua Thien. "We must realize," he said, "that there are no individual problems, but that all are a part of the whole. Neither food, nor schools, nor water can be viewed as separate problems. They are all involved together; they all support each other. People of the villages must see that their problems are common to all and that they must work together toward a common goal."

It is sometimes a difficult problem to get people of the villages to think beyond the boundaries of their own villages and family groups, Col. Chism commented later. The Vietnamese, he added, place family and friends above village; village affairs above district; district above province and so on.

"One of Col. Than's remarkable abilities," Col. Chism said, "is his facility for getting people to work together despite religious and family differences. This quality has been vital in achieving what has been achieved in Thua Thien and it will be vital to what will be accomplished in the future," he continued.

The shape of the future in Thua Thien depends on the resolution of several vital problems. Although communist forces are presently very inactive in Thua Thien, the people are aware that the NVA have the ability to mount a second major offensive. But with more than 40,000 men under arms in the province, such an attack is unlikely. Much has happened since Tet *Mau Tan*.

"I don't want to underestimate the enemy

threat," Col. Chism commented, "but inflation and other economic problems are more of a problem here than the communists. This province is one of the most pacified in Vietnam, but it is also one of the least developed."

Col. Chism explained that Thua Thien is a "...deficit province across the board. Look around at the mountains of Thua Thien and then consider that we must even import gravel for our cement plant from outside the province," he said. "It isn't a problem of lack of resources, but rather, it is one of lack of development."

As an example, Col. Chism pointed out the need for cement in Thua Thien. Although there is a cement plant, it cannot meet the province's needs and more must be imported.

"What makes this important," he said, "is the fact that there is a lime deposit here that, if properly developed, could supply enough lime for the production of cement to meet the present needs of all of Vietnam for 100 years; yet it has hardly been touched."

Col. Chism also pointed out that the province is rich in potentially productive lumber industries. The western forests are rich in teak and mahogany, woods virtually given up in the United States for building purposes because they are too rare and costly. Here, they could be inexpensively produced.

"We have begun improving the lumber industry," he went on. "Through Col. Than's efforts, the lumber industry now produces more monthly than it did yearly before Tet of 1968. But this is still a relatively small scale operation, producing about 40,000 tons annually."

Rice production, too, falls far below what it could be. Col. Chism stated that of 55,000 hectares of cultivatable land in the province, only 20,000 is actually being used to grow crops. The remainder lays fallow. Paradoxically, Thua Thien must import rice even though thousands of acres lay seemingly neglected.

"The problem is a lack of manpower," Col. Chism said. "One out of every 17 in the population is presently serving in the armed forces. When you consider that this

Col. Than (center) and his advisor, Col. Chism (right rear) discuss building programs which are bringing hope for the future to Thua Thien Province with officers from the Seabees and Army Engineer Corps.



involves the young men who would normally be doing the plowing and planting, you can begin to understand the difficulties of the situation."

The problem of rice production is also affected by a shortage of water buffalo, traditionally the tractor of the East. Tet of 1968 resulted in the killing of thousands of the beasts, either as a result of the fighting or for food purposes.

In an effort to combat this problem, Col. Than applied a unique approach, acquiring 232 Kovota Paddy Tractors. These machines could be the answer to some of Thua Thien's most vital problems.

The machines can be driven along a flooded rice paddy just as the Vietnamese farmer has traditionally driven his buffalo. Instead of tires, the tractors have large paddles that fold down as the machine moves across the field. According to Col. Than, the tractors do less damage to young rice plants than the water buffalo.

"The buffalo's hooves dig into the paddy mud, occasionally destroying some of the plants," Col. Than explained. "The tractors don't do this quite so much because the paddles spread the weight over a larger area."

Col. Than acquired the tractors as an experiment to evaluate their potential. They have been so successful that more are being ordered. The machines have proven simple to operate and men in each village using the tractors are being trained in maintenance.

Col. Than emphasizes that this is still a pilot program. The first tractors were given to villages as a part of their resettlement allowance. He explained that the normal practice is to give a village enough money to supply rice for six months. If the people decide to use the tractor, they receive rice money for three months. But Col. Than would like to see more villages and hamlets adopt the machines.

"The few tractors we have are not nearly enough to meet the province's needs," he said. "A more realistic figure would be around 2,000 machines. Through this introductory program we hope to encourage people to buy the tractors on their own now that they've seen what they can accomplish."

"This whole project is typical of Col. Than," Col. Chism said later. "He's turned this province into the most mechanized in Vietnam. These tractors plus the use of new high-yield varieties of rice may eventually make the province self-sufficient. The whole future of the Vietnamization program, the whole future of this nation, depend on the solution of just the problems we are tackling here. The tractors are just a first step, but they are a step."

So this is what attracted Col. Than's attention that day as the helicopter circled low over that village in Huong Dien. In the field below, two Kovota tractors churned through the green rice field with citizens of Thua Thien in tow.

And, perhaps, in the broad spectrum of the problems facing Vietnam and Thua Thien Province, the part they play is small. But what they mean in terms of new ideas and brave new approaches to old problems may be very important indeed.

Le Van Than, colonel in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, province chief of Thua Thien, mayor of Hue and leader of men sat back in his seat, and became lost in thought as the aircraft churned ahead.



Mr. Robert McCanliss, the civilian advisor to the city of Hue, tries his hand with one of the Kovota Paddy Tractors which are revolutionizing farming techniques in the province.

Another full day of meetings is over and Col. Than prepares to return to his offices in Hue where long hours of work and planning await him.





People's Self Defense Forces

By: Sgt. Timothy Coder and Spec. 5 Joel Bean



Nearly 30 kilometers northwest of Hue rests Ap Sieu Quan, a sleepy hamlet set neatly within the confines of symmetrically planted hedgerows. Bearing little to distinguish it from the dozens of other hamlets that dot the coastal plains of northern I Corps, Ap Sieu Quan like its counterparts, wears the scars of its recent past.

Once elaborate temples and pagodas now stand heaped in rubble; the remnants of their artfully decorated walls distorted by pock-marks from the spitfire of enemy bullets, scorched by the blasts of mortar explosions.

Simple family dwellings are now charcoal bamboo skeletons. Even the eroded VC bunkers, filled with underbrush and barely visible to the untrained eye, tell their ugly tales to those who know the horrors of war. The hardship and sorrow of the 1968 Tet Offensive can be seen in the faces of the elder peasants. But Ap Sieu Quan, like other hamlets in the 101st area of operations, is not dead.

In the midst of the rubble and ruins, aluminum roofs now glimmer between the hedgerows. Vegetable greens sprout in gardens diligently tilled by the villagers and plans are made for the coming year's rice crop which will come from the fertile paddies that had long lain fallow. The tangy aroma of Vietnamese cooking sifts through the evening breeze as the work day ends and the people return to their homes. In the hamlet where joy had been poisoned by the hardships of war guarded laughter is now heard from those who have cried until tears came no more.

On the southern fringes of the hamlet, an unlikely assortment of young boys and

girls and older men sit at their earthen desks in an open air class conducted by a Vietnamese interpreter from the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). Standing beside him is an American advisor, also a Screaming Eagle, who periodically confers with the interpreter to insure that important points have been stressed. The subjects taught in this and similar classes are not the schoolboy studies of reading, writing and arithmetic, but the basic principles of hamlet defense. The students are members of the People's Self Defense Force (PSDF), which is comprised of those villagers too young and too old for active military service, but nonetheless, have taken up arms to defend their homes against communist aggression.

To an observer unfamiliar with the "facts of life" in Vietnam, such classes seem strange indeed. The men and women between the ages of 40 and 60 with wrinkled brows and age-whitened beards provide a striking contrast to the girls and boys between 16 and 18 years old who, in spite of their youth, have known war all their lives.

A new decade has come to Vietnam, and the PSDF training being provided by Mobile Training Teams (MTT) from the three brigades of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), are bringing a new sense of optimism to the area.

The MTTs are part of Vietnamization designed to enable the PSDF to completely defend the hamlets against VC terrorism and infiltration. This will allow Popular Forces to provide static security around military installations and other strategic areas and the Regional Forces to act as a province reaction force as well as working with the ARVN on certain operations. Lt. Steven Haney, North Brunswick, N.J., a team leader from the 1st Brigade calls the PSDF "...the keystone to security on the district level."

As the PSDFs are not professional soldiers, the training classes are designed to fit into the daily work schedules of the villagers.

Ssg. Joseph Reid, Chicago, a team leader from the 3rd Brigade, commented, "The villagers know we are here for one basic reason. That is to prepare them to defend and care for themselves when the GIs are no longer around to assist them."

For many of the men and women, participation in the PSDF represents their first formal military training. A number of the men in the older age bracket, however, have spent many years in the army, fighting either for or against the French.

"At times an old veteran will start off a discussion in the ambush class by saying '...with the French, this is how we did it...,'" said Haney. "Their experience is an invaluable asset," he continued.

The PSDF is a relatively new concept in Vietnam. After the communist attacks during Tet of 1968, many Vietnamese civilians asked the Government of Vietnam to give them arms so they could defend themselves, their families and their property from communist attack. The government answered the appeal of the people by furnishing them weapons through the PSDF program which was established under the Mobilization Law of June, 1968.

Some of the weapons used by the PSDF may seem strange and outmoded in comparison to the streamlined M-16s used by American and ARVN soldiers. The PSDF arsenal is made up of Thompson .45 caliber sub-machine guns, M-1 Garands and M-1 carbines. Most of the weapons are the

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A young PSDF member and an American advisor take a close look at his shot pattern.

personal property of PSDF members.

In order to instruct the self defense forces properly in marksmanship and weapons maintenance, members of the MTTs first had to familiarize themselves in the procedures for firing, disassembly and maintenance of such weapons.

Prior to instruction by the MTTs, marksmanship among the PSDFs was very poor.

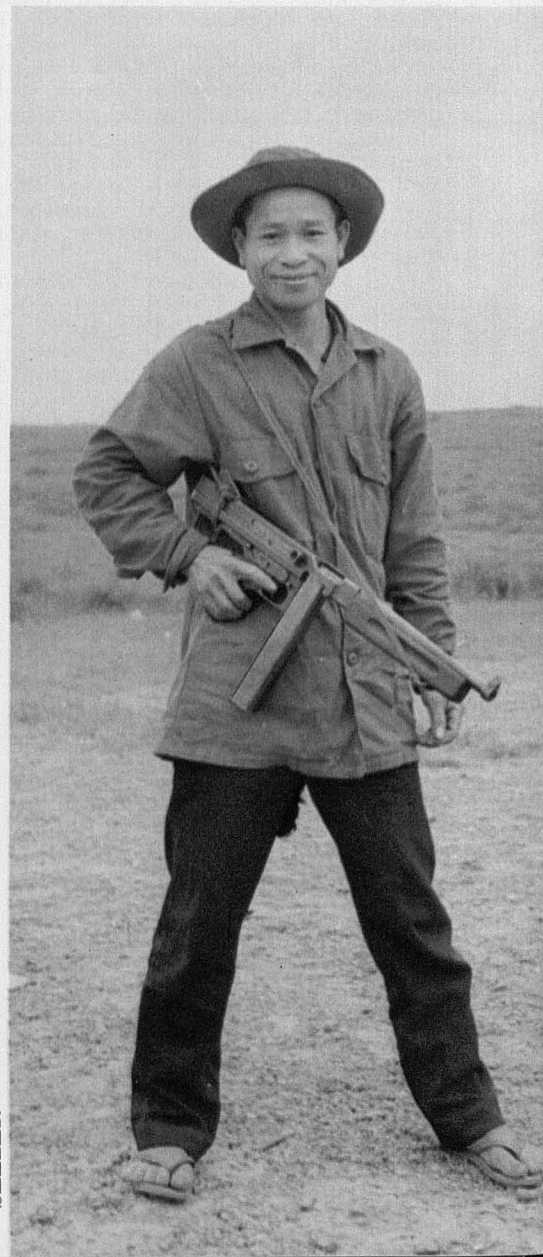
Hilariously frustrating were the episodes at the Ap Sieu Quan rifle range when a young girl would rapidly fire three unaimed rounds in the general direction of the target, throw the weapon down in horror, and jump out of the foxhole as if the unmanned weapon would maliciously turn on her.

