Vol. 2, No. 3 - 4 SPRING - SUMMER, 1970

THUNDER!

A NEW COMMANDER

Major General Edward Bautz, Jr., assumed command of the 25th Division in April. He is the 24th commander of the Tropic Lightning Division in its 29-year history. He replaced Major General Harris W. Hollis who had commanded the division since September 1969. General Bautz was assistant chief of staff for Operations at the Military Assistance Command Vietnam before coming to the 25th. He served with the 4th Armor Division during World War II and participated in all five major campaigns. He has served on the Army's General Staff and was Director of Plans for the Combat Developments Command and Director of Military Personnel Policies.

PACIFICATION AWARD

The 25th Infantry Division was awarded the Civic Actions Honor Medal in March by the Vietnamese Ministry of Defense. The award is for the division's work in Civic Actions, Vietnamization and Pacification programs. The division was cited for building homes; distributing food and clothing to refugees and toys to children; building dispensaries; repairing schools, churches, pagodas, orphanages and roads and conducting medical programs among the people and training medical personnel. The division was also praised for the dissemination of civic action leaflets and helping train and supply Regional and Popular Forces.

THUNDER!

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Front Fifth Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry troopers near LZ Blue in the Elephant's Ear.

Photo by SP4 Rich Fitzpatrick

Back Children at Binh Thanh, a community near the Cambodian border.

Photo by SSG Stephen F. Veroczi

The Watchwords: Vietnamization and Pacification

Combat reached a low point after October 1969 in the 25th Infantry Division area of operations. Pacification and Vietnamization were the watchwords.

Operations continued same as in the past. Riflemen still spent almost every night on ambush patrols and searched the swamps and forests by day for the enemy. But more and more often they were accompanied by Vietnamese troops and more and more often they found themselves detailed to securing civic action projects.

Booby traps and accidents were the cause of most of the casualties to the U.S. troops. Attacks by the enemy were scarce. In only a few places could units be assured of walking into a fight.

Land Clearing

As the dry season began the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry, swept into the HoBo woods with the mission of clearing the area of enemy staging points. They encountered well camouflaged and fortified bunkers throughout the area. Engineers working with the infantry units moved in with Rome plows to cut down the thick jungles that the enemy used so well as hiding places.

The hefty plows cut a path that exposed the pock marks of numerous engagements and the remains of fighting positions defended during the battles of spring and summer.

The heavy fighting was on the slopes of Nui Ba Den, a long-time enemy stronghold. Contacts in other areas were small and short lived. The enemy was avoiding a fight in favor of booby traps, mines and indirect fire attacks at night.

Pacification Grows

The continual operations, combined with a snowballing pacification program, was drying up the sea in which the enemy had thrived. Although tactical operations remained vigorous there seemed to be more time for Vietnamization, and devotion to the pacification program grew.

Combined operations were nothing new, but by early November they were more extensive than ever. The 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry went to work with the 2nd ARVN Airborne Brigade to build Fire Support Bases Cathy and Elizabeth in Tay Ninh province. Elements of the 5th ARVN division joined the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry, on bushmaster operations in the Boi Loi Woods.

The 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, Wolfhounds, operating near the Cambodian border worked closely with Regional and Popular Forces at Binh Thanh and Phuoc Luu. In a late November enemy attack during early morning hours on the 84th Popular Force outpost, two companies of Wolfhounds stood ready to support the outpost. They were never called. The PFs staved off the attack killing 25 enemy soldiers and capturing 11 assault rifles.

On the pacification side civic action teams probed into remote hamlets regularly and the operations paid dividends in valuable intelligence information as well as good will.

Important Ralliers

Enemy rallying to the government were turning out to be persons of more importance than they had been and they were coming from new areas. One, a former deputy village chief and VC rifleman, told about his treatment by the communists after he was wounded. He said, "I finally realized they weren't going to help the people. If they wouldn't even help me after I was wounded what would they do for the peasant farmer."

Another Hoi Chanh (rallier) said he heard about the open arms program while he was undergoing training by the enemy inside Cambodia. According to his story he made his way across the marshes that night and rallied to a U.S. unit at sunrise the next day.

Two other ralliers said they were co-village chiefs and had been communists since the 1940's. Both men were more than 60-years-old when they showed up at a Chieu Hoi center.

Along the Vam Co Dong, the river that separates a once productive rice and sugar cane region from the barren Plain of Reeds, there were renewed signs of prosperity. Woodcutters worked each day along the river banks during early December. Only a few months before it had been unsafe to travel on the river and its banks were an enemy stronghold. Now sampans could travel from Ben Luc to Tay Ninh City in

relative safety thanks to river patrols.

The harvest was going well. Troops took extra care to avoid crop damage during operations. The crop was good and the farmers were delivering it to the mills and markets freely. "The fields are secure," one psychological operations officer said, "and prosperity is returning."

Mobility is Tactic

For U.S. units in the field the tactic of the day was mobility and quick reaction. Extended search missions increased. During late November the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Golden Dragons, and the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Warriors, teamed up on a three-day "super bushmaster" in the Boi Loi Woods. Thirty-two enemy were killed during the operation.

The mechanized 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Tomahawks rushed to the Crescent southwest of Tay Ninh City to catch ten enemy who had stopped for chow.

The 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Manchus could be found almost anywhere from the Straight Edge Woods on the western border to the Boi Loi Woods on the eastern border.

The 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Dreadnaughts, working with the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regulars, continued to comb the rocks and caves of Nui Ba Den and met heavy resistance. But, with each battle the enemy dwindled.

Work Together

Vietnamization increased. Vietnamese Air Force fighter bombers flew in support of U.S. troops in Tay Ninh province. Combined artillery fire support centers emerged in Tay Ninh and Hau Nghia provinces.

Among the major factors that helped the Allies as the new year approached was the discovery of numerous enemy weapons caches. In late December the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry, operating with the 773rd RF Company and two Hoi Chanhs, broke into an enemy arsenal of more than 300 weapons including rifles, machineguns and rockets.

At the end of January the command issued a staff report that said because of the success of combined operations throughout the area the enemy was avoiding contact. The report said that it should be apparent to the enemy that the supplies he has for so long hidden in tunnels and caves throughout the area are no longer safe. Decreased contact with the enemy had led to a substantial increase in the number of arms and supply caches found by Allied forces.

During January alone ARVN/US troops uncovered 407,322 rounds of small arms ammunition; 415 hand grenades; 1,327 mortar rounds; 167 rifle grenades; 339 rocket-propelled grenade rounds; 158 recoilless rifle rounds; 119 bangalore torpedoes and 124 rockets.

More than 150 small arms were discovered during the month plus eight rocket propelled grenade launchers, 14 crew served weapons, 12 mortar tubes, 134 anti-tank mines and 298 booby-traps.

The enemy equipment finds continued into February. Friday the 13th was unlucky only for Charlie because the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 22nd Infantry, came upon another huge cache of weapons, ammunition, food and money.

In March the commander of ARVN troops in the Third Corps, Lieutenant General Do Cao Tri, came to Cu Chi as envoy for the Vietnamese Ministry of Defense. A year before the division had been awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for valor. Now it would receive the only other award the government presents to U.S. units—the Civic Actions Medal—an award for excellence in Civic Actions, Pacification and Vietnamization.

Accomplishments Listed

Among the 25th's accomplishments were:

Providing material to build 6,500 houses.

Distribution of 600 tons of food, 50 tons of material to refugees and 40,000 toys and many thousands of school kits to poor children.

Construction of 18 dispensaries and the repair of 140 schools, 100 churches and pagodas, 50 orphanages, 550 kilometers of roads and 50 bridges.

Conduct of 5,934 medical civic action projects which treated 579,621 patients and trained rural medical personnel.

Printing and dissemination of 600 million leaflets during 12,000 hours of aerial and ground broadcasts.

Generals Comment

"The enemy claims that their Army in the south is like fish living in water," Tri said. "But, without the support of the people, no doubt they soon will be out of the country. This is the reason we emphasize civic action."

Major General Harris Hollis was the 25th Division Commander. "Civic Action is one of the primary planks in our mission," he said. "Pacification is the goal which we all seek . . . pacification means peace."

"Apart from the fighting which is entailed in war, there must be a healthy base upon which democracy and freedom might flourish in the years ahead."

He pointed out that as pacification grew, government agencies became stronger. They were able to take a greater share of the area defense themselves, he said.

At the same time the award was being presented at division headquarters the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 22nd Infantry, was turning Patrol Base Dixon, built by them only weeks before, to ARVN forces. During those weeks the Triple Deuce had regular skirmishes with the enemy coming into the area from Cambodia through the An Ninh corridor—one of the heaviest enemy infiltration routes in Vietnam. A lot of land had been cleared and a lot of enemy supplies had been discovered. Now it would be the ARVN's job.

North of Cu Chi base camp a huge slice of the division area of operations had been turned over to the army of the republic as had numerous patrol and fire support bases throughout the area of operations.

Vietnamization and pacification had reached almost everywhere. One exception was the rocky crags and caves of Nui Ba Den where the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23rd Infantry, and the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, went looking for the enemy in late March. They met heavy resistance in a battle that lasted three days. Five Americans were killed and 56 enemy died.

"This is my third tour in Vietnam," one soldier said, "and that was some of the heaviest and most accurate enemy fire I've encountered. Anything that moved in the open got hit."

One commander could say only that his men did "an outstanding job considering the circumstances" because they were pinned down throughout the battle. Thirteen of them earned Silver Stars for their valor.

A week later the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, with the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, were up against a well entrenched enemy again in the Renegade Woods near the border. Ninty-three enemy were killed in fighting that didn't let up for four days.

Troops Ready

There was little relief for the soldiers working in 100 degree temperatures.

The spring before had seen most of the division's heaviest fighting. The soldiers were poised, waiting for an anniversary eruption. Battles that resulted in at least 100 enemy killed were common as summer 1969 approached. But then, pacification was nebulous and Vietnamization hadn't formally begun.

A new commander came to the 25th on April 2. In a message to his troops Major General Edward Bautz, Jr., summed up what was ahead for the division in the summer of 1970.

"I need not remind you that the task before us is unfinished. Our help in this critical hour of the history of the Republic of Vietnam is still very much needed."

"The task is threefold:

"To rid the area of communist cadre, guerillas, local, main force and regular units."

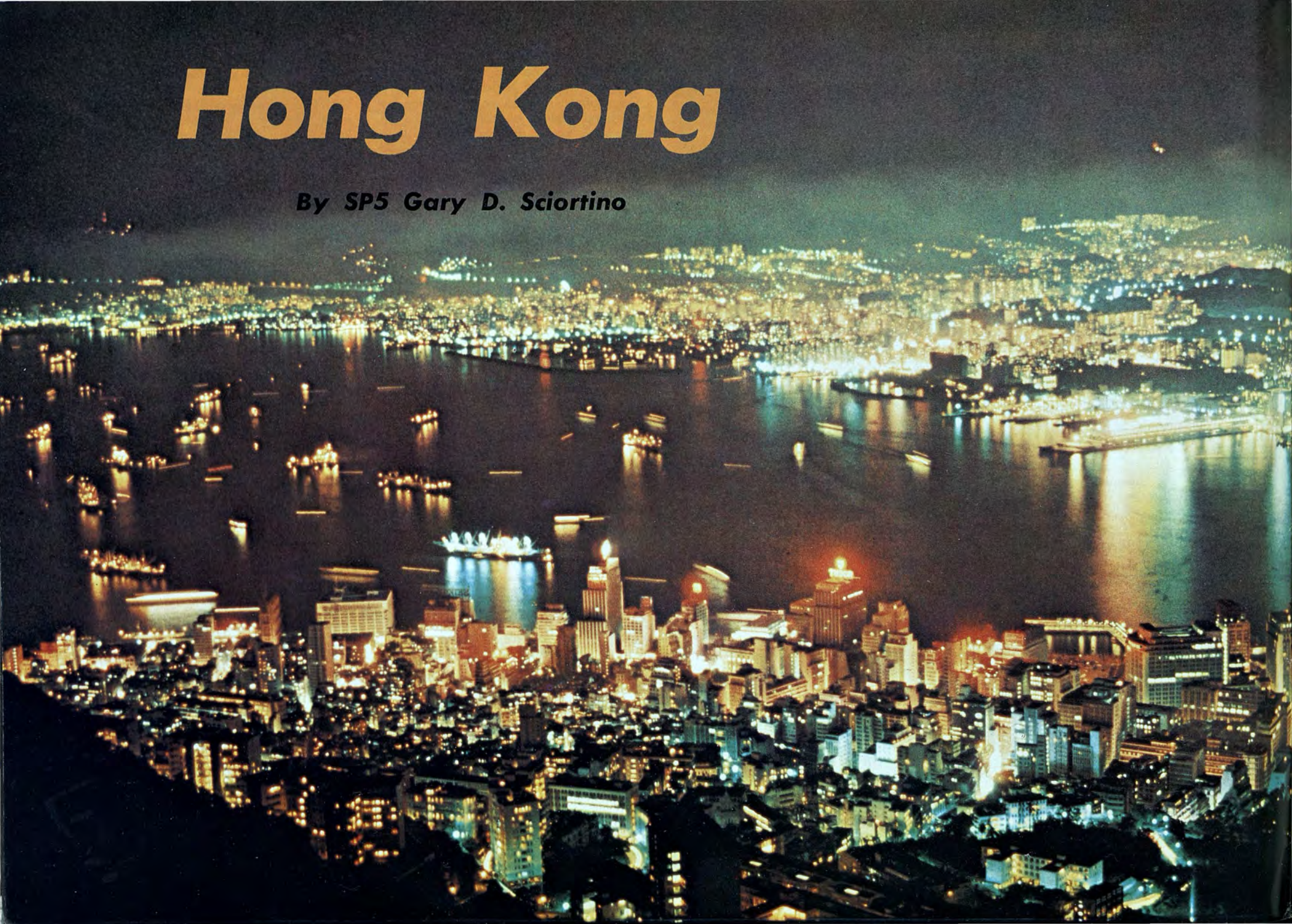
"To improve the operational capability of the Vietnamese Armed Forces and Territorial Forces."

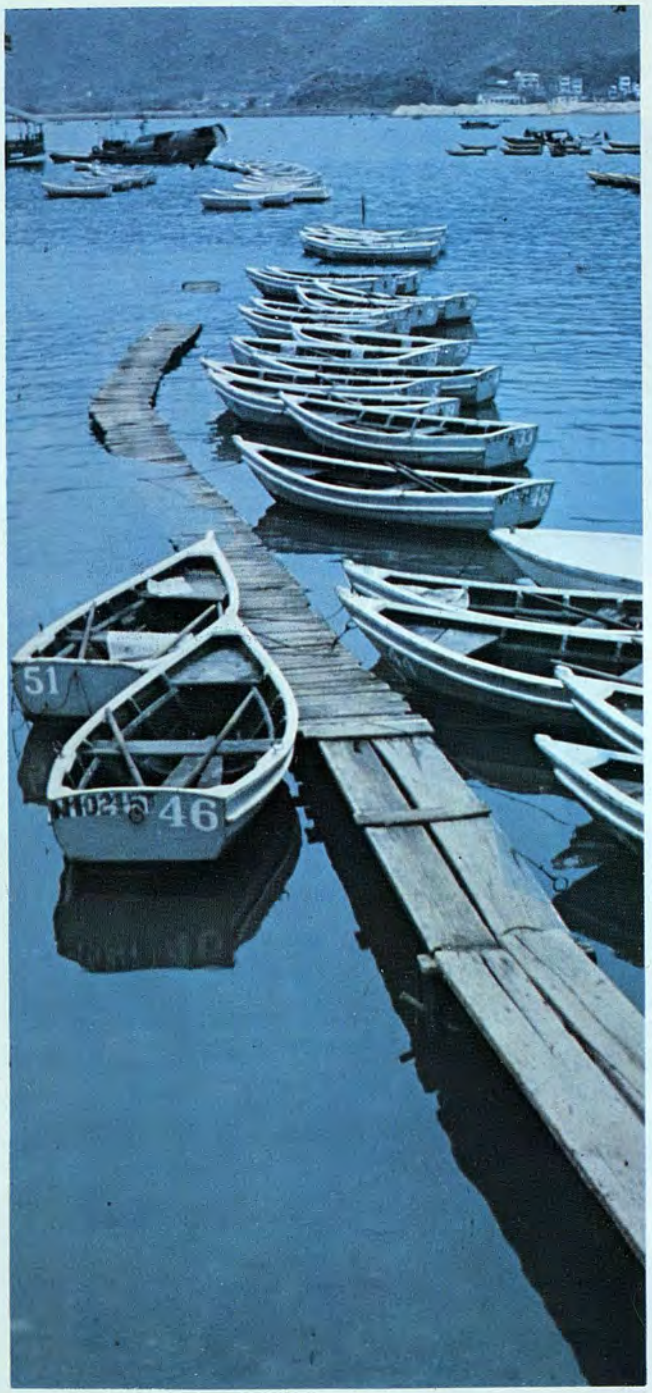
"To assist in the pacification of the countryside by working in harmony with the government to bring a free and more rewarding life to the people of Vietnam."

"These are the reasons we must remain here to complete the job our predecessors began."

Hong Kong

By SP5 Gary D. Sciortino





Hong Kong sounds like and unlikely name for a city, but then Hong Kong is an unlikely city to westerners. And, as an R&R spot it represents a place to do, see, and buy some unlikely things.

The British Crown Colony is situated on the brink of the Communist Chinese mainland. Its nucleus is Hong Kong island, 35 1/2 square miles, on which is located Victoria the colonial capital. Opposite is Kowloon, a peninsula jutting out from the mainland, which is only three square miles. An additional 355 square miles, known as the New Territories, comprised of an adjacent mainland area and numerous islands makes up the rest of the colony. It is the home of more than four million persons, mostly Chinese.

The community thrives mainly from free trade with the world. Hundreds of cargo laden

A person may walk until he can walk no more and not have seen much. Everything imaginable is in the offing—tailor made suits, carved ivory statues, cameras, stereo equipment, jewelry. There are myriad night clubs and bars. Excellent food. Elegant hotels.

The city is crowded. All around the harbor people and buildings are packed together. Everywhere one looks he sees the government's construction laborers scraping up land to terrace the hillsides that will be the foundations for new high rise buildings. The earth that is scraped away is loaded into the harbor to create even more land for building.

It is on the back streets, behind the facade of tall buildings, that the natives of Hong Kong—the Chinese—live. Their homes are butted against Mout Victoria not far from the business

ships from all countries drop anchor in Hong Kong's excellent natural harbor each day. Cargo junks scurry the goods in every direction to the shores where Chinese laborers busily unload the endless goods and distribute them to the thousands of stores throughout Kowloon and the island.

Some of the merchandise is top notch, sold at prices which cannot be matched anywhere in the world. A buyer must be wary as he wanders the retail districts where countless hawkers entice and encourage him to buy what they have for sale.

The hawkers are everywhere in the business districts pulling at elbows. Some are Indian, most are Chinese. "Sir, come right in here," they plead.

At night the streets are filled with neon light.

section itself. With laundry put-out-to-dry in every window, they are jammed and stacked together.