But, in this particular instance, GI ingenuity overcame the difficulty and marksmanship soon became a game. Team members pooled some piasters, purchased a large number of balloons at the market, and soon an assortment of colorful targets replaced the drab Canadian bulls. Marksmanship classes took on a competitive carnival atmosphere and, as the shooting eyes of the PSDF became keener, the targets decreased in size.

Weapons maintenance was also a major problem for the training teams in the initial stages of the program. Most of the PSDFs mistakenly believed that a generous coat of oil placed on a weapon was all that was needed to keep it in good condition. Weapons were seldom broken down and given proper cleanings.

"You can imagine the shape some of the weapons were in," said Sgt. Robert Hill of Toledo, Ohio, who is working with 3rd Brigade training teams. "We explained to the people the correct way to clean their weapons, and we've seen them do it the right way. We can only hope that they continue to realize the importance of proper maintenance when we are not around to supervise them."

Through experience, the MTTs have found that classroom material should be presented in an interesting manner. Where possible, the teams have succeeded in doing this and the results have been en-



SELZER



The atmosphere may not be one of ivy-covered walls, but open-air classes such as the one above provide PSDF members with important information necessary for the defense of their hamlet.

couraging. But some areas of instruction, like the drudgery of a long patrol and the tedious hours of waiting in a night ambush position are simply not what could be called captivating subjects.

"We try to impress upon the villagers the tactical importance of patrols and ambushes," said Reid. "If the areas surrounding the hamlets are not frequently combed, infiltration will be easy for the VC. The people know this because they have seen the VC operate before. Yet, we have sometimes found them reluctant to come out with us.

"It is not our function to force them to conduct patrols and ambushes with us. We can only point out why they are necessary. Strong leadership at the district, village and hamlet levels is needed to insure that lessons presently learned will be put into action after we leave," Reid continued.

But progress in this area has been made. In the first PSDF ambushes conducted by the Mobile Training Teams, the people had a tendency to cluster in bunches, were weak in noise and light discipline, would stand up whenever they felt they needed a stretch and would frequently sleep on guard. Corrections were made, examples set and consequently many rough spots in ambush techniques have been ironed out.

The PSDF has also become a consistently reliable source of intelligence. Since each member is drawn from the general population of his hamlet, the PSDFs are known and trusted by the people. So when villagers learn of any enemy activity, they readily notify the PSDF.

In addition to the military training conducted by the MTTs, first aid and sanitation are also integral parts of the instruction. Spec. 4 John Lynch, a medic for one of the 3rd Brigade teams, spent 27 months with the Peace Corps in Chile before entering the Army. Since working with the team, he has treated as many as 500 villagers a month, primarily for skin diseases, minor wounds and cuts and scratches.

According to Lynch, the main difference between the people in Chile and the Viet-

namese is the extensive contact the Vietnamese have had with Americans.

"The people in Chile have had no contact with the outside world and practice many superstitious medical remedies. But the Vietnamese have witnessed the benefits of Western medicine and many times shun their own well-trained Vietnamese medics."

Capt. Edward Tsou of Mountain Lakes, N.J., an Air Force surgeon assigned to the 2nd Bn. (Ambl.) 506th Inf., is working to correct this problem of over-dependency. He insists that one PSDF girl who has been trained in first aid be present to help the

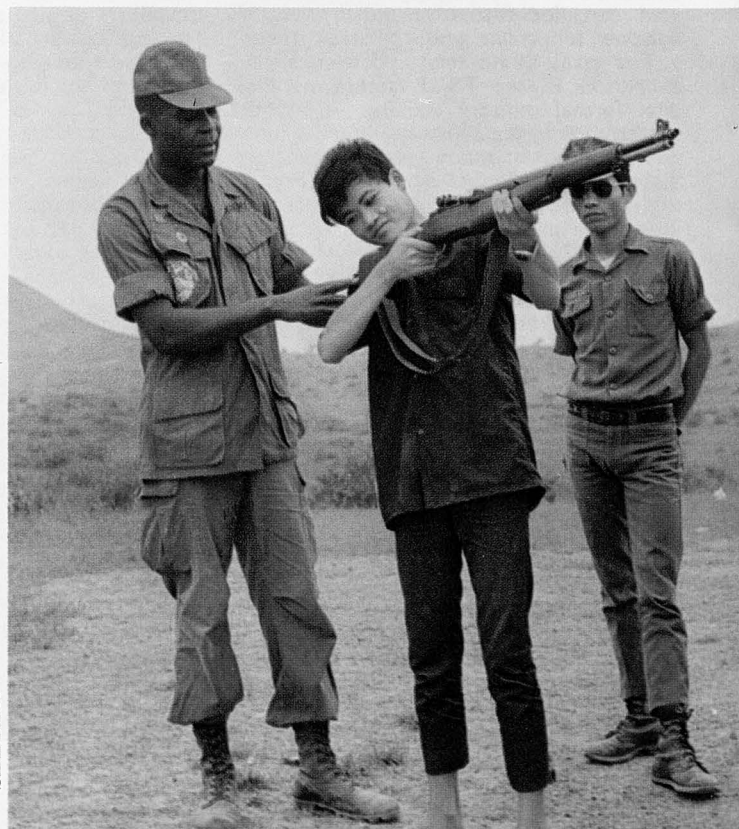
villagers who are being treated. In this on-the-job training, the girl not only becomes more proficient in her skills, but she also gains the respect and confidence of her people.

Aside from his duties of treating the people, the team medic also conducts scheduled classes in basic first aid.

"To tell the truth, I wasn't prepared for the high degree of response I receive from the people," said Lynch. "They have good retention and have asked many pertinent and intelligent questions."

Whenever possible, the teams combine

Spot Weld and good marksmanship form are as important to the PSDF as they are to the American soldier in training.





RAMPTON

Above, PSDF members practice the first-aid they have learned through MTT instruction.

civic action with their training. Working through the hamlet chief, the MTTs distribute food, clothing and soap to needy families. "The next day we'll come back and see swarms of freshly scrubbed kids in sneakers and bright new clothes," Lt. Haney commented.

"The kids are amazing," continued Haney. "They materialize out of nowhere and in no time at all there's a hundred of them surrounding our truck. It's as if we were mobile Pied Pipers!"

Perhaps the most important man on the Mobile Training Team is the interpreter. He is the "go between"—the man who must not only convey information to the villagers, but establish the villagers' confidence in the training program as well.

The interpreter for the training team from the 1/506 is Thong Huynh. A high school student in Hue at the time of the 1968 Tet Offensive, Huynh was conscripted by the attacking VC. After 10 days, he rallied and became a Kit Carson Scout for the 101st, eventually becoming the chief interpreter for the 1/506.

"Thoung is an invaluable asset to our team," said Reid. "Many times during his lectures he has interjected comments

about Vietnamese culture in relation to the material we are teaching.

"For instance, in the class on mouth-to-mouth resuscitation he made it clear that, in cases of emergency, a girl may have to give aid to a boy, or vice versa. The Vietnamese are very conscious about public bodily contact between members of the opposite sex. Without that comment, the class would have been useless."

Since the inception of the Mobile Training Teams, Screaming Eagles have dedicated themselves to teaching the villagers of Thua Thien Province the methods of hamlet defense. But the learning has been a mutual experience. Vietnamese and Americans have encountered each other on a daily basis, seeing each other not as a race of people, but as individuals. They have lived together, become accustomed to each other's faults and peculiarities and, in many cases, have grown fond of each other.

The training is only a beginning. As the PSDF becomes stronger, the villages will become more secure. In time, happiness and security will reign supreme where once there were only tears.



JENSEN

Cua Viet

STREET WITHOUT JOY

Gulf of Tonkin

555

Quang Tri

● Hai Lang

● Ap Van Trinh

Son o Lau

● Ap Vinh An

● Ap Sieu Quan

● Ap Pho Trach

● Ap Luong Mai

● Huong Dien

Pha Tam Giang

QL-1

● Phong Dien

BY: SPEC. 5 JAMES GREENFIELD AND
1LT. KENNETH STRAFER

It is 1952. The French convoy cautiously moves along the rough dirt road, trying to avoid the largest of the water-filled shell craters which pock-mark the trail and make progress slow and difficult. The countryside is shrouded in mist, creating an atmosphere which is almost grotesque. Suddenly, all is chaos as shots ring out from unseen places and the ground trembles from the concussion of hand-made mines—there is no escape. The convoy moves no further.

The French came to call this 20 mile strip of land along Highway One "The Street Without Joy." For the people of the area, too, there was no reason for joy or laughter. Their homes and crops were being destroyed as the French and the Viet Minh struggled for dominance in the area.

Almost 20 years after the French Indo-Chinese War, the region again became the scene of great devastation and hardship, this time at the hands of the NVA and VC forces which took part in the 1968 Tet Offensive. The people once again found themselves living on a "street without joy" as they were forced to flee from their homes to government refugee camps, leaving all of their possessions behind to be destroyed by the communists. There was no laughter in 1968 along that ill-fated portion of land.

But all of this is changing. Combined American-Vietnamese military operations since Tet 1968 have brought security to the district, and with security, resettlement became possible. The homeless are returning to their hamlets. The Street Without Joy is again echoing the sound of children's laughter.

A few village elders remember the area before the laughter disappeared. They remember the French convoys traveling along Highway One from Hue to Quang Tri and the Viet Minh ambushes which gave the region its nickname. They remember the failures of the massive French operations in the area, which helped speed French departure from Vietnam. When the French had left, the residents of the Street Without Joy believed that peace had come at last.

For about 10 years following the French withdrawal, the area was relatively free from the plague of war. The people prospered, cultivating the rich ricelands near their homes and living the tranquil life that peace brings. This patchwork of villages and ricefields remained untouched by the struggle going on around it until the mid 1960s, when the Viet Cong began to make their presence felt.

Tran Van Tich, a life-long resident of Luong Mai, located near the geographic center of the Street Without Joy, remembers the increasing Viet Cong pressure for more taxes and recruits from the area.

"Our people had to pay two taxes, one to the government and one to the VC. Our sons were called to serve in two armies at once. We had to share our crops with the Viet Cong... it was impossible to live."

Conditions worsened until the Tet Offensive of 1968 turned the area into an uninhabitable no man's land between opposing military forces.

Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regulars drove the people from their homes, forcing them to relocate in refugee camps in the more secure areas of the province. The unfortunate residents of the Street Without Joy were faced with the choice of biding their time in a refugee camp, or staying on their land where they would face certain death or oppression at the hands of the



Screaming Eagles from the 326 Engr. Bn. (Ambl.) examine a recently completed culvert along the Street Without Joy.

communists.