The nighttime markets along the back streets abound with life. Traffic is blocked off and the people crowd the streets as if every night were a carnival. Tiny shops push one against the other —some with fruits and vegetables stacked in abundance, others with mountains of books, still others with fresh meat displayed openly and unrefrigerated by lantern light. Set up along the way to entertain passersby are snake charmers who pull cobras out of gunny sacks. Venders, pushing small, two-wheeled stovecarts, sell pieces of squid to anyone with a taste for Chinese delicacies.

Beyond the bustle of Hong Kong are the New Territories. In one island community are the Haklo people whose entire village floats on water. Their occupation is fishing. Others, on the mainland, are farmers. A person can travel

straight to the edge of Communist China at the borderpost Lok Ma Chau and see workers till their fields on the other side.

The Temple of Ten Thousand Buddhas is also there. Because the Buddhists believe Buddha takes many forms in life, the temple is a show case of colorful statues depicting those different forms.

Hong Kong, from the border to the bustle of Victoria and Kowloon, takes many forms. It is many things to many persons. The Communists see it as a city of imperial decadence but also as a window to the free world and trade. To the natives it is a place to earn a good living. It is modern, yet, a piece of old China. To a visitor it is busy, beautiful and fun—a chance-in-a-lifetime place.

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN A YEAR?

Loper

By SP5 Stephen F. Kroft

"Do you know how long a year takes when it is going away?" Dunbar repeated to Clevinger. "This long." He snapped his fingers. "A second ago you were stepping into college with your lungs full of fresh air. Today you are an old man."
. . .Catch-22

Traveling time from Oakland to Oakland is a little more than 31 million seconds, each one carefully measured to international standards.

In Vietnam, time is the great equalizer. Every soldier who walks down the boarding ramp at Tan Son Nhut, Cam Rahn, or Bien Hoa begins his own personal 12-month, 365 day race to DEROS. Amid all the unknowns and variables there is one constant: with a little bit of luck he will be getting back on the plane this time next year.

A twelve month tour is one of the truly unique aspects of the Vietnam conflict. Ernie Pyle's dogface of World War II plodded on through nameless towns in Italy, France and Germany not knowing where he would be in a month, a week, or even the next day. All he knew was that he would be going home when the war was over. Whenever he talked about the future he was almost sure to add the disclaimer, "If I make it through this thing all right."

The GI in Vietnam isn't as fatalistic. This is not to say that he isn't just as scared. Everyone knows he is. He simply has too much to live for to admit there is a possibility he might not make that rendezvous with the freedom bird. He can still remember what a hot shower feels like, and he has the months marked off on his camouflage cover to remind him that his discomforts are only temporary. Whenever he talks about the future he will say, "When I get home."

The present holds little promise for the soldier. After a few weeks in-country most GIs begin living either in the past or in the future. Of course there are those times of notable exception, during fire fight, or a mortar attack, as Hemingway said, he will be living in the "very second of the present, with no before and no after." Those will be the longest seconds. But then, time is relative. It is meaningless without experience. How can you compare an hour filling sandbags with one spent on stand down?

Few people begin counting off the days at 365. There is no sense in it. Most prefer to avoid looking at calendars for the first few months. Occasionally a casual glance to mark notable milestones (i.e. the first 90 days, one month to R & R. etc.) is in order. But there is really little difference between having 245 days to go and 238.

Getting short is like growing old. It's best to do it gracefully. It can't be rushed or forced, so why try. Time fades fatigues in much the same way it grays temples.

Take the case of one Harvey O. Andrews, Specialist 5, United States Army. Harvey was a 19 year-old short timer from the Midwest. Although only nineteen, like all short timers, he looked older. The twenty-four year old turtles (those replacements who took so long in arriving) afforded him the respect of an elder statesman.

On a second's notice Harvey could conjure up spirits of those gone before but not forgotten. He could sit back and reflect on the good old days . . . way back in September.

In his final days Harvey would sit on an ammo box in front of the splashwall and talk to the turtles. He would patiently answer their questions one by one. He could rap about the pending Monsoon as if it were some phenomenon of nature that occured once in a million years. Harvey, you see, had been through one.

As a single digit midget (he had less than 10 days to go), Harvey was in semi-retirement. He spent most of his time catching rays. He could be counted on to do a few small tasks, but nothing that took very much time or required concentration.

He also showed signs of *senile dimensia*. Gone was the exuberance of his early 60's. He was quiet most of the time, walking around with a freaky grin on his face.

His apathy had an unsettling effect on the turtles. They expected zaniness and crazy antics. Harvey countered with sobriety.

He was still smiling when he slid into the jeep for the short ride to the 8th Aerial Port, where he would embark on his triumphant return to the 90th Replacement Detatchment.

DEROSing, in many respects, in like getting married. You can watch it happen to your friends, ask questions about it, but in the end you will have to experience it yourself before your mind can truly comprehend.

Baker 2, Bravo 4, Braniff International departed Bien Hoa at 10: 51 three days later with one Harvey O. Andrews aboard.

Twelve days later the following letter arrived in Cu Chi.

It was beautiful, a big yellow Braniff bird with good looking stewardesses. We cheered as the turtles sweated their way off the plane, screamed as we got on.

The big plane rumbled down the runway. Faster, faster, almost a sexual experience. TAKE OFF!! Applause.

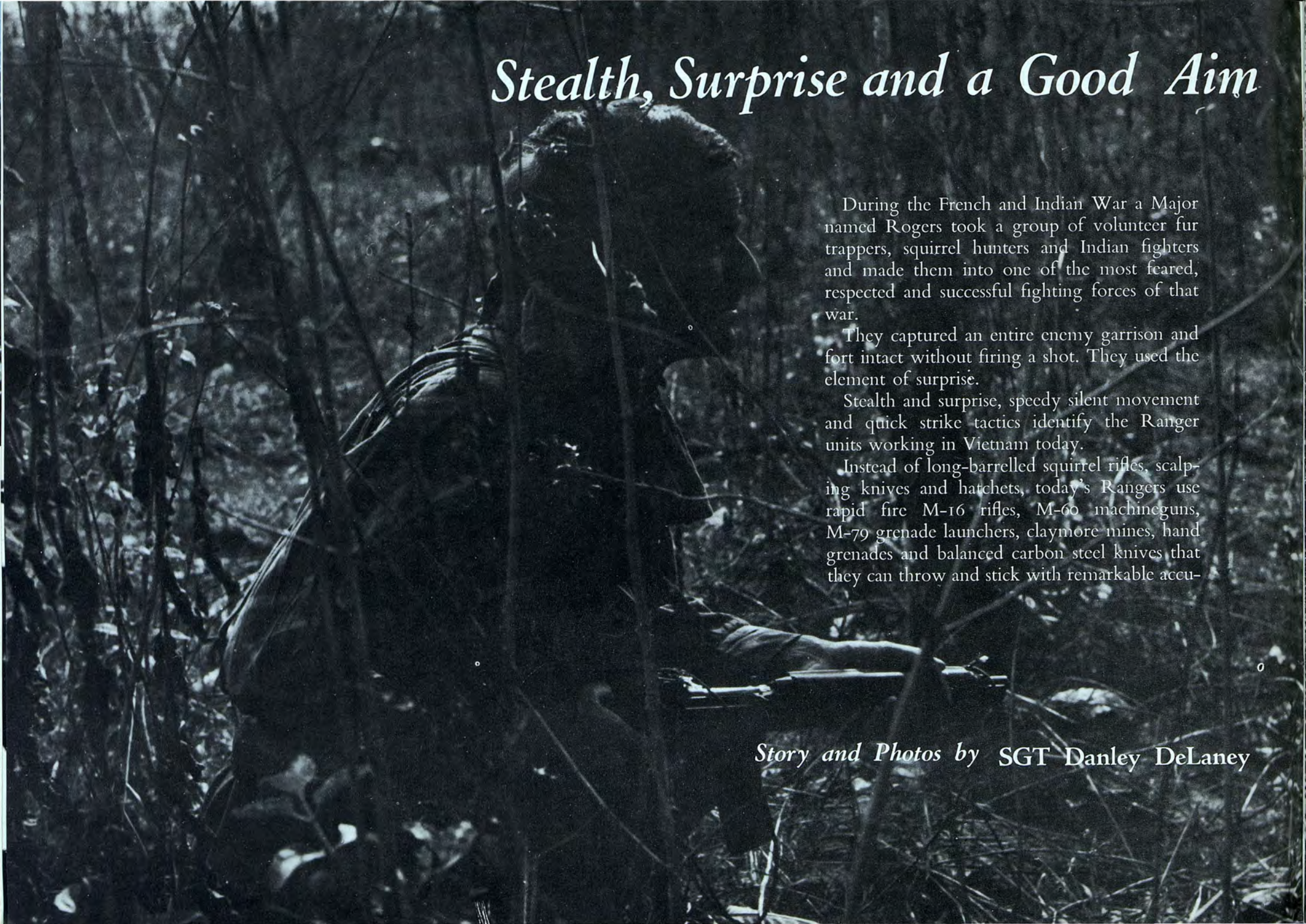
One stop at an Air Force Base in Japan and then eleven hours flying time to Oakland.

The captain came on the squawk box and said, "Gentlemen we are a approaching the California coastline which you can see in the distance, with the sun rising over the Rocky Mountains in the far distance."

TOUCHDOWN!!. Cleared Travis customs in 10 minutes, Oakland in 16 hours. Took a cab with four others to S.F. Airport. I looked around and tried to remember. Vietnam was 10,000 years ago.

Arrive home. Hugs, Kisses, Tears. Beaucoup yak-yak. Beaucoup questions. How do you explain a year?

HARVEY



Stealth, Surprise and a Good Aim

During the French and Indian War a Major named Rogers took a group of volunteer fur trappers, squirrel hunters and Indian fighters and made them into one of the most feared, respected and successful fighting forces of that war.

They captured an entire enemy garrison and fort intact without firing a shot. They used the element of surprise.

Stealth and surprise, speedy silent movement and quick strike tactics identify the Ranger units working in Vietnam today.

Instead of long-barrelled squirrel rifles, scalping knives and hatchets, today's Rangers use rapid fire M-16 rifles, M-60 machineguns, M-79 grenade launchers, claymore mines, hand grenades and balanced carbon steel knives that they can throw and stick with remarkable accu-

Story and Photos by **SGT Danley DeLaney**

racy into targets 15 to 20 feet away.

Instead of moccasins, buckskins, leather shot pouches, corn meal and pemmican, a Ranger today wears camouflaged tropical fatigues, canvas and rubber jungle boots with spike protective steel plates in the soles. He carries freeze dried rations such as beef stew, chicken stew, chili concarne, peaches, pears and fruit cocktail. He carries his ammunition in 100-round belts and steel M-16 magazines. He has insect repellent that works.

Instead of using horses and pack mules, a Ranger is carried 20 miles from his base camp into the jungle at 100 knots aboard a helicopter or up a muddy brown river to an ambush site aboard a Navy patrol boat armed with double .50 caliber machineguns.

The Ranger's equipment has changed. But, so has the equipment of the enemy. It's a different enemy everytime and the fight is on different ground. He still uses logs in his fort, the enemy, but he builds his forts underground covered by jungle.

Indians used to travel to fight on the bloody battlegrounds of Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois and Michigan. They traveled from their homes in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Georgia and Indiana.

The enemy in Vietnam travels too. He moves from dusk till dawn from one base camp to another along probably a thousand miles of trails from North Vietnam down through Laos and Cambodia and in the back door of South Vietnam through the jungle patches that seem to hide him even from the air. He carries his equipment on his back. His bearers store rice and ammunition for him along the way so he can travel light.

The enemy is a skilled fighting man, too, no matter how one looks at him. He is slick. When he believes the odds are in his favor he will charge a position and try to overrun it.

Rangers in Vietnam have the job of going into the jungle in small teams and ambushing, engaging and destroying that enemy where he lives, when he travels, while he eats.

There is always a Ranger team in the field somewhere. While they are out, another team is standing by as a reactionary force in case the team in the field bites off a hunk too large to handle.

Sergeant First Class Michael E. Rohly of Southington, Ohio, platoon sergeant for Company F, 75th Ranger Battalion, which works out of the 25th Division's Tay Ninh base camp, handles the mortar for the reaction team when it goes out. He holds it in gloved hands, the base of it propped on the ground, and gets three or four rounds in the air at a time headed for the enemy force.

It's Tough Going

The Rangers took me along on a mission in the middle of a big patch of jungle somewhere about 10 miles from Tay Ninh base camp. It was Team 12, Company F, 75th Rangers, working for the 25th Infantry Division.

The team leader was Staff Sergeant Lonnie Gentry who is on his third tour of duty in Vietnam. His assistant was Sergeant Charles W. Grimsley of Pampa, Tex. Private First Class Bob Stephens, Tampa, Fla., carried the M-79 grenade launcher, grenades and rounds of ammunition for his grenade launcher.

Everyone carried a claymore mine and an extra 100-round belt of machinegun ammunition. I carried a camera, an M-16, a book by Hemingway called "The Wild Years," grenades and extra magazines of ammunition.

Everyone carried plenty of water in two quart or three quart collapsible plastic containers and plenty of food.

The load and the heat and the thick jungle walking damned near killed me.

Cobra gunships are another part of the reaction force. They beat back enemy skirmishes long enough for a team in trouble to get away.

Utility helicopters swoop down, the team in contact jumps on board fast, the lift ship rises off the ground and they take off, both door gunners firing their machineguns and the Rangers inside pouring out fire too.

"Our primary mission is to engage and destroy the enemy," First Lieutenant Robert L. Palmer, a platoon leader, said. "We plan our missions according to intelligence reports received at headquarters. If a force of the enemy is reported to be in an area we send in a team to work the area over."

Lieutenant Palmer holds a Silver Star awarded to him for gallantry in action against an enemy force.

The day before a mission a team leader does a visual reconnaissance of an area he is going into. An observation helicopter carries him and his assistant team leader over the area. On his map he marks the locations of any trails, bunkers or signs of activity he can see from the air and he picks out a landing zone.

The next day the team is carried into the landing zone. They jump off the ship with weapons at the ready, packs on their backs. They move into the jungle right away, getting out of the clearing. They all move as quietly as possible. Once in the jungle they move slowly, but they check trails for tracks and signs.

The first day in an area they set up an ambush position. There they spend the first night, sitting up with their rifles across their knees, watching in all directions.

In the morning the team picks up its claymores and then begins a day of searching for the enemy in his camping places, rest stop areas or base camps.

In the afternoon they set up another ambush, unless they find something worth-their-while during the day. If so, they set up on what they found and wait it out, ready.

In Vietnam, now, the Rangers are working. Their equipment has changed but their tactics and their skill and their spirit hasn't changed much from the days when their enemy carried a scalping knife and hatchet, and the winning tactic was stealth, surprise and a good aim.

Forum: The Rear Echelon Soldier

The 25th Administration Company is the largest company in the Tropic Lightning Division, more than 600 strong. It is made up, for the most part, of clerical types: "Remington Raiders" or "Cu Chi Warriors" as they are often referred to by the men in the field.

They are fighting a different kind of war in Vietnam—one that has been called "The Paper War." The tools of their trade encompass everything from ball point pens to Univac computers. They wade through a jungle of Army forms with complicated regulations as their only guidelines.

Like the G.I. in the field, they often work long hours. Their job is sometimes interesting, often boring, seldom dangerous.

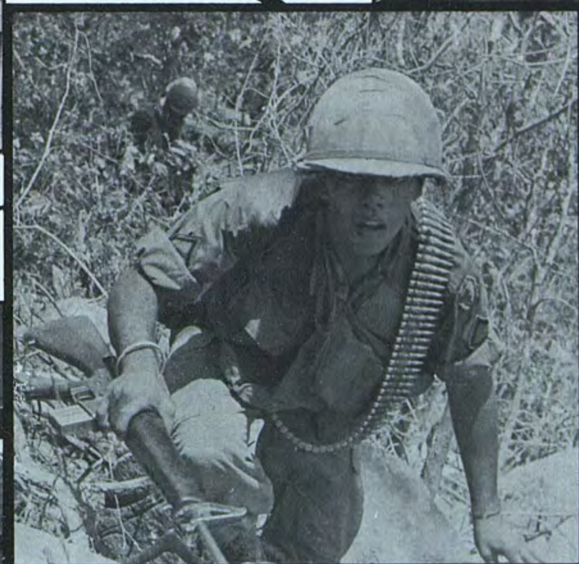
By 25th Infantry Division standards they lead a soft life. Their living conditions are far from palatial, but they do have beds and enjoy regular showers and hot meals. Vietnam is still a hardship tour, even for the rear echelon soldier.

The soldier on line might think about his next paycheck, being promoted to E-5, or an upcoming R&R, but he certainly can't afford to worry about it. He lets his banker, bookkeeper, or travel agent back in Cu Chi handle the details. Without that man in the rear, he could not function.

What kind of a soldier is the rear echelon man? How does he feel about his job? Is he resented by the man in the field? The following interviews offer insight into those questions from four different vantage points.


SJA
SURG
AVN O
ALO
2 BDE
3 BDE
DIVARTY
DISCOM
B/5/2
FSE
ENGR O
IG
94 MAINT
WOMET
1/8 ARTY
25 MED
9 CML DET
5 WEA DET
20 TRANS
40 MED
RED CROSS
CC SUB SEC
86 SIG
25 SBT


ADMIN



MAJOR CHARLES E. STILES, COMMANDING OFFICER, 25TH ADMINISTRATION COMPANY

Major Stiles of Lawton, Okla., commands the largest company in the Tropic Lightning Division. Made up mostly of clerical types, the 25th Admin Company is comprised of more than 600 soldiers.

THUNDER: Major Stiles, how important is the rear echelon soldier?

STILES: He is playing an important role in the Army. For instance, the soldier in the field is the person everyone looks at. "What type of a job is he doing?" they ask. But, without the rear echelon soldier, that man in the field could not function.

THUNDER: Do you think the soldier on the front lines realizes this or appreciates it?

STILES: I don't think that this is the foremost thing on his mind at all. He expects this as an American fighting man, and he deserves it. Unquestionably, he expects to be supported and someone has to do it.

THUNDER: What kind of a soldier is the rear echelon man?

STILES: Basically he is a good soldier. But, in evaluating him, we must look at his mission. If his mission is to pay people, maintain records, give legal assistance, or provide special services activities we must look at his abilities and his desire to get the job done.

It is difficult to evaluate him in the traditional sense of the word. But, for instance, I have had nothing but praise for the 25th Administation Company's performance on the bunker line.

THUNDER: Do you think the rear echelon soldier is more prone to complain about his living conditions and the minor discomforts that go along with any hardship tour?

STILES: I think every soldier is prone to complain. But, the rear echelon soldier may complain a little more. His aspirations are higher in terms of, lets say, the quality of the food, recreational facilities, and the likes. This is due to the static situation, or certainly less tactical situation, that resides here at base camp. I don't think he expects any special treatment. I think what he expects is the things he sees around him that are within his means to have. I think the same holds true in the field. It is the Army's responsibility to provide its men with as many comforts and conveniences as possible. We want to give the soldiers the best that we can within our capabilities. It is only natural that the men in the rear expect more.

THUNDER: Major Stiles, does this command present any special problems?

STILES: No, I don't think so. If there is anything special about it, I would say that you have to be more diplomatic. You have to get around more and keep in touch.