The ability of the communist forces to temporarily dominate the area was a combination of their troop presence and the fact that many of the hamlets in the area were inaccessible by land. By early 1969, however, the main force communist troops had been driven from the region and resettlement was initiated.

The outlying sections of the Street Without Joy were resettled by the end of 1969. Houng Dien District was completely resettled last fall, thus making it the first totally resettled district in Vietnam.

However, the resettlement of the districts stretching throughout the heartland of the Street Without Joy did not begin until 1970.

As with their sister district, Houng Dien,

resettlement of the remaining districts depended upon the security provided by the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and local Vietnamese forces. The air-mobility of the 101st enabled the allied forces to penetrate the formerly inaccessible bastion of Viet Cong strength, first bringing troops for the pacification and later, the refugees themselves along with supplies for their resettlement.

In Phong Dien District, resettlement was made even more difficult by the presence of hundreds of mines and booby traps which were planted during the Tet Offensive. The passing of a year and severe flooding throughout the district had eliminated any early attempts at resettling the cluster of dirt roads which had been made almost impassable by the heavy



rains.

In October 1969, the 3rd Bn. (Ambl), 187th Inf. was sent into Phong Dien District. Their immediate goal was to pacify the area by rooting out the local Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI) through combined operations with Regional and Popular Vietnamese forces. In addition, Bravo Co., under the command of Capt. Philip Mayer, China Lake, Calif., began the arduous task of clearing mines and booby traps from the resettlement area. At the same time, engineers from the 326th Engr. Bn. (Ambl.) began constructing roads which would connect the Street Without Joy with Highway One and commercial outlets for the farmers' produce.

Removing the booby traps proved to be a slow and painstaking process. Some days, the road clearing teams would advance only a few hundred meters. Although there were no enemy troops to hinder progress, there was ample proof that the area had once been a Viet Cong stronghold. Crudely written communist slogans were found scrawled on crumbling walls in the deserted hamlets.

Sgt. Felmer F. Cummins, Atlanta, recalled the signs that read: "GIs, get off this bloody highway before you are killed," and related the troops' reaction to such signs. "Instead of frightening the men, the signs merely increased our resolve to stay and remove all the booby traps from the area."

By the middle of January 1970, the 101st troopers had removed over 200 of the deadly impediments, accounting for all the booby traps in the area. Resettlement plans could at last become a reality.

While Rakkasan troops had been busy with pacification, training and security



STRAFER

A woman irrigates her rice fields—something that was not possible before the area was opened and made safe for the populace through the efforts of Screaming Eagles from the 2nd and 3rd. Bdes.

efforts, MACV advisors for the Phong Dien District and District Chief Dai-uy Le Phu had been completing the final logistical plans for the resettlement.

For Dai-uy Phu, 1970 brought with it the promise that his two-year-old dream of resettling the Street Without Joy could finally be fulfilled.

"We had to wait until the time was right," said Phu. "Our Popular Force platoons had to be trained so they could carry the burden of defending themselves. This takes time. I refused to let my people move back to

their homes until their defense could be assured."

By the beginning of 1970, the time for resettlement had arrived. Plans called for the movement of more than 9,000 people back to their former homes throughout the district during the year.

Phong Bien village, a group of five, closely-knit hamlets near the center of the Street Without Joy was to be the first village resettled. Finally, on February 24, 1970, after months of planning and hard work, a dream became reality. On that date, American and Vietnamese trucks moved more than 900 villagers back to their homes in Phong Bien.

Although the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) had played a large role in bringing about the resettlement, the day of initial resettlement was solely Vietnamese. Dai-uy Phu and his staff, who had planned and worked for so long, controlled the entire operation.

A contented smile appeared on the Dai-uy's face as his people disembarked from their trucks and began to walk the final few hundred meters to their homes. It was a satisfied smile, the product of a job well done and a dream fulfilled.

What were the people thinking as they entered the ghost towns which used to ring with children's laughter? Were they apprehensive?

If the people understood the enormity of the task ahead, it was not apparent to the casual observer. Their faces reflected only the joy of homecoming. For over two years, they had suffered as refugees, but now they were home, and that was all that mattered.

Even with resettlement, the inhabitants of the Street Without Joy are finding that problems still remain. Their yearly rice crops will continue to be threatened by the flooding which has plagued the area for centuries. However, with the aid of American engineers, the Vietnamese have completed a dam near Lake Tram Then Neim, which will hopefully control flooding.

In Quang Dien District, as a part of the resettlement program, new land is being planted in an effort to radically increase the area's rice production. Fifteen kilometers of land along the southern portion of the Street Without Joy will be made

Market places such as the one below now flourish along the Street Without Joy.



PINNELL

suitable for farming through the combined efforts of the villagers of Quang Loi hamlet, a MACV Advisory Team and men of the 101st. The region's rice harvest is anticipated to double, enabling the province to sell rice outside its geographic boundaries for the first time in sixteen years. In previous years, the province and most notably Hue, its principal city, has had to import rice to feed the populace.

Capt. John Hardy of Westover, Mass., civil affairs officer for the 2nd Bde. and the division resettlement coordinator, called the project "... one of the most aggressive undertakings by any military unit in Vietnam." He added that this will be a model project, a measuring stick for future plans.

"We hope to show here what the people of the province can do when they are working to reestablish the economy of their ancestral lands. I think the results will be impressive," he said. "The people of Quang Dien were moved to resettlement centers around Hue after Tet 1968, but their hearts have always been here. The culture of the Vietnamese ties them to the land of their ancestors. They feel lost in other areas because they can't identify with their surroundings. But when they are on their own land, the difference in productivity and determination is amazing," he went on.

Sgt. Pham Minh Quy, an ARVN soldier from Hue, has spent more than three years working in Quang Dien. He observed, "For the first time in many years, the people of this district are eager to help with community projects. Each day, numerous people walk four to six kilometers to help work on the road or in the fields. These are the same people who fled several years ago; now they have returned to rebuild."

In addition to the flood control projects in Phong Dien, local citizens, troopers of the 101st and the men of the 326th Engr. Bn. (Ambl.) are helping to repair the road that connects Phong Dien and Quang Dien.

Sfc. Martin Reilly of Puyallup, Wash., explained that the road will handle only one-way traffic at present. "We hope to finish repairs and increase the traffic flow soon," he said. "But we couldn't have progressed nearly as rapidly as we have without the help and cooperation of the local citizens."

The future certainly holds some difficult times for the inhabitants of the Street Without Joy. However, Lt. Col. Herbert Y. Schandler, commander of the 3rd Bn. (Ambl.), 187th Inf. which has been working in the area for the past six months, believes the people are capable of overcoming whatever hardships the future may bring.

"Before Tet 1968, the people of the area were indifferent to the government. They were taxed by both sides, but had no real loyalty to either the government in Saigon or the Viet Cong. However, Tet changed all this. People were uprooted and forced to go to the government for aid.

"The Vietnamese Government not only helped them in 1968, but has returned the people to their homes and provided them with the security needed to live productively.



A trooper from the 101st Abn. Div. (Ambl.) takes time out to lend a local resident a hand as a school house nears completion.

Now the people care for the government. They appreciate the help they have been given and are developing lasting loyalties.

"For its part, the government has been forced to deal with the refugee problem and take a wider interest in the people. Both sides are developing a healthy attitude toward one another."

Village Chief Nguyen Tan believes that the attitude of the people has undergone a significant change since Tet 1968.

"Phong Bien was a prosperous village before Tet," mused Tan as he looked out over the tin shelters and overgrown fields, "but it can be even more prosperous now. All the Viet Cong are gone, the government is helping us rebuild, but best of all, the people have tremendous spirit.

"Without spirit, the people can do nothing," he said, "but with spirit, anything is possible."

Even bringing joy to a place which has been without it for so long.



A woman sets to work building a new home—the beginning of a new life along what has come to be known as the Street Without Joy.



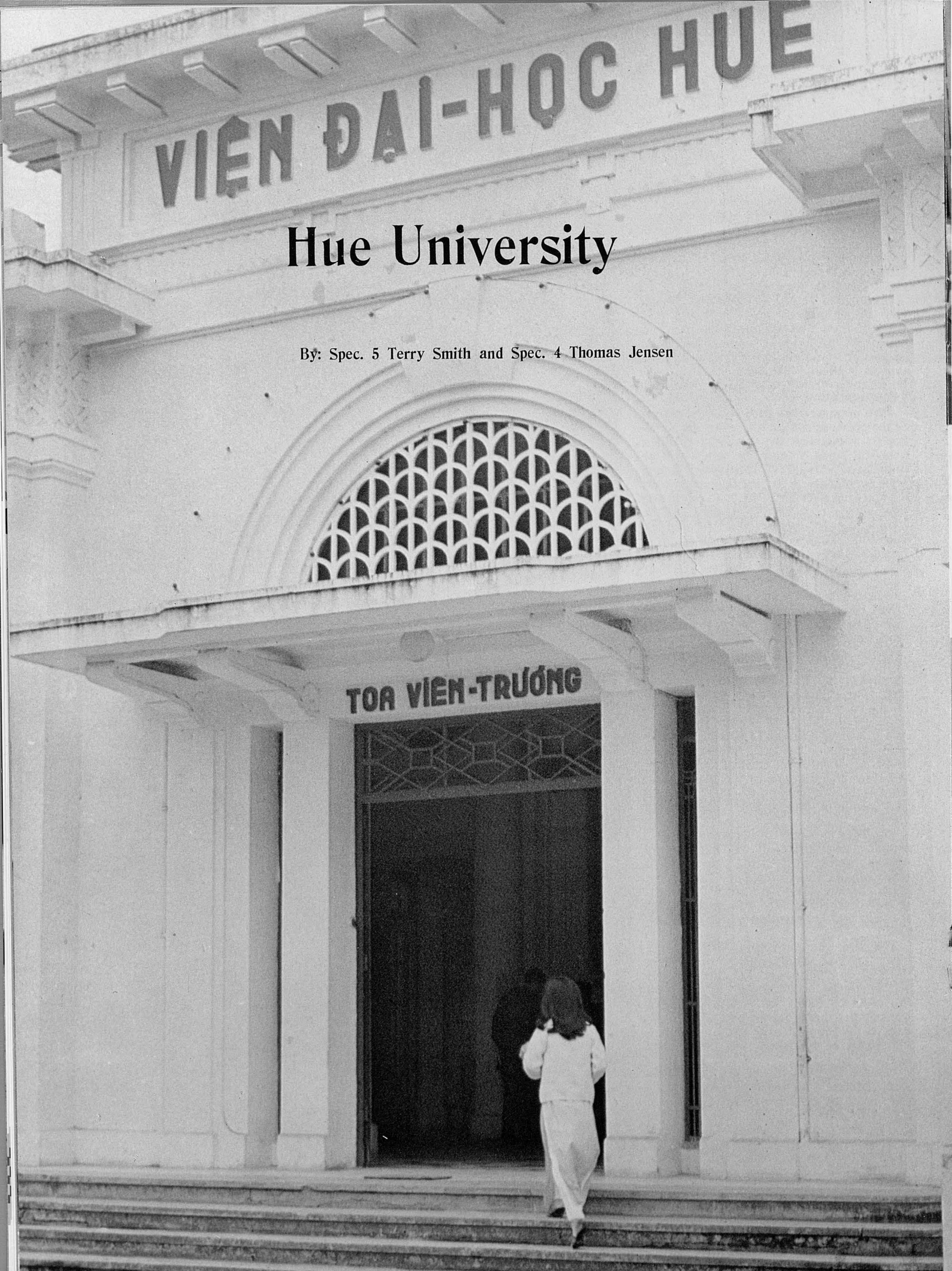
RAMPTON

VIỆN ĐẠI-HỌC HUẾ

Hue University

By: Spec. 5 Terry Smith and Spec. 4 Thomas Jensen

TÒA VIỆN-TRƯỞNG





A pretty co-ed takes advantage of a few spare moments between classes to do some quick research for an upcoming lecture.