Sergeant Poulis, a native of Silver Spring, Md., has spent fourteen years in the Army. He is the liason NCO between the machine branch (computer operation) and the military pay operation. Sergeant Poulis has 93 rear echelon soldiers working for him.

THUNDER: Sergeant Poulis, what is your mission here in Finance?

POULIS: Our mission is to pay the 25th Infantry Division and all units attached for support.

THUNDER: What type of a day do you work? How many hours?

POULIS: We come to work at 7: 30 in the morning and work until six in the evening. Occasionally, as payday approaches, it is necessary to work evenings, but this isn't a regular occurrence. Our Mech pay division works a split or double shift: one day crew, one night crew.

THUNDER: What is it like to work in Finance? How demanding a job is it?

POULIS: Physically, none. No physical demands at all. Mentally? It is very tedious work. The people sit at their desks all day long, taking pay complaints and working on pay problems. There is very little variety in the work they are doing. Their physical movement is restricted, they have very little chance to move around or get out of the office. I would say it is very tedious type work.

THUNDER: Sergeant Poulis, have you ever been in the field?

POULIS: No. I was in the infantry when I first came into the Army, but I didn't stay there long.

THUNDER: What kind of outlook do your men have towards their job? Is there a feeling that you are really here to help the men in the field?

POULIS: I think my clerks bend over backwards to help the grunt in the field. We try to do everything possible to make sure their pay is straight, that they get paid on time, and that all their allotments are taken care of.

THUNDER: Do you think the people in the field realize what is involved in making sure they get that paycheck each month?

POULIS: I think the ones that come into our office realize it. There are a lot of men that come into our office either to make pay complaints or to ask questions about their pay. Gradually they see the amount of paperwork involved. The clerks here really put out an effort to help them. They make a concerted effort to show each man exactly how we figure his pay check. We make it a point to answer all his questions. We want him to be perfectly satisfied.

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS NICHOLAS J. POULIS, NCOIC DIVISION FINANCE







SP5 GLEN R. GRABOWSKI, 25TH ADMINISTRATION COMPANY, FINANCE CLERK

Specialist Grabowski has seen both sides of the war in Vietnam. He was on line with the 1st of the 27th Wolfhounds, before finding himself a job off line.

THUNDER: Glen, how did you go about getting a job off line?

GRABOWSKI: I spoke to a Lieutenant Colonel one day while I was in the rear. I had a few interviews with the people in Finance and I was just lucky enough to land a job.

THUNDER: Were you glad to get off line?

GRABOWSKI: That is quite an understatement.

THUNDER: What kind of work do you do here in finance?

GRABOWSKI: I spend most of my time putting together payrolls and making sure the money funded, is right.

THUNDER: What kind of a job is it? Is it demanding?

GRABOWSKI: It takes a lot of time and energy, yes.

THUNDER: How would you compare it with being on line?

GRABOWSKI: I don't think there really is a comparison. Here you are relatively secure, out there there is no security whatsoever. The only security you have is with yourself and your friends.

THUNDER: The people working in Finance have very important jobs. Do you think the average GI realizes the effort it takes to get him that monthly paycheck?

GRABOWSKI: I know when I was in the field I didn't think about it. Oh sure, I realized that there were people in the rear. I realized that they were doing important jobs. But when you are in the field you just have too many other things on your mind. I had my job, they had theirs.

THUNDER: When you were on line did you find any resentment towards the rear echelon soldier?

GRABOWSKI: Not in most cases. Maybe on a stand down you might jokingly chide the guys in 25th Admin company or something like that. But really there isn't much resentment. Now that the shoe is on the other foot I take some of the kidding myself. But when you sit down and talk with the guys out in the boonies, especially the friends you've had out there, they say you're lucky. I admire you. I'd like to trade places with you.

Private First Class DuWayne Banks, Cannon Falls, Minn., operates a caliber .50 machinegun on an armored personnel carrier for the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 22nd Infantry. He has been in Vietnam since December.

THUNDER: What is your job in the field?

BANKS: I'm 11 bravo. (Light weapons infantryman).

THUNDER: How long have you been on line?

BANKS: I've been out in the boonies for about four months now.

THUNDER: Would you prefer a job back in the rear?

BANKS: I don't know. It is pretty safe back there. Sure, I guess I'd like to be there, but there are a few drawbacks.

THUNDER: What exactly do you mean by drawbacks?

BANKS: Well, I mean drawbacks for me. I don't like clerk's work. Besides, it is a hassle back there. Those cats have to pull details and make formations, that kind of stuff. Out here at least everyone leaves you pretty much alone.

THUNDER: Have you ever tried to get a job off line?

BANKS: No.

THUNDER: Do you think you will ever try?

BANKS: I don't think so. Maybe I'll give it a try when I get short. I suppose it would be nice then.

THUNDER: A significant number of line soldiers, and replacements with infantry training, are successful in finding off line jobs. Have you seen any resentment towards these men.?

BANKS: Really, I don't have anything to say about that. Personally, I feel if they are qualified for an off-line job I just don't see any reason why they shouldn't have it.

I would rather have qualified people back there than a bunch of people who don't know what they are doing.

THUNDER: Do you think that the people in the rear are doing a good job.?

BANKS: They're doing all right by me. I haven't got any complaints. I will say one thing about the man back there in the rear, I don't think he really realizes how good he has it.

Now the guy who has seen both places, he appreciates it. But the guy who spends all his time in base camp just can't understand what it is like out here. He might complain a lot about bugs, cold showers, and the food. But he doesn't realize how lucky he is. This is where your resentment comes in. The man out in the field hears this guy complaining about all sorts of unimportant stuff. I just think that the man on line feels that the Cu Chi Warriors don't appreciate what they have got.

PFC DUWAYNE BANKS, 2ND BATTALION, 22ND INFANTRY, MACHINEGUNNER

The 49th Regiment

Photos by SP4 Greg Stanmar

They were ready. Seconds after reaching the landing zone, the soldiers entrenched themselves behind old rice paddy dikes and the helicopters they had come in were safely airborne again.

Only minutes passed before they made contact with the enemy and successfully swept the area clean of the enemy. Aggressiveness saved both the company and the platoon.

It is the same aggressiveness that Americans use as the first adjective to describe the 49th ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) Regiment.

"Real aggressive," said Captain William Byrd from Chatanooga, Tenn., who was a platoon leader last year with the U.S. 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry, and did a lot of work with the ARVN's. "They constantly improve. The main thing is that their leaders are aggressive. When this happens, naturally it shows in the men."

Hinman

He recalled the time an ARVN staff sergeant, a platoon leader, was informed of a large rocket somewhere in San Ho One. By probing 50,000 square meters with bamboo poles, the rocket was found. It was a big effort for a small group of men, but one that saved lives.

Later that same day an American in Byrd's platoon was injured.

"We couldn't get him to a chopper in the heavy vegetation," said Byrd. "But, the ARVN sergeant had his men carry the GI to a clearing some distance away. They were so quick about it that little time was lost in getting the man dusted off."

The 49th Regiment of the 25th ARVN Division is a good example of the ARVN's work in Tropic Lightning's area of operations.

In seven months of warfare, from October through March, the regiment put 716 enemy out of action (385 killed, 176 captured and 155 ralliers). The regiment's friendly casualty figure was 40 killed.

The number of friendly injuries was not released. But even so, the regiment had an 18-to-1 kill ratio.

In addition, 297 weapons were captured from the enemy including 33 crew-served pieces. The ARVN's lost only two light weapons.

Colonel Nguyen Van Chuyen, regimental commander of the 49th, attributed the success of those seven months to increased air mobility. "We have air mobility almost every day," he stated. "This helps us a great deal."

The helicopters and pilots are supplied by the U.S. 116th Assualt Helicopter Company.

"They're unbelievably quick in getting off the craft," remarked Captain Gary T. Arnold of Wichita Falls, Tex., a pilot.

Another pilot recalled an incident of an ARVN dismounting with speed in mind. The soldier figured he could get off the craft faster if he were to stand on the landing skid as they were coming into the landing zone.

"We were still 100 feet up when he took up his position," said the pilot. "I glanced out the window, and there was this ARVN staring at me from the other side."

The one day spent flying with the 116th on assault missions with the ARVN, this reporter saw two incidents which were described by the pilots as bad luck.

One incident occurred because of a private's anxiousness to get off the helicopter. He did so thirty feet above the ground. The trail ship had to evacuate him to Cu Chi's 12th Evacuation Hospital.

Another soldier hesitated to get off the chopper when it hovered over a bomb crater. As the chopper continued to rise, he chose a jump-off point that was a longer drop than into the crater. Fortunately, the ARVN knew how to land and was unhurt.

A third incident of the day proved that the 49th Regiment had learned its lessons on air assualt well.

Several gunships had taken fire in a heavily forested portion of the HoBo Woods. It was the ARVN's job to go in and clean out the enemy.

Landing in an area where the NVA wait would chill the bones of the most experienced GI s. No trace of anxiety could be found in the faces of those Vietnamese.

"The men of the two countries get along well," Byrd said. "Often they trade rice and C-rations, giving a variety in the bland diet of both."

"They are doing a great job," he continued. "If they are given logistic support they can maintain the level of proficiency that we have now—without us."

Lieutenant Jerry Shields, a platoon leader with the American 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, did a lot of work with ARVN units at patrol bases near the Cambodian border last winter.

"We take a little time to get each others point of view," he said. "Once we know how the other works, things go real well. I feel good working with them because they know an area and they are good at night. Give an ARVN

a starlight scope and he's glued to it all night."

Shields said one day he heard that the ARVN platoon leader he would work with that night understood absolutely no English. But, when Shields got together with his counterpart to discuss the night's operation, he found he and the ARVN spoke the same language.

Pointing to his map, Shields indicated that the operation called for a platoon of GIs and the ARVN platoon leader along with ten men. They would move out during late afternoon to an ambush site where Shields, with half of his men and half of the ARVN platoon, would set up a night position.