PITCHFORD

The city of Hue erupts as an island of concrete buildings, street markets, palatial homes and wooden shacks from the lush rice paddies of the surrounding countryside. Once the imperial capital of Vietnam, Hue is now the home of laborers and merchants who work daily amid the noise and confusion of the city. A center of commerce in what is called "Central Vietnam," Hue is also a place where over 3,000 students come to study in one of the five colleges which comprise the University of Hue.

Although scattered throughout the city, the five colleges provide a tranquil, inviting atmosphere for study. And though a person cannot look at any of the university buildings without seeing a harsh reminder of war's destruction, he also sees monuments to education and the unflagging dedication and toil which have sustained the school through 13 years of turbulence.

Students come to the university to earn degrees in law, medicine, letters (arts), science and pedagogy (education). Representing all classes of Vietnamese society, they come primarily from "Central Vietnam;" that area of the country from Da Nang to Quang Tri.

The students who are not from the immediate area live in dormitories located six kilometers from the city. Nguyen Vanh Minh and Nhuyen Hoang-Tho, two dorm-dwelling literature students, are typical of the students at the university. They regard their education highly—and look with pride on not only their personal achievements, but on the progress of the university itself. But their thoughts are not unlike

Below, an instructor at the Faculty of Medicine stresses a point in his lecture. The School of Medicine was one of the hardest hit during the 1968 communist attacks.



PITCHFORD



The serene atmosphere of the university is enhanced by the quiet, tree-shaded grounds of the Faculty of Law.

those of college seniors in any university anywhere in the world. "Although I have enjoyed my years at the university very much, I will be very happy to be finished with my studies and finally get into teaching which I hope to make my life's work," said Minh.

He went on to say that "The quality of education has increased a great deal even in the time I have been here and I think the university is becoming a very highly respectable educational institution."

Minh's comments were echoed by Nguyen Hoang-Tho, his roommate at the dormitory. "The university has had to come a long way since Tet of 1968. And though it has not yet completely recovered from the destruction the attacks caused, a great deal of progress has been made. I think that soon the school will reach its full potential and will be able to educate even more students than is now the case."

The university students typify the grace and tranquility which has come to be a trademark of Hue and its university. The shy girls doing research in the medical school library, the thorough lecturer conducting a class, and the groups of students quietly discussing the day's assignment as they walk down the halls of the Faculty of Pedagogy—all display the presence which has always been associated with Hue—the Imperial City.

This serene atmosphere was shattered by the communist attacks against Hue during the 1968 Tet Offensive. "Prior to the Tet Offensive, the general attitude in Hue was one of ambivalence toward the war," said Mr. Le Huu An, the public relations director of the university. "The average citizen and the average student at the university considered themselves above the war and developed a detached neutrality toward it," An continued.

"Some of the students were conscripted by the Viet Cong, but some also went freely to join in the battle for Hue, but they soon found out that the communists may preach freedom, but bring only death and destruction. Now, the people of the area and the students are violently anti-communist because they have found out through experience what the communists do," Mr. An concluded.

The University of Hue is now faced with the monumental task of rebuilding as a result of the 1968 attacks, in addition to dealing with the problems which face all Vietnamese educational institutions.

Vietnamese education at all levels has

suffered greatly due to the pressures of war. The South Vietnamese Government, which is the primary source of money for the country's three public universities, has been forced to divert funds earmarked for education to help sustain the war effort. This lack of available funds has brought building to a virtual standstill and is the main factor in the shortage of qualified teachers at all levels of Vietnamese education.

These monetary problems have caused great difficulties in secondary education as well. Individuals are now weeded out before reaching higher educational levels because present facilities are not adequate to accommodate a large number of students. Present estimates have it that only about 20% of the country's high school-age children are actually in school and the estimates are much lower for college-age individuals.

Serious as the money difficulties facing the universities are, the entire Vietnamese educational system is faced with many other problems, the solution of which will determine the very future of education in Vietnam.

To help the Vietnamese educators solve these problems, the U.S. Government has established an educational advisory program which has gained the support of many American colleges and universities. Schools are awarded government contracts in such areas as education, veterinary medicine, engineering and agriculture on a most-qualified basis. Selected institutions then send teams of advisors to work with Vietnamese educators in a particular field.

Doctors Thomas Helms and Kenneth E. Williams are members of such an advisory team. Both men are from Ohio University which presently has fourteen personnel working in Vietnam's three public universities.

Dr. Helms, an advisor to the Faculty of Pedagogy at the university, describes his job as "...advising the school's dean on procedure and policy and the development of curriculum and teaching methods." He emphasizes that, although his job is to expose Vietnamese educators to the most recent trends and methods in education, he and his fellow advisors work "...with our Vietnamese associates and under no circumstances do the Vietnamese educators work for us."

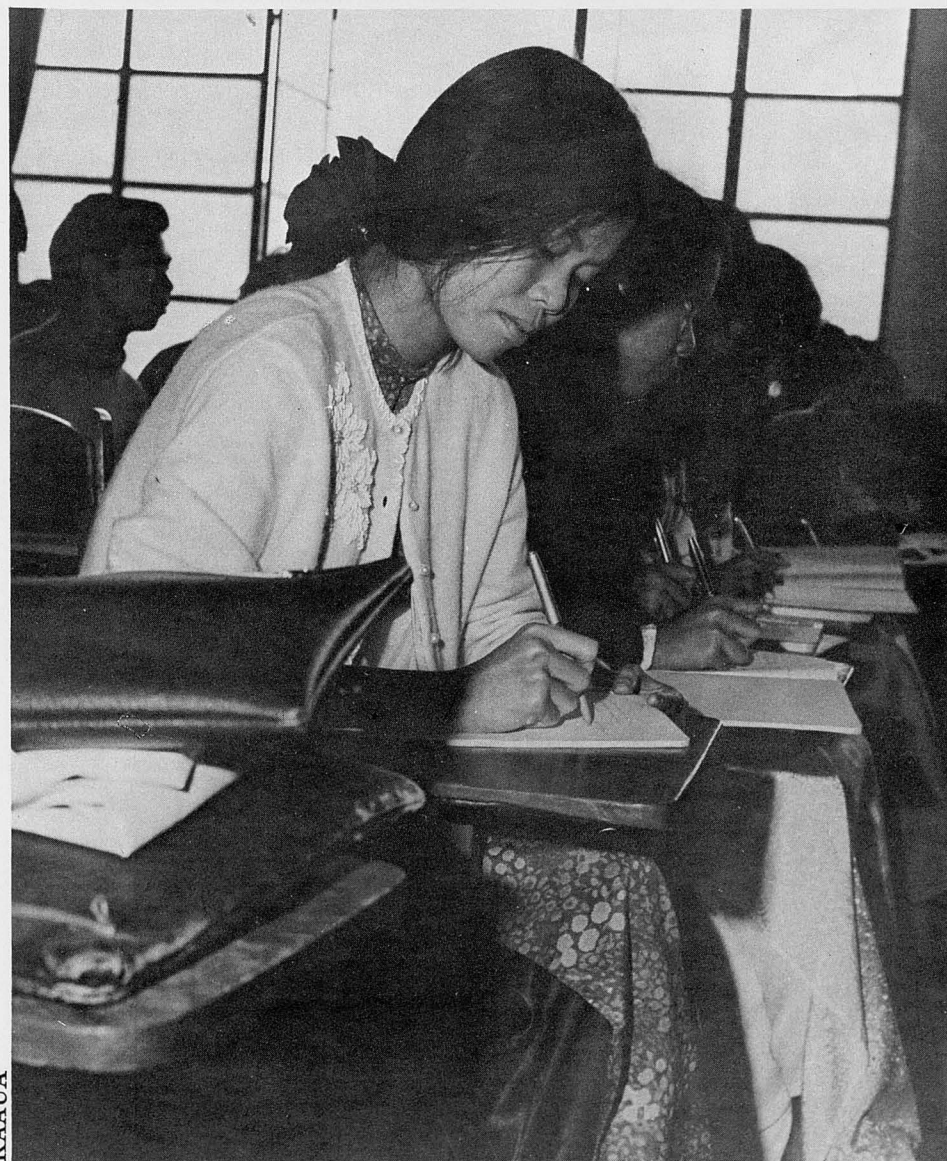
Comparing the students at Hue University and their counterparts in the United States, Dr. Helms notes, "The scholastic atmosphere is remarkably similar in many ways, despite the Vietnamese cultural holds. The students understandably maintain a strong hold in politics and engage in group activities through various student organizations such as the Hue Students' Union and the Students' Athletic Club. They even have their own version of the Students for Democratic Society (SDS). The students are also very receptive to Western ideas," Dr. Helms adds, "but want to use their own implementation of those ideas."

Working with Dr. Helms is Dr. Kenneth E. Williams, an advisor to the science department at Hue University. Dr. Williams is presently involved in obtaining and implementing the use of experimental facilities in the Faculty of Science which is the largest of the university's five schools. "The students are oriented more toward theoretical education and possess impressive theoretical knowledge," Dr. Williams relates, "but there is a great need for experimental equipment if the students are to receive a well-rounded scientific education."

Both Doctors Helms and Williams have

Dorm rooms at the university—and the students who live there are reminiscent of colleges all over the world.

The grace and beauty of the city of Hue is typified in many of the university students. One good example of this is seen below carefully taking notes in class.



KAAUA



KAAUA

spent nearly two years in Vietnam working to improve the educational system at the university. "Our job has been a discouraging one at times," Dr. Williams admits, "but we have seen a great deal of progress made and are looking forward to the time when we, and all advisors like us, will have worked ourselves out of a job."

The problems facing higher education in Vietnam are experienced by secondary level institutions as well. Ohio University is presently working with 12 Vietnamese high schools in a program designed to introduce industrial arts into the high school curriculum. According to Dr. Helms, "The goal of this program is to give the students a salable trade upon graduation from high school. At present, all of the Republic's high schools follow a college preparatory curriculum which does not equip the students to take up a trade upon graduation."