The ARVN lieutenant would circle back to the camp with the rest of the men before darkness.

The Vietnamese quickly sketched the route Shields had shown him on his map and indicated with his fingers and gestures that he could supply only seven men with claymore mines. That was all he had.

Shields came up with some extra claymores and the two elements moved out.

"One thing about the ARVN," Shields said. "They're always ready to go. Five minutes before an operation it looks like they're still messing around with something else. But, as soon as the GIs are saddled up, there they are —all set."

"They can read maps very well," he said. "Out here it is difficult because it's so wet. One night we were right in the middle of nothing but water. I was still pretty sure we had reached the right spot, but didn't say so. I asked the ARVN patrol leader where he thought we were."

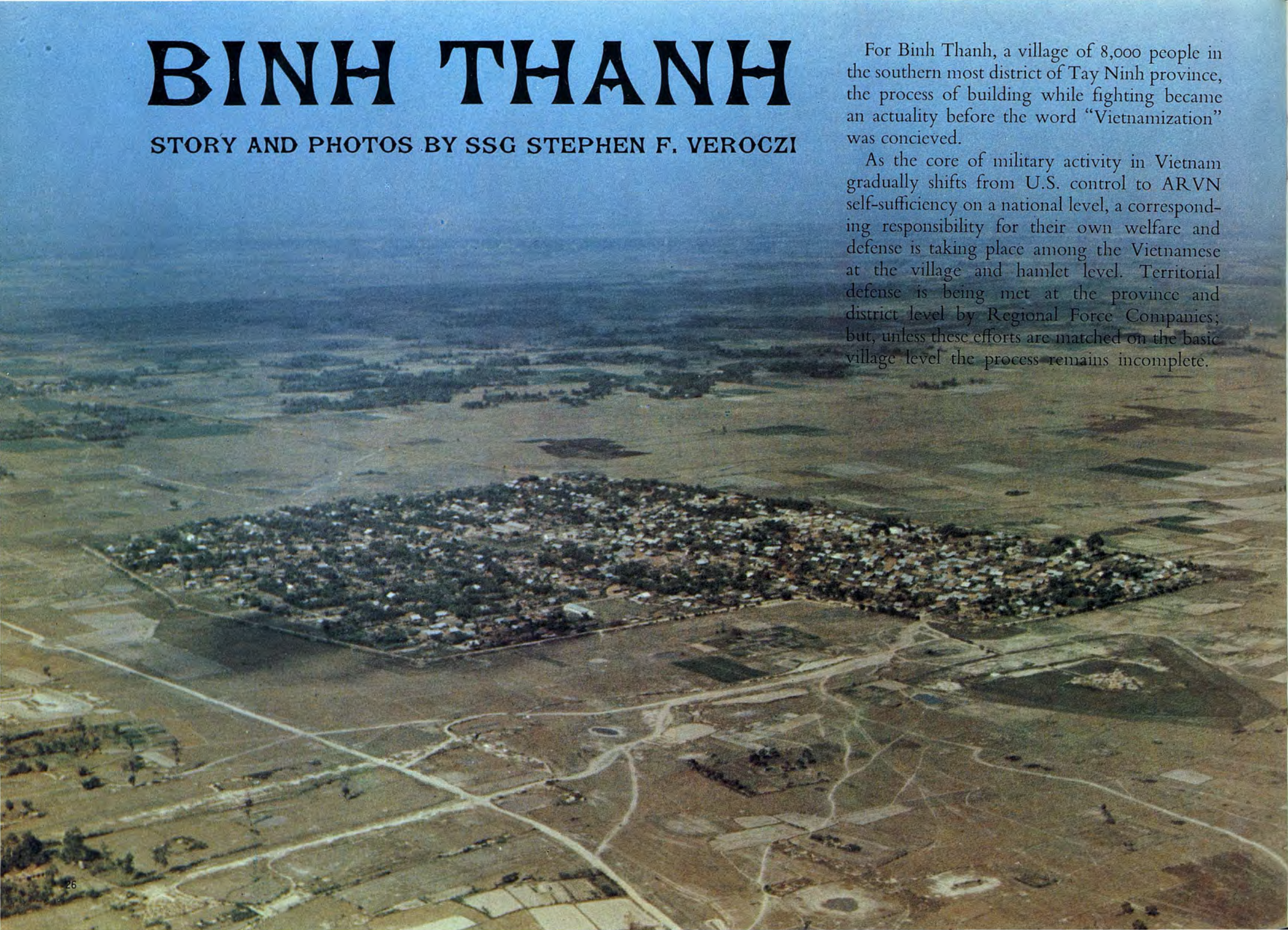
"He just walked away. I thought he didn't hear me. Then (after checking out the area) he came back and showed me on the map. It was the same place I had picked. It turned out we were both off on the north-south location; but, on the east-west, the important one, we were right on the money."

BINH THANH

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SSG STEPHEN F. VEROCZI

For Binh Thanh, a village of 8,000 people in the southern most district of Tay Ninh province, the process of building while fighting became an actuality before the word "Vietnamization" was concieved.

As the core of military activity in Vietnam gradually shifts from U.S. control to ARVN self-sufficiency on a national level, a corresponding responsibility for their own welfare and defense is taking place among the Vietnamese at the village and hamlet level. Territorial defense is being met at the province and district level by Regional Force Companies; but, unless these efforts are matched on the basic village level the process remains incomplete.



Situated two miles east of the communist sanctuary in the Angel's Wing, a heavily utilized area of the Cambodian border, the village of Binh Thanh is strongly anti-communist. Its citizens have paid the price of that conviction. Receiving neither sympathy nor cooperation from the villagers, a VC battalion moved into the village, in January 1969. The VC anticipated U.S. retaliation. Destruction by American Forces was intended to sway the sympathies of Binh Thanh and result in a psychological victory for the VC.

The strategy reversed itself when American Forces surrounded the village on three sides—and waited. The VC were forced to leave and as they did they destroyed the village offices, classrooms and houses reinforcing an anti-communist attitude among the villagers and giving the psychological victory to the government.

Despite the VC occupation and its proximity to the border, the condensed village boundaries reflect a sense of unity and security. Within Binh Thanh's rectangular perimeter an orderly maze of tin, thatched and tile roofed houses surround the focal point of village activity—the market place, the newly constructed Village Office and the Cao Dai Temple.

The houses are arranged like squares on a checkerboard or a low-cost housing project outside New York City. Everything touches everything else. Similarly the family structure is very close—two or three generations of the same family might live in the same home or in adjoining homes. And, what would be considered a lack of privacy to Americans, is considered an open door to the community to the villagers.

The unity of the community is further

strengthened by the Cao Dai religious influence. A minor See of the Holy See in Tay Ninh City stands at the edge of the center of the village. Although the entrance portico is undergoing reconstruction for damage caused by intermittent mortaring, the undisturbed internal serenity remains the center of worship for Binh Thanh, a village 97 percent Cao Daist.

Out of the religious unity and family structure arises a deep concern for the welfare of the community and community administration.

The Village People's Council, the governing body of Binh Thanh, is elected. There are no formal campaigns, platforms or political parties. When asked by the MACV civilian advisor which political party he belonged to, one village elder looked bewildered by the meaning of the word party in a political context. "There is no party here," he answered, meaning festivity. Finally, understanding that the word implied the goals of the candidates, the man concentrated

for several moments, then said he was of the "peace party."

The welfare of the village is the only issue of the election and the confidence of the people is expressed in the election of the council members —popular vote determining the chairman of the 10 man council. The Village People's Council, however, is not the administrative branch of the community. It is the representative or the voice of the people. Problems of the community are expressed directly to the council members who in turn decide how and when action will be taken.

Chairman Giang Van Ut is the oldest member of the People's Council. He received the greatest number of votes in the election. His gaunt, deeply creased face and ancient, white chin-beard express an attitude of wisdom and dignity.

Giang was a farmer until his election in March, and he approaches community affairs with the experience and knowledge of the villagers way of life. He knows irrigation pumps will increase crop yields, that children must be provided with better facilities of education, and that conveniences and luxuries will become necessities as the standard of living rises. For 50 years, Giang has lived the progress of his community. Now, as Council Chairman, he is the voice of the people.

Chairman Ut passes the decisions of the Council to the Village Chief, Vo Thanh Cong for administration. At the first meeting of the Peoples Council the members vote to determine which one of them, excluding the chairman, will be the Village Chief.

Cong is one of the younger members of the council. He is a farmer, owns a television set and is deliberately aware of National affairs. The year before Cong served as the Commissioner of Agriculture for the village. As Village Chief, chosen for his ability to get things done, he will have to integrate the directives of the district and the needs of the village.

The Village Administrative Committee is the working branch of the community government. As the head of the committee, the Village Chief chooses his own administrators. Although they are directly responsible to him the commissioners carry out the business of the People's Council. They initiate and direct the projects of the village.

The success of the Administrative Committee reverts back to the involvement of the people. The security of the village itself is an indication of the participation and respect the people have for their government. If the people believe in their own village administration and if the administrators work for the village, they will defend it against the enemy.