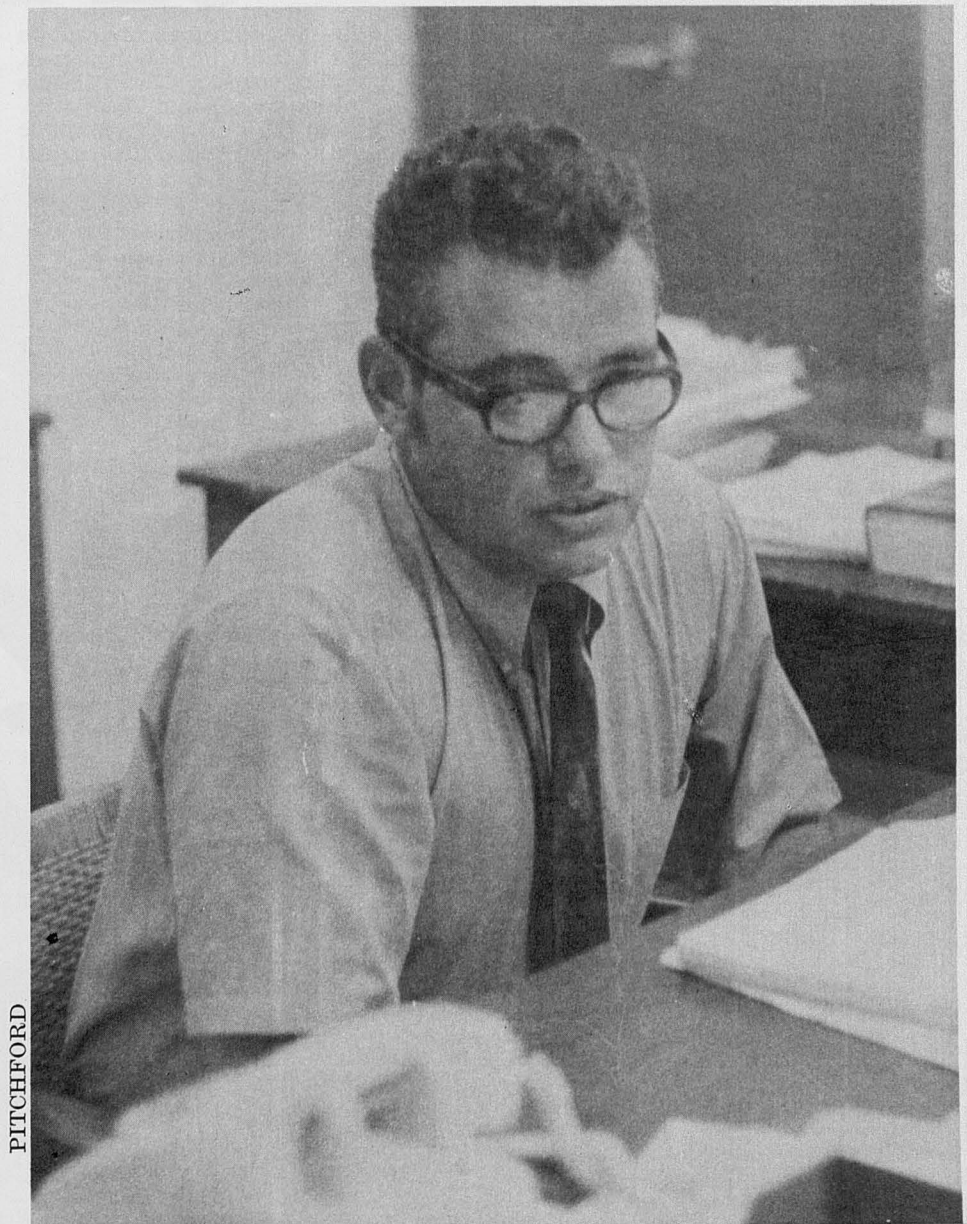
By broadening the secondary educational system in Vietnam, educators are making positive contributions to the nation's economy and doing their part to insure that the Vietnam of the near future will be a dynamic, stable factor in Southeast Asia.

Vietnamese educators must also work to develop an educational system tailored to

the Vietnamese student. French and American teaching methods are now predominant in the country's schools, but most educators feel these methods must be supplemented as education in Vietnam progresses. They have expressed an admiration for American education but feel it is not fully suited for the present situation in this country. Because of the war, this is a very slow process—but it is becoming a reality as notable changes have already been made.

The entire South Vietnamese educational system is presently engaged in a process of "becoming." Educators at all levels are striving to build a strong educational basis for the country, looking ahead to the time South Vietnam takes its rightful place in the community of nations in Southeast Asia.

Hue University is deeply involved in this process of building and becoming. Throughout its turbulent thirteen year history, the university has never lost sight of its expressed goal of "serving the needs of the intellectual youth of Central Vietnam."



PITCHFORD

Dr. Thomas Helms, right, muses over his two years as an educational advisor in Vietnam.



Screaming Eagle Vietnam Diary

By: Spec. 4 Thomas Atwell

January 20—Cobra gunships from Alpha Trp., 2nd Sqdrn. (Ambl.), 17th Cav. spot 20 NVA near the Laotian border south of Khe Sanh. They engage the enemy, killing 11 of them.

January 21—In a major civil affairs project for the 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 501st Inf., villagers complete a gymnasium for Huong Tra District High School in Huong Can village with material provided by the 101st. The gym was required because a large per centage of the students come to the school from great distances and needed a place to eat and get some exercise during the lunch hour.

February 6—Tet comes to Vietnam, and the Year of the Dog begins. Remembering enemy activity during years past, Screaming Eagles made a concerted effort to "Get Set for Tet." The program is effective as very little activity erupts in the area of operations during the holiday. The division is busy with civil affairs projects, however. To make the holiday a happy one for the Vietnamese, Screaming Eagles donate 36,131 pounds of food and 2,005 pounds of clothes, tools, candy and toys to the people.

February 11—The 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 502nd Inf. receives approximately fifty 60mm mortar rounds at Fire Base Rifle. The mortar attack is followed by an attack by an unknown number of enemy sappers. The Strike Force troopers successfully repel the attack, killing 12 NVA.

February 24—Vietnamese refugees start resettling Phong Dien District along the Street Without Joy. Screaming Eagles from the 3rd Bn. (Ambl.), 187th Inf. and Charlie Co, 326th Engr. Bn. (Ambl.) cleared the area of communist booby traps and rebuilt the road in preparation for the resettlement. More than 9,000 people are participating in the first phase of the project.

February 28—The 101st MP Co. starts a project in which they build and set up police stations for the local Vietnamese police force. So far, three of the stations have been completed with material provided by the division and labor provided by the local people.

March 8—A ceremony at Division Headquarters marks the second anniversary of Camp Eagle. Built in the wake of the communist attack on Hue during Tet of 1968, the camp has served the 101st ever since.

March 12—In two separate actions during

the day, Cobra gunships of the 2nd Sqdrn. (Ambl.), 17th Cav kill 11 NVA. After receiving small arms fire, Alpha Trp. kills seven of the communist soldiers near the Laotian border south of Khe Sanh, and Bravo Trp. kills four of the enemy south of Fire Base Granite.

March 20—An enemy force of unknown size attacks Fire Base Granite with mortars, rocket propelled grenades, satchel charges and small arms fire. Charlie Co., 1st Bn. (Ambl.), 506th Inf. counters with organic fire and calls in Aerial Rocket Artillery and artillery. The attack is successfully repelled with 16 enemy being killed.

March 21—Roadbuilders from Alpha Co. 326th Engr. Bn. (Ambl.) complete work on the Phu Thu Road. Because of a lack of transportation, hundreds of acres of rice-growing land have lain fallow since 1968. The six-mile stretch of road will open the markets of Hue and Phu Bai to the farmers.

March 27—A light observation helicopter from Bravo Trp., 2nd Sqdrn. (Ambl.), 17th Cav. receives small arms and automatic weapons fire, suffering no hits, about three kilometers from the A Shau Valley. The pilot calls in Aerial Rocket Artillery, air strikes and artillery fire. A sweep of the

area reveals 21 NVA killed in the action.

March 28—Once again the Cav. is busy as Cobra gunships from Alpha and Bravo Trps. spot about 40 NVA in a bunker complex approximately 30 kilometers west of Camp Evans. After attacking the complex, the pilots call in artillery and air strikes, killing 16.

March 29—The division celebrates Easter with the largest service in Vietnam. Dr. Richard C. Halverson delivers the sermon to 8,600 men. Other highlights of the service include performances by Mr. Charles King and the Saigon Choral Society.

March 31—Operation Randolph Glen draws to a close. During the 124 day operation, Screaming Eagles were credited with killing 668 enemy, capturing 323 individual weapons and 35 crew-served weapons.

April 6—Fire Base Arsenal receives an unknown number of rocket propelled grenade rounds followed by a sapper attack. Troopers from Charlie Co., 1st Bn. (Ambl.), 502nd Inf. respond with small arms fire and call in artillery and Aerial Rocket Artillery. Six NVA were killed during the action and two detainees were taken.





PINNELL



YELTON

EAGLE EYES



GORMAN



SELZER

STAFF PHOTO



RAMTPON



Task Force 3/506

By: Spec. 4 Nicholas G. Kobe, Jr.

It was hot and dusty when the C-130 transport touched down at Landing Zone Betty. The engines suddenly reversed to bring the lumbering monster to a stop at the end of the runway. It slowly turned, heading towards the loading area with its single tin-roofed shack. The men who lined the runway struggled to their feet. They were leaving Betty, they had no idea for how long, or what lay ahead.

So it was, that Task Force 3/506 composed of: 3rd Bn. (Ambl.), 506th Infantry; Delta Battery, 2nd Bn. (Ambl.) 320th Arty; and a detachment of HHC, 326 Engr. Bn. (Ambl.) left Landing Zone Betty.

The C-130 had been airborne for nearly two hours when it made its landing approach. It dipped through the clouds and felt for the runway, touched down and reversed engines. It was Ban Me Thout, and little could be said for the conditions which these men had to deal with. The weather was foul; the rain and constant mist made life miserable, but there could be no dampening the pride in these men, who, separated from the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) since 1967, had lived the Currahee motto, "Stand Alone."

The Task Force, under Operational Control (OPCON) to Task Force South, had fought the fierce battle of Phan Thiet during Tet of 1968. The Viet Cong threw everything they had into the battle, gambling on complete victory and the political and military gains which the capture of Phan Thiet would bring. The Viet Cong left 500 dead in the wake of what became utter disaster for their aspirations in Binh Thuan Province.

It was November, 1969 when, at Ban Me Thout, the Task Force was OPCON'ed to the 23rd ARVN Div. and shortly thereafter, to the 1st Bde., 4th Inf. Div. Contact

was light as the Currahees pursued an aggressive search and clear operation until their departure.

In late December, the C-130's were loaded again, and a different destination awaited the Task Force.

The C-130's were to land at Phu Cat and Landing Zone English, the advance guard moved by Chinook to Landing Zone Uplift while the main element moved by truck. The Task Force was now under the Operational Control of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The mission of the Task Force was to find the 2nd NVA Regt. and prevent it from disrupting the Pacification Program on the Bong Son Plain; a combined project of the 173rd and the South Vietnamese Government.

The possibility of an NVA thrust existed in Binh Hoai Province and not a moment could be wasted. The Currahees were immediately transferred from the "hooks" to waiting UH-1H "slicks" and combat assaulted into the Crowsfoot Mountains. Meanwhile, the engineers began turning a barren hill into Fire Base Abby and constructing a Tactical Operations Center (TOC) in the valley below—which bore the ironic name "Happy Valley."

Contact in the Crowsfoot Mountains proved light, as the NVA fled the approaching Airmobile Forces. In mid-January, the companies—freshly shaven, showered and clothed shuttled to Landing Zone North English by truck.

Tet 1970 was approaching and thoughts drifted back to the 1968 Tet Offensive. The 22nd NVA Regt. was expected to make a drive into the lowlands of Binh Dinh Province. The pacification program had hurt the VC and NVA, denying them rice and replacements from the villages of the province. The NVA were expected to make

a show of force and the Currahees were to face this test.

The forward TOC was moved from Fire Base Abby to Fire Base Tape in the An Lao Valley. The stage was being set. The companies of Task Force 3/506 were deployed, both in the An Lao Valley and the surrounding "Combat Alley." The search for the enemy was intensive as time seemed to be running out.

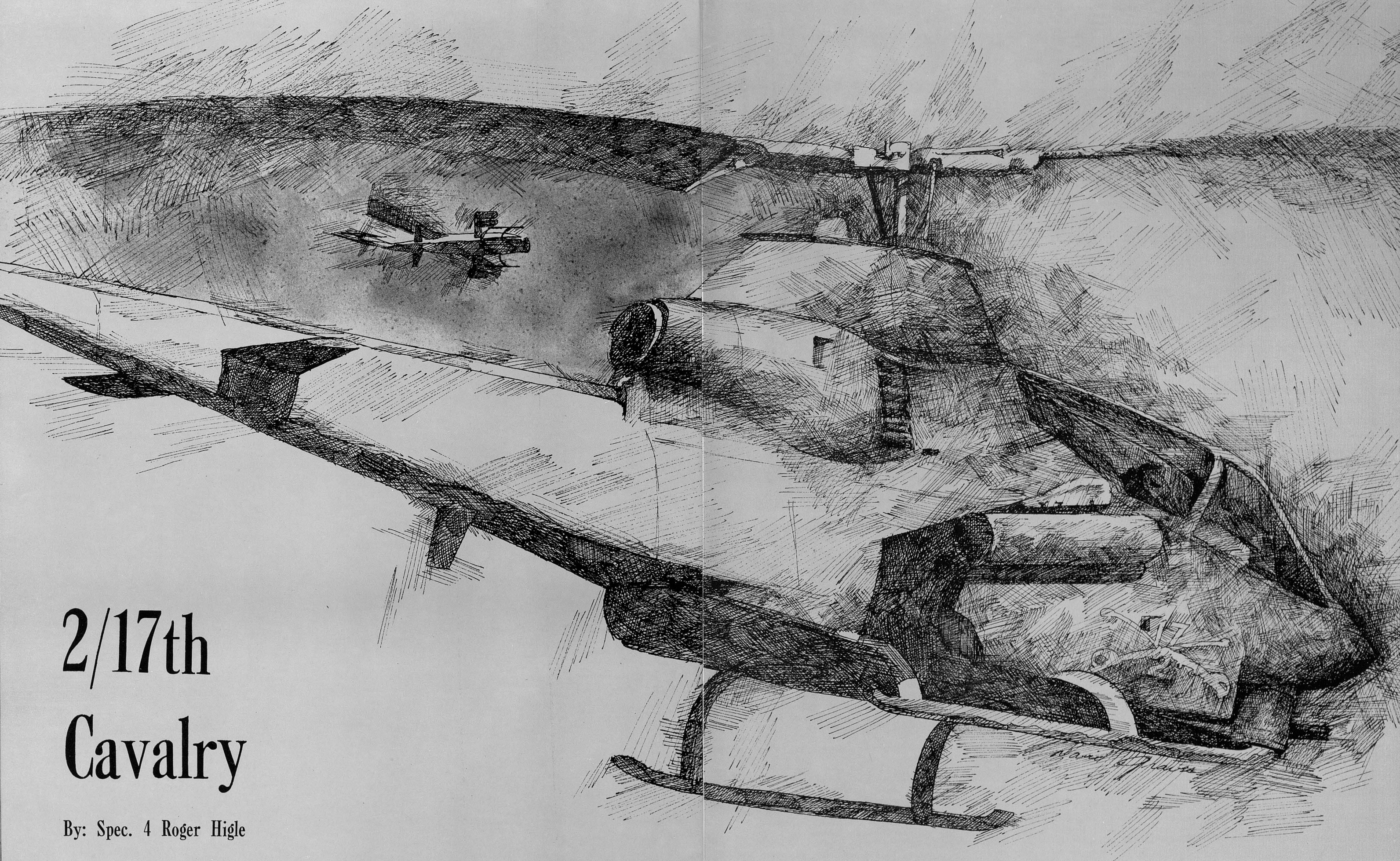
It was on the afternoon of January 25 that Delta Company was moving up the slope of one of the hills enclosing "Combat Alley" when they began to receive intense small arms and heavy weapons fire. This was the beginning of the battle for Hill 474. By late afternoon, Delta, Charlie, Bravo and Alpha Companies were locked in a series of fire-fights with the 8th Bn., 22nd NVA Regt.

The NVA had massed in the shelter of a vast natural cave complex. With the terrain in their favor, the NVA withstood several assaults by the veteran Currahee battalion. For nine days, an intense air and artillery bombardment blasted at the granite caverns. But in the end, it was the individual soldier who had to dig the NVA out of the cave complexes. Many acts of heroism occurred in the days that followed as the men fought their way through the darkened citadel with pistols and, above all, raw courage.

Tet was short for the NVA—they never left their staging areas as they were again met and defeated by the Currahees.

Task Force 3/506, its resources and strength, are built upon determination seasoned with experience and tradition. The faces change as well as the names of the men who have carried the burden. So long as there is a need, this task force—Task Force 3/506, remains prepared to "Stand Alone."





2/17th Cavalry

By: Spec. 4 Roger Hagle



Until late 1969, Quang Tri Combat Base housed the headquarters of the Third Marine Division. It was a bustling center for U.S. military operations in Quang Tri Province, the northernmost province in the Republic of Vietnam. Now, the huge installation seems almost deserted.

At one end of the airstrip there, dwarfed by two empty hangars, stands an operations center, the home of Alpha Troop, 2nd Squadron (Airmobile), 17th Cavalry.

The men of the troop live in quarters which formerly belonged to Marine Air Group 39. The hooches are far from new. They have been "lived in" and need some minor repairs, but they are good enough, according to the men who occupy them.

The Tactical Operations Center (TOC) was designed to house a much larger staff than air cavalry operations require, so the men of Alpha Troop have moved into one corner of the low-lying building. There are a couple of metal folding chairs and field desks in the room. On one wall is a large map depicting the troop's area of operations (AO), which runs from Quang Tri City west to the Laotian border and north to the Demilitarized Zone. Written on the map, just above the designation "South China Sea," is a notice to all pilots. It says: "WARNING: Don't fire outside our AO. . . don't dump your rockets anywhere except on the enemy."

In the solid structure, constructed from huge hardwood timbers, the silence is broken only by the intermittent hissing of radio sets and the low hum of a small fan. From the inside, the TOC has the appearance of a frontiersman's log cabin. Its only full-time occupants are the operations officer and three enlisted men who operate the radios and plot the troop's missions.

"We came here in January, planning to stay only a couple of days," recalls Capt. James Billing, operations officer. "But, we just never went back down south. This is home now, and we like it. There's plenty of work to keep us busy."

The attitude is typical of the squadron's cavalry troopers. As the "eyes and ears of the Division," the Cav always operates in the forward portions of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) area of operations, seeking out the enemy's rear areas, troop concentrations and infiltration routes. The squadron has a motto: "Out Front" . . . and it usually is.

The Cav has more than a slogan. It has an *esprit de corps* which is unique. "We are good, and we know it," says one of the men in the room. "Everyday is interesting,

and very different from the day before. I don't think there are many units around that draw so many varied assignments."

In the 2/17th Cavalry, variety and challenge inspire a sense of pride in the cavalry, pride in being a part of a military tradition which dates back to the horse soldiers of the American frontier in the 19th Century.

Since that time, the cavalry concept has grown into a combined arms effort. In Vietnam 1970, the 2/17th Cav is an elite organization which combines infantry, artillery, armor and aviation capabilities to accomplish its task.

"We have the ability to deploy 500 miles and operate there for an indefinite period of time using only our organic equipment," explains Capt. Ralph A. Northrop, who is in charge of the Bravo Troop operations center at Camp Eagle. Capt. Northrop flew the OH-6A light observation helicopter (LOH) before he moved into operations. As a former member of the "scouts," the men who fly low-level reconnaissance missions in the maneuverable LOH, he speaks with authority about the tactical capabilities of his unit.

"Around here, anything can happen," he says. "Although we have many missions which are planned in advance, we can also react on short notice to contact missions which are requested by ground troops in the field."

Quick reaction is at the heart of the Cav's style. Each of the squadron's air cavalry troops has a platoon of specially trained infantrymen, the "aero-rifle platoon," which is on call 24 hours a day. Depending on the level of activity in the area, the platoon can be set to move on five to thirty minutes notice. Within moments, they can be airborne, on their way to check on enemy activity observed from the air, or to secure a downed aircraft.

For an infantryman, duty with an aero-rifle platoon is a choice assignment. "We know, no matter where we're going or how rough it is, we're a quick-reaction force," says one of the men who are known as the "Blues." "We rarely operate in the field for long periods, so we can go all out all the time."

Air crews also operate on a mission-ready basis. If there are only a few assignments planned for a day, the remaining pilots, crew chiefs and door gunners wait to be called for a mission that could come at any time.

When the troop is alerted for special action, the operations room fills with the designated crews. The operations officer

gives a rapid-fire briefing to the men. "It's white bird (LOH), meet your red bird (Cobra). . . gentlemen, here's where you'll be going. . .". Moments later, the blades are turning and the mission is on its way.

"This is probably the only place in the Division where an aviator is given such a wide variety of combat assignments," says one Bravo Troop pilot. With a broad smile, he adds, "This is where all the action is, too."

In addition to the air cavalry troops, the squadron also has a unit of armor and infantry-trained men who operate a fleet of "gun jeeps," equipped with recoilless rifles. Delta Troop's missions range from providing security in cordon operations to beefing-up the defenses on the perimeter of a base camp. They, too, are on call at all times.

One of the most striking characteristics of the Cav spirit is its pervasiveness. It belongs to an orderly room clerk as much as to any member of a flight crew. And it runs throughout the ranks.

A former squadron commander of the 2/17th, LTC Lavere W. Bindrup, speaks of "Pride in our efficiency and confidence in our ability to accomplish a wide variety of missions for the division." He feels these are the principal sources of the spirit. In the Cav, a clerk-typist will tell you the same thing.

"Whatever it is, it's catching," admits Spec. 4 Willis Flachsenur of Bravo Troop. "New people come in here with no previous knowledge of the Cav or its operations and become a part of the team right away. Maybe it's because things happen so fast around here that we have to know each other well to do the best job."

LTC Bindrup calls the squadron "... a fraternal sort of organization." He goes on to say that "We all feel close, on and off duty. Every job is a challenge, and doing it right is a personal thing. That seems to apply to everyone here."

Variety, action, challenge and teamwork are all a part of what makes the Cav a special organization in the eyes of its members. But all of these factors together do not tell the story. Much of the unit's flexibility stems from the advances in modern weaponry and aviation, yet the character of the unit is not dependent upon any of the tools it has at its disposal.

The spirit goes back to the origins of the cavalry—an elite, fastmoving reconnaissance force, which has traditionally operated along the disputed frontiers of conflict.

Many soldiers of the division's 2nd Brigade will long remember the day when the big, dark blue Stetsons, like those worn by the men of Custer's time, began appearing around the brigade's Camp Sally. The hats stood out in the uniformity of green. Everyone seemed to accept the new phenomenon without question; primarily because the men wearing that special trademark had already been accepted as men who were out of the ordinary.