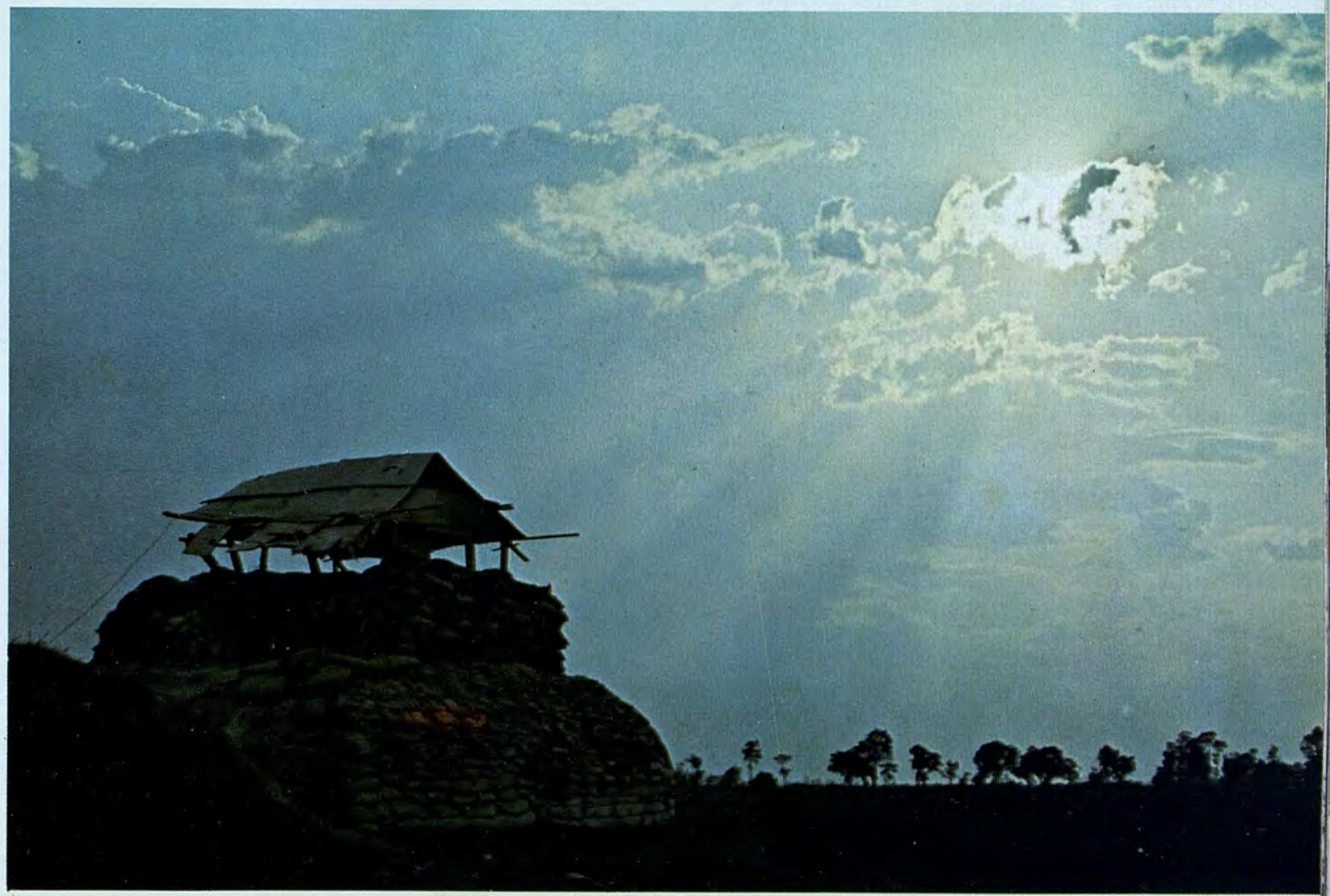
In Binh Thanh village defense is established at two levels: the Popular Force Platoon (PF) and the People's Self Defense Force (PSDF).

The Popular Forces operate out of a triangular compound outside the perimeter of the village. The PF's, who live in Binh Thanh, are a village military force. Much like America's National Guard, they work with units of the U.S. 25th Division to secure the surrounding farm land and rice paddies. PF's, in groups of three or four, accompany the American units on day operations, check point security and ambush patrols to upgrade their military skill.

The People's Self Defense Force, on the other hand, is a community effort of defense. Organized much like an auxiliary police force, the PSDF shares the responsibility of the PF's for the internal defense of the village. Under the supervision of Tinh Van Minh, a former ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) captain who lives in Binh Thanh, the villagers are provided with weapons and instructed in the basic procedures of self defense.

The villagers are taught to disassemble, clean and accurately fire the .30 caliber carbines they are issued. Small bunker compounds were built by the PF's at the corners of the village perimeter, and the PSDF established a bunker guard to insure night security.

Most important is the attitude of the villagers concerning self-defense. When the villagers prepare for guard and equip themselves with a weapon they proudly refer to themselves as ARVNs and Tinh Van Minh as Dai Uy (Captain). However innacurate the name, the meaning implies an identification with National defense and the Government of Vietnam.



A Case for Black Magic—

Story by

SP5 Edmund Drinkard

An alchemist in Long Van hamlet?

There is a shop here that has all the trappings of black magic. But, instead of bubbling cauldrons, shelves of frog tongues and lizard eggs, there is an improvised smelting furnace, a lathe, craftsman's tools and vials of polishing liquid.

They are the tools of Nguyen Van Loi, master craftsman, and his family.

They have mastered the distinguished art of taking artillery casings and transforming the pitted hulks into gleaming vases, bowls, candlesticks and a variety of ornate brass works.

In his almost obscure workshop and home he diligently makes brassware which dazzles the eyes of visitors, many of whom soon become satisfied customers.

Nguyen's brass works become even more interesting when one realizes the labor which Nguyen and his family put into each piece of brass to produce a finished work of art.

Nguyen first uses a pile of red hot coals to soften and clean the shell casings. He does this by rotating the casing with a pair of tongs until the dark rust is burned from the brass.

Nguyen's wife, also skilled in this unusual art, then beats the top edge of the casing onto a tapered anvil. This bends out the top of the casing, enabling her to pound the edge into various patterns. The pounding is done with a tiny steel hammer to produce an intricate design.

The bottom of the casing is re-heated and beaten with a hammer just above its base, forming a delicately curved stem for the brassware.

The finishing touch is added by Nguyen who polishes the brassware to a high gloss finish. What was once a crude, cold piece of artillery ammunition is now a finely crafted treasure.

Nguyen proudly displays his wares in handmade cases making his humble dwelling a treasure chest of beauty.

Nguyen's artistry and workmanship are second to none in their authenticity and simplicity of form and design. Like the legendary alchemist, he is able to transform castaway metal into a valued treasure.

Is Alchemy a dead science? Nguyen Van Loi doesn't seem to think so.

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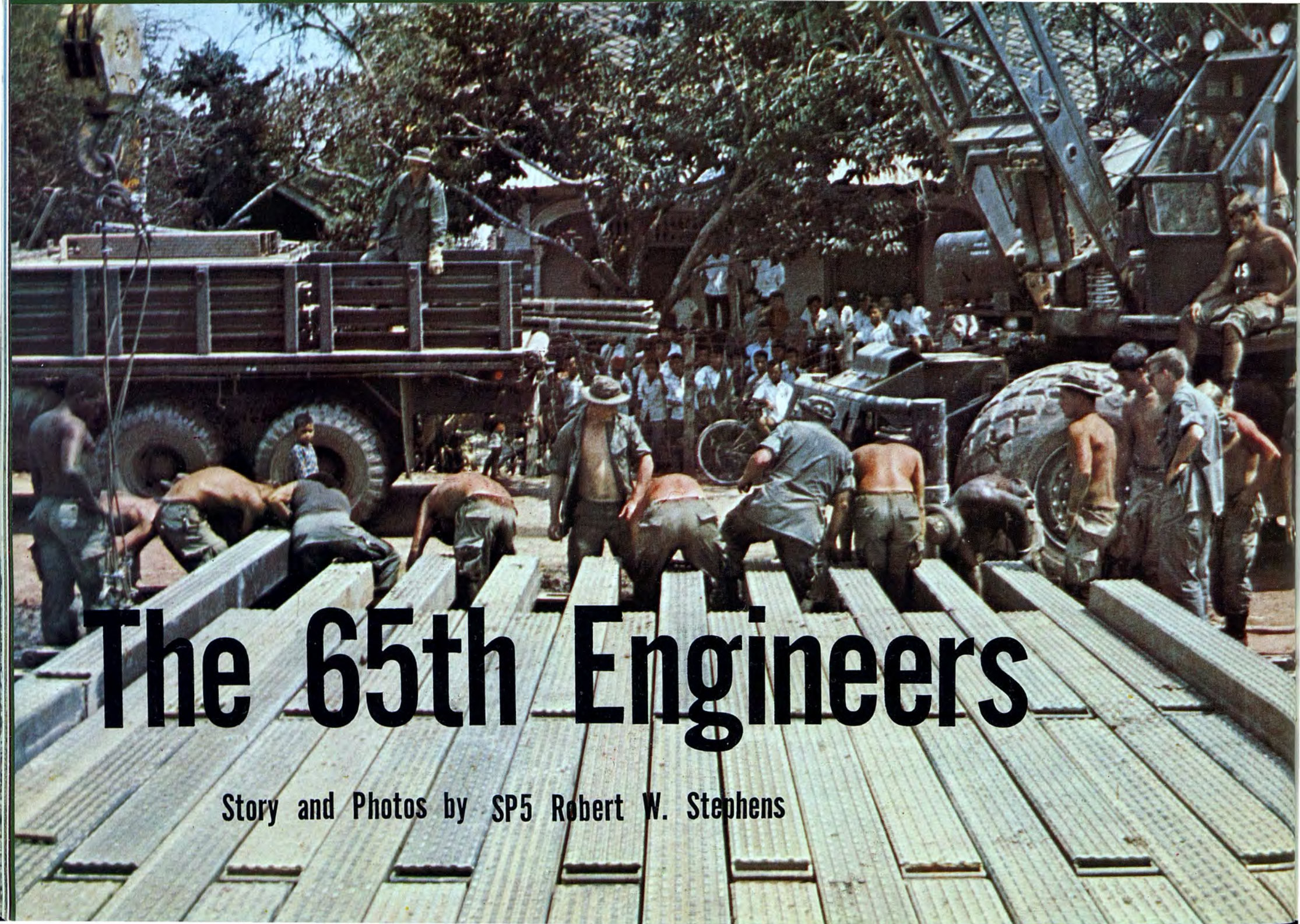


The 65th Engineers

Story and Photos by SP5 Robert W. Stephens

"I spend a lot of time crawling into bunkers and tunnels in order to blow them," says Specialist 4 Ed Oechsner of St. Louis. "I blow up booby traps, too, whenever the company finds them. The infantrymen treat me just like one of their own and I even come in for stand down with them."