It has been a long way from the era of the horse soldier to Vietnam and reconnaissance operations at places like Quang Tri, Mai Loc and Tam Ky. Techniques and equipment have changed drastically, but the men have not. They are direct, proud and professional. They are a closely-knit team, but they are also individuals, not stereotypes.

They are just "the Cav." They are just the best, and they will tell you so. Standing "Out Front" is their job.





AYUTTHAYA

BY: Capt. Allen J. Dines

DINES

Ayutthaya. Merely to pronounce the syllables is to conjure up alluring visions of an oriental age gone by. The name alone makes Ayutthaya worthy of a special journey. Surely a place with a name such as this must abound with adventures and mystery.

But Ayutthaya is far more than an exotic sounding name. It is, in part, a small town of about 25,000 and an active local center of agricultural trade in Thailand's Menam Delta. It is also the site of the capital of the once powerful Kingdom of Ayutthaya where sun-baked ruins stand in mute testimony to the colorful and prosperous civilization which once ruled most of what is now modern Thailand. In addition, Ayutthaya is located only 40 miles north of Bangkok, making it easily accessible to R&R visitors to that city.

If you prefer to have the "logistical and operational" aspects of your journey tended by someone other than yourself, several popular tourist agencies offer excellent full-day excursions which are quite comprehensive in scope. You have the choice of traveling to Ayutthaya via bus through some of Thailand's best riceland, or by motor launch along the scenic Chao Phraya River. The tour comes complete with knowledgeable guide, box lunch and a seemingly endless supply of cold sodas and moist towels to keep the sightseer at his calm, cool best as the Thai sun forges its way across the afternoon sky.

For those who feel that running their own show is just another part of the adventure, the Bangkok-Pitsanulok train leaves from the Bangkok-Hua Lampong Station at 7:00 a.m. each morning and arrives in Ayutthaya at 8:55 a.m. A word of caution, though, be sure to check the schedules before you make any plans. For the true adventurer, there is yet another alternative. On the Bangkok waterfront, you will observe many long, slender



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The Phukao Tong Pagoda, built by the Burmese in 1569 and later remodeled by the Thais, adds to the splendor and beauty of Ayutthaya.

Elephants were important to Ayutthaya in both war and peace. Wild elephants were funneled into this corral where the king chose the best elephants for his personal use. The remaining animals were used for heavy labor or for warriors in the army.



DINES

Thai water taxis, complete with tassled sun covers and small, swivel mounted automobile engines which serve as both the craft's means of propulsion and its tiller. The gregarious skippers of these taxis will generally rent their craft for the entire day or half-day. When the price is split three or four ways, it comes to a modest sum per person and gives the flavor of a truly private excursion. Be forewarned that the Thais operate their boats in much the same way as they operate their automobiles!

It would also be wise to give some thought to a means of transportation once you arrive in Ayutthaya; the sights are a fair distance apart. The problem is far from insurmountable, however, as the visitor will undoubtedly find himself greeted by a horde of local entrepreneurs offering their transportation services. Whatever you select as a means of conveyance, be sure to settle on a price before you get in—and don't accept the first price offered; bargaining is the Thai way.

If you are the independent sort, your extra efforts will be amply rewarded. Far more time will be yours to indulge your fancies and linger at will as you explore Ayutthaya's extensive ruins. Should you choose to really immerse yourself in the subject, a stop at the National Museum in Bangkok a day before you make your trip will greatly increase your understanding and appreciation of Ayutthaya.

But just what was Ayutthaya and what was so special about it? What makes it such a photographer's paradise and a pure delight for any visitor? Ayutthaya's time-worn ruins conceal a tumultuous past which holds a story literally stranger than fiction.

The city traces its origins back to 1350. A prince named Rama Tibodi and several of his followers founded the kingdom after they had been forced to migrate from their former homes to the north of the city by a devastating cholera epidemic.

The influence of the infant city rapidly expanded. By the end of the 14th Century, Ayutthaya's power was felt from the port cities of Moulmein, Tenasserim and Tavoy on the Andaman Sea to the land of the Khymer peoples who occupied what is now Cambodia. From the beginning of the 15th Century, the Khymer capital of Angkor was under constant threat by the Thai armies.

It was no small coincidence that Ayutthaya rose so quickly to such power. The Menam Delta is the most fertile valley in Southeast Asia and the ports on the Andaman Sea opened Ayutthaya to a lucrative maritime trade route not available

to the ports on the Gulf of Siam.

In 1431, the Thai army captured the city of Angkor and the Khmers fled, never to return. Angkor was then deserted and engulfed by tropical forests. The subsequent decline of the Khmer people was one from which they were never to recover. Ayutthaya thus became dominant throughout the entire central plain of Southeast Asia.

Throughout the 16th Century, a struggle ensued between Ayutthaya and the Burman kingdom to the west. Burmese armies actually threatened Ayutthaya with extinction for a short period of time in the latter part of the century. But, in 1490 King Naresuen subdued Lan Chang, a nation located roughly where Laos is today, and moved his armies against Burma with an attack on Pegu, then a principal Burmese city north of modern Rangoon.

With the reestablishment of its power and influence, Ayutthaya became one of the most progressive cities on the Indochinese peninsula. During the 17th Century, the powerful Thai kingdom entered into many trade agreements with the European powers which were vying for influence in the area. France, England, The Netherlands and Portugal all bartered with the kings of Ayutthaya for trade rights. This period taught the Thais a particular sensitivity for the distribution of political power, the intrigues of international relations and the importance of diplomacy.

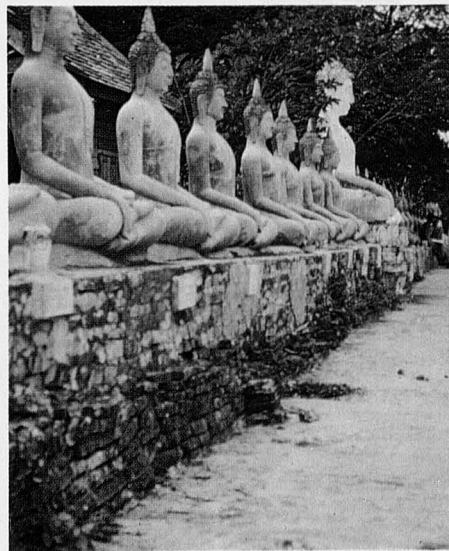
During the 18th Century, the old struggle with Burma once again resumed. This time, the ultimate outcome was to be Ayutthaya's decline. As the years passed, the Kingdom's power ebbed until 1767 when the Burmese army sacked and burned Ayutthaya. The cycle was complete; after 400 years Ayutthaya had suffered the very fate it had imposed earlier on other great kingdoms such as Angkor. After 1767, the Thais moved their capital downriver and established the new city of Bangkok, leaving the imposing pagodas and temples in ruin—to serve only as a memory. Ayutthaya was never again to realize its former stature as a Southeast Asian power.

While wandering through the countless ruins of Ayutthaya, one feels that he is walking into a land where time has stood still; where, at any moment, the hollow shells of buildings could come alive with chants of people from centuries past, or, from behind some crumbled wall, might pass a retinue of brightly robed holy men.

Such is the mystery of Ayutthaya.



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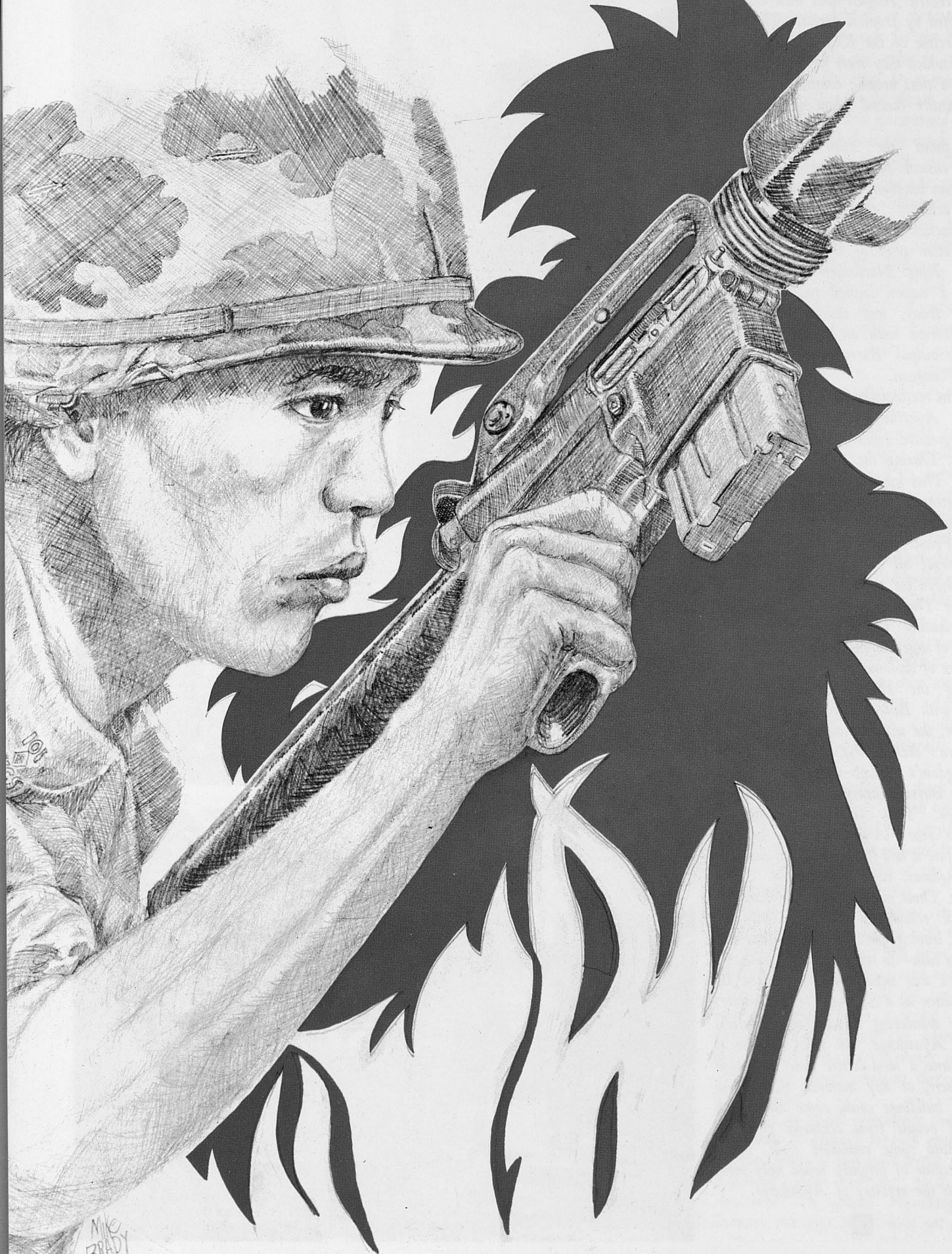


DINES



KIT CARSON SCOUTS

By: Spec. 4 Thomas Jensen





Mr. Nguyen Quang Phat, director of the Tam Ky Chieu Hoi Center briefs fifteen volunteers for the Kit Carson Scouts prior to their departure for Camp Eagle.

"Hard core, Vinh, tell them we want healthy, hard core fighters. No rice carriers!"

Troung Vinh, the Division Kit Carson Scout, has just received his instructions from Capt. Owen Ditchfield, the Kit Carson Scout coordinator for the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).

Vinh wheels around to face the fifteen prospective scouts, and with all the poise and assurance that comes from serving seven years as an NVA sapper company commander, explains what it is to be a Kit Carson Scout—in particular, a scout for the 101st.

The Division Scout does his job well. The fifteen former Viet Cong, who have recently completed a six-week reindoctrination course at the Tam Ky Chieu Hoi Center, step forward, ready to begin their training as Kit Carson Scouts for the 101st.

The decision to become a Kit Carson Scout, which is only one of the many options open to a Hoi Chanh after he completes his reindoctrination training, involves the acceptance of an almost totally new, and sometimes dangerous, way of life.

"The reasons why men decide to become scouts are as varied as the individuals themselves," explains Ditchfield. "Some of

the men are homesick and just plain tired of the way of life they have been leading and, in many cases, political conversion also plays a part in their decision to Chieu Hoi and then go on to become Kit Carson Scouts. Probably the best advertisement for the program comes from the scouts themselves when they go home on leave. We find they give a realistic appraisal of the program itself and the treatment they receive."

Bui Quoc Thanh was one of the men to step forward that day in Tam Ky. After three years in the service of the Viet Cong, Thanh rallied to the South Vietnamese Government, and six weeks later, volunteered to become a Kit Carson Scout.

Bui's decision to follow such a course of action involved many motives. Through an interpreter, he speaks of being impressed by "...the broadcasts from aircraft which tell of the Chieu Hoi program, the good treatment the Hoi Chanh receive, and the money given each man who rallies to the government." But more than this was involved in the decision to rally of this tall, outgoing 22 year-old.

"My family also wanted me to Chieu Hoi," he relates. "They did not like what the Viet Cong were doing and helped convince me that I was wrong to work for the VC."

There was no question in Thanh's mind that he wanted to eventually work as a Kit Carson Scout. "I had always been impressed with the way American soldiers operate, especially with the Cobras, artillery and the M-16 rifle. Now, I want to work with the Americans and use their equipment."

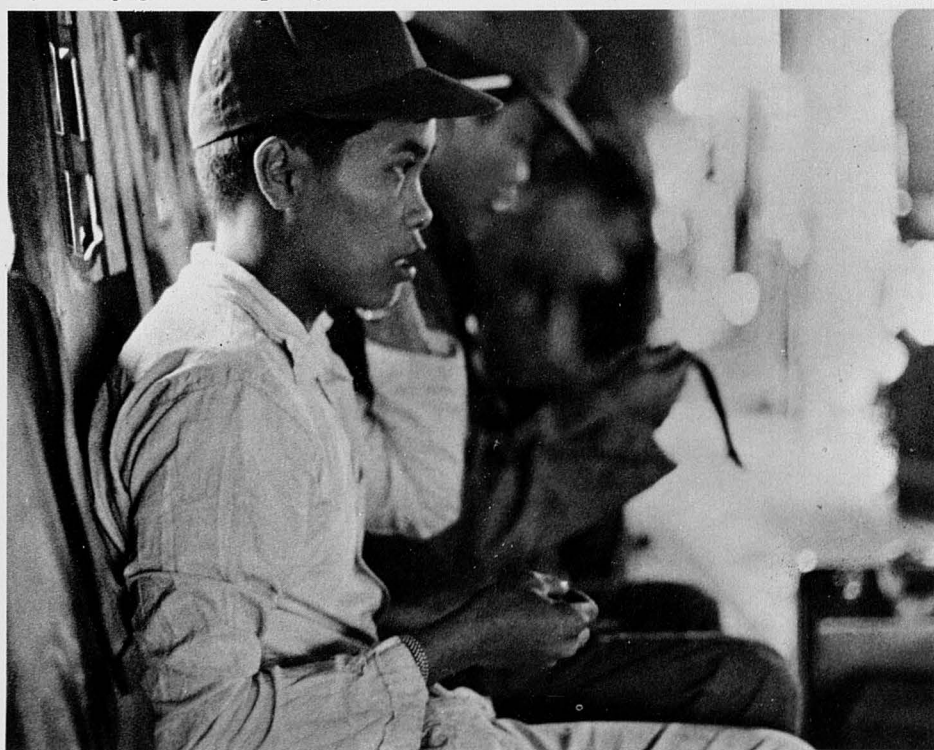
For Bui Quoc Thanh, the Kit Carson Scout program presented a means of beginning a new life, a chance to learn firsthand of methods, equipment and personnel previously unknown to him. So he stepped forward that day at Tam Ky.

Mr. Nguyen Quang Phat, the director of the Chieu Hoi Center at Tam Ky, supervises the paperwork necessary to release a man from the center and makes sure that, before a man leaves, he has completed all of the training the government requires. According to Phat, "The moment a man is released from the center, he is no longer a Hoi Chanh, but a citizen of the Republic of Vietnam with all the rights of citizenship. Programs like the Kit Carson Scouts are very valuable in that they give the men a chance to quickly become working members of the society who carry their own weight among the people. The Kit Carson program has been very effective in giving the men the self-respect they deserve, both in their own eyes and the eyes of the public."

So when the loading ramp of the giant Chinook opened, exposing the semi-dark passenger compartment which was to carry Thanh and the fourteen other volunteers to Camp Eagle for the start of their processing into the 101st, the men were actually stepping into a new life for both themselves and society. The hour-long introduction to the Airmobile Concept is one of wide-eyed stares at the landscape below, aching eardrums, and apprehension about the training they will soon undergo. But one of the first, and perhaps most frightening, steps has been taken.

Camp Eagle is the object of more wide-eyed stares, but there is no time for the apprehension each man lived with on the flight from Tam Ky. New experiences are everywhere—the unfamiliar American food

Below, the wonderment of a first helicopter ride is displayed as a new volunteer straps in for the flight to Camp Eagle.



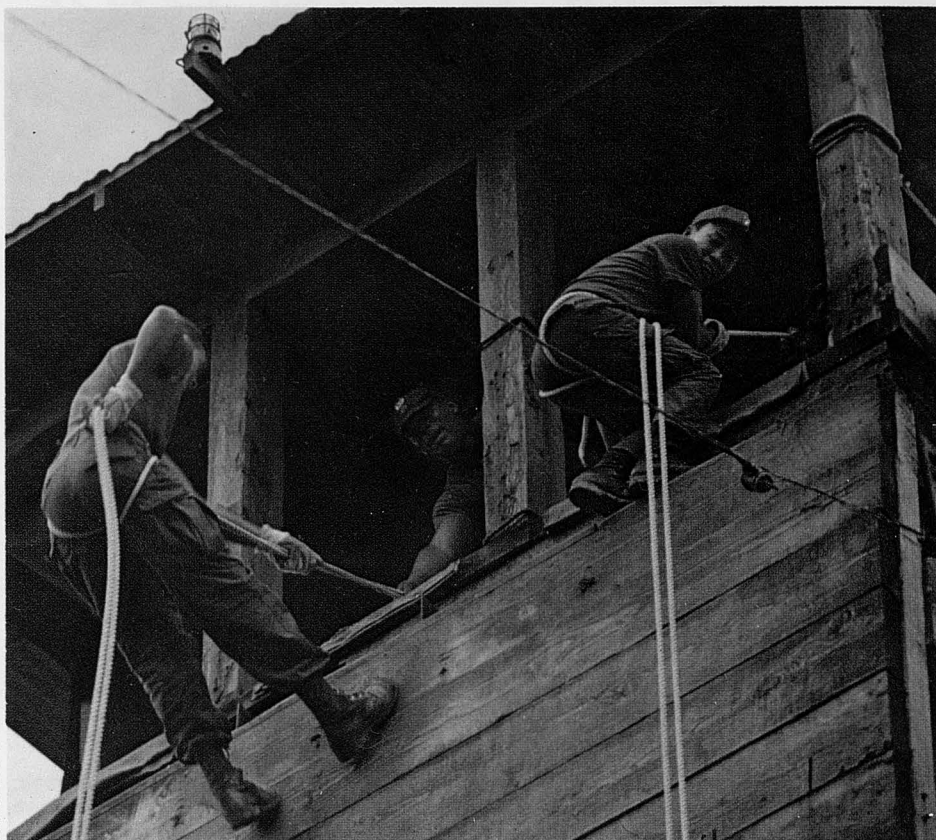
in the mess hall, which takes some getting used to, but Bui Quoc Thanh feels "...is good for me;" the quick shower which is very welcome and effective, even though some of the recipients forgot to take off their undershorts; and the strange, new clothes that require some help getting into for the first time. But there is also that warm feeling that comes the first time a new scout asks a GI for a light, and receives the typically American reply, "Sure man—here ya go." It makes the scouts feel a little more at home, even if they don't understand exactly what was said.

The stay at Eagle is a short one. The men are processed through the Division G-5, given their basic issue and the necessary administrative work is done. Only 24 hours after arrival, the prospective scouts find themselves on the way to Camp Evans and the Screaming Eagle Replacement Training School (SERTS) for the start of their training.

The clean, well-kept hooches and training areas at SERTS dispel all the doubt the new scouts have been living with for the past day and a half. These men, who so recently came from the jungle hiding places of the Viet Cong to become brothers-in-arms with their former enemies, know now that they are ready to accept this new way of life. They plunge into training with an almost childlike enthusiasm.

During their first full day at SERTS, the scouts are paired with their American "buddies." These buddies have volunteered to come in from their line units and help the new scouts become accustomed to their new surroundings and equipment. For the next eight days, the scouts and their buddies attend orientation classes on such subjects as field hygiene, military courtesy and the care and use of equipment. During this time, the scout is taught some basic English, and his buddy some basic Vietnamese. The ability of the scout and buddy to communicate is of great importance—life-saving importance.

Following the initial eight-day orienta-



One cautious look earthward, and then it's down the rappelling tower as this new scout takes part in SERTS Proficiency Training.

tion period, buddy and scout then go through the regular Proficiency Training at SERTS. Upon graduation from the six-day course, the new Kit Carson Scout and his buddy return to the buddy's unit, where they are assigned to the same platoon and squad, to begin their work in earnest.

The Kit Carson Scout program was developed by the Third Marine Division in 1966 and received MACV approval for

use throughout Vietnam in 1968. Since this time, the program has proven to be one of the most successful wartime operations ever undertaken by the United States. According to Capt. Ditchfield, "The only limit to the usefulness of a scout is the imagination of his commander. Scouts are presently being effectively used as interpreters and interrogators, in Psychological Operations, and in the identification of members of the Viet Cong Infrastructure. Each scout brings with him at least six months combat experience, a knowledge of the terrain, VC and NVA tactics and, above all, the willingness and enthusiasm to do a good job for his unit. It is very rare that we have a scout who decides to leave the program, or a dissatisfied commander."

The Kit Carson Scout program has not only succeeded militarily, but socially and politically as well.

As an extension of the Chieu Hoi program, the Kit Carson Scout program has provided a means through which the South Vietnamese Government not only gains added strength, but also gives returnees the opportunity to quickly become useful citizens and gain society's acceptance.

In this manner, the Kit Carson program carries the Chieu Hoi concept to its logical conclusion. The rallier is accepted by the "open arms" of the legal government, and through training and reindoctrination becomes a productive member of a society which has forgiven his past transgressions and totally accepted him.

For American, Australian and Thai forces presently serving in the Republic, Kit Carson Scouts have become living proof of the adage: "He that can be a worthy enemy, will, when reconciled, be a worthier friend."



JENSEN