Ed Oechsner is a combat engineer. He's assigned to the 65th Engineer Battalion, 25th Infantry Division. But, he spends his time with an infantry rifle company working as a demolition specialist. It's his job to destroy the enemy booby traps, mines and bunkers that the riflemen encounter during their operations. It takes courage, skill and ingenuity.

Staff Sergeant Clyde Kirby of Patterson, N.J., is a demolitions man, too. "Whenever I go into an enemy bunker and find that they've left behind some of their RPG (rocket propelled grenade) or mortar rounds instead of using my own explosives I just rig a blasting charge to their stuff and blow it up along with the position," he said.

The 65th has a motto to live up to—"First In, Last Out." When the division's first fighting troops came to Vietnam, landing at Vung Tau in January 1966, elements of the "Whiskey-Fifth" as the engineer battalion is called, were waiting for them. They had been ashore for nearly five months. The link-up was a renewal of a partnership that began at Pearl Harbor in 1941 when the infantrymen and the engineers became the first American soldiers to engage the enemy in the Pacific war.

They stayed together. When the 65th wasn't building roads, bridges or drainage systems it was fighting alongside the 25th. The

engineer battalion earned campaign streamers for the Central Pacific, Guadalcanal, Northern Solomans and Luzon capaigns.

After the war the battalion was instrumental in rebuilding in Japan. In Korea it earned 10 more campaign streamers with the 25th.

After the link-up at Vung Tau the "Whiskey-Fifth" fought with the Tropic Lightning up the long road to Cu Chi where both are now headquartered. There the engineers began to build again.

The site where the huge base camp now stands was nothing more than a small clearing around what was once an enemy stronghold. "We lived in pup tents and Charlie used to pop out of holes in the middle of the camp and toss hand grenades at us," an oldtimer said. Despite the hazards, by the end of a year the camp had become one of the U.S. forces best fortified positions. Within the base camp the engineers built 15 miles of roads, a 1,200 foot long air strip, 85 helipads and three miles of culverts. They set up 350 bunkers, 64 prefabricated metal buildings and more than 2,000 frame buildings with metal or canvas roofs.

Besides that, they carried on daily operations in support of the troops in the field which continue today.

Perhaps the most routine task the engineers have been doing since the division arrived is mine sweeps. The daily operations are also about the most important job they do.

"Mine sweeps are our major operation," says Captain Charles Ahnell of Alexandria, Va., the battalion intelligence officer. "Every morning we have sweep teams covering all utilized roads in the division's area of operations to make sure Charlie hasn't mined or booby trapped them."

The teams include a non-commissioned officer in charge, sweepers and two probers. While the NCO supervises, the sweepers walk down either side of a road moving mine detectors back and forth.

"The mine detectors work off an electromagnet," explained Specialist 4 David Bright of Quincey, Mass. "Each sweeper wears a set of ear phones connected to the magnet. When it passes over something metallic the buzz tone from the ear phones becomes louder and we know somethings's there."

"Once we get a reading the probers carefully sweep the dirt away and if it's a mine they blow it in place," said Bright.

Land clearing projects are another major function of the battalion. "Whiskey-Fifth" bulldozers, with either Rome plow attachments that can cut through full grown trees or heavy chains stretched between them, move through enemy areas clearing away cover. As they go they detonate booby traps and destroy enemy bunkers and tunnels.

Specialist 5 Wallace Martin of Southington, Conn., operates a dozer equipped with a chain.

"The chain is about 55 yards long and has small spikes to catch trip wires," he said. "It's a pretty dangerous job because the chain will sometimes detonate a booby trap right next to the dozer. We wear our helmets and armored vests and that cuts down on a lot of the casualties."

Dozer operators have been credited with destroying as many as 20 booby traps in a single day's work. Wallace says a dozer operator also must watch out for natural enemies. "I've got a couple of friends who've turned over bees' nests with their dozers. They probably made the hastiest retreats in military history," he chuckled.

Speed is important to the engineers. Last February a communist demolition squad destroyed the bridge that crosses the Vam Co Dong at Go Dau Ha. The area west of the river was cut off from all overland supplies. Within 24 hours the "Whiskey-Fifth" had constructed and was operating a pontoon ferry bringing traffic back to normal.

"We try to help the infantry in every way possible," Captain Ahnell said. "Recently we introduced a new piece of equipment called the Combat Engineer Vehicle. It's a large tank with a blade in the front and a 165 mm demolition gun."

"With it we can easily destroy bunkers or build berm lines for night laager positions. It even has a winch for rescuing heavy equipment that gets stuck in the mud," he said.

"It's great to have them around," one infantry company commander said. "They can do just about anything for you. They pull my tracks out of the mud and they blow the mines and the traps my men find. If they weren't along we'd get pretty bogged down because we don't have the equipment or the knowhow to do a lot of those things."

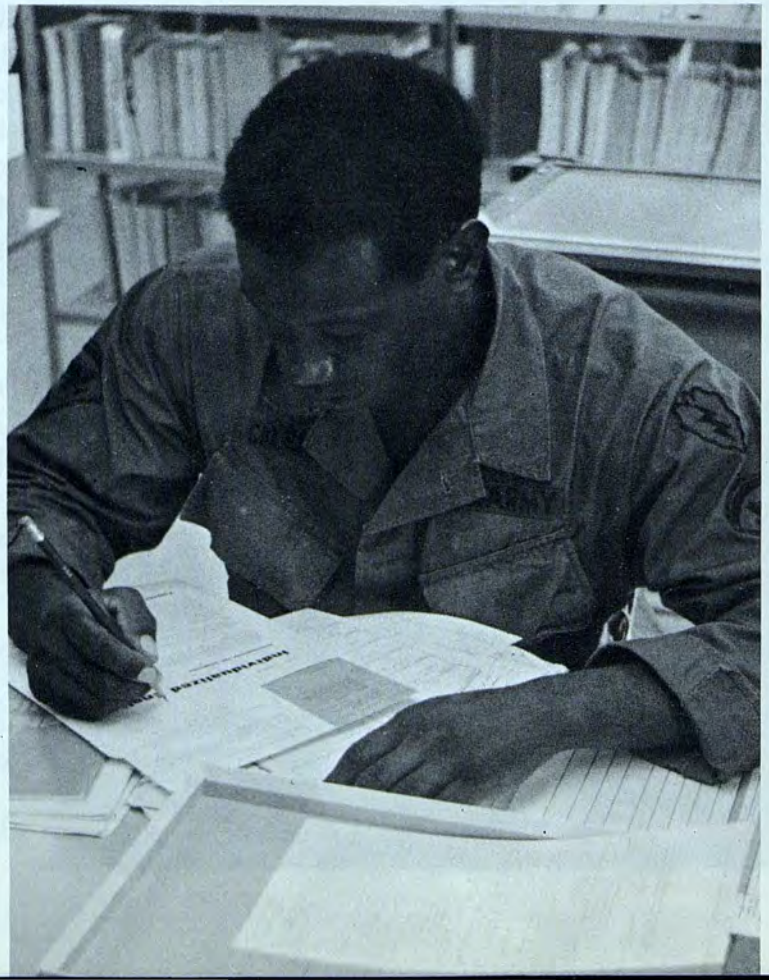
A rifle platoon went looking for an enemy tunnel complex during a daytime reconnaissance recently. "We see a lot just like these" a squad leader said. "No one's ever in them. We threw smoke into the opening and our scout yelled some stuff in there and no one answered so the engineer came up with his demo's."

"There were two V.C. in there," the engineer said later. "I got out fast."

The Kit Carson Scout talked the enemy inside the tunnel into surrendering. Then the engineer went back in with his explosives.

"I was lucky that first time," he said. "But, you know the Whiskey-Fifth, first in and last out."

"The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life."



Key to the Future

By SP5 Edmund Drinkard

The Greek philosopher, Plato, once said, "The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life."

Today this wise saying still holds true. The U.S. Armed Forces Institute (USAFI) is making an education possible and increasing a man's chances for a better future.

The Tropic Lightning Division has one of the most progressive Education Centers in Vietnam. A wide variety of educational programs ranging from elementary reading to college level extension courses are offered at the Center. The Center employs three fulltime and 18 part-time instructors, all of whom hold college degrees and are qualified in their areas of study.

Education centers within the division are located at Cu Chi and Tay Ninh. The Cu Chi Center also operates a mobile center which administers field testing to GI s in areas as remote as the peak of Nui Ba Den.

The Center conducts testing in several areas of study. College entrance examinations are given for GI s who intend to start college upon completion of their military obligation. General Educational Development (GED) testing for the equivalent of a high school diploma is also conducted daily at the Education Center.

For persons who are planning a career in the Army, extension courses in various military occupation categories are offered to students who wish to either change their occupations in the Army or become more skilled in the ones at which they are working.

In addition to the standard GED testing, the USAFI Corps GED program, designed to prepare the student for the GED test, was initiated. The program initially tests students to determine the areas of study in which they are weak. Students are then strengthened in these study areas and are finally given a second GED test. It is a program of planned aid designed specially for the individual.

Each military post develops its own program. At Cu Chi persons are tested in three areas: English grammar, mathematics, and reading. After grading the tests a person's weakest areas may be determined. Study emphasis is placed on these areas.

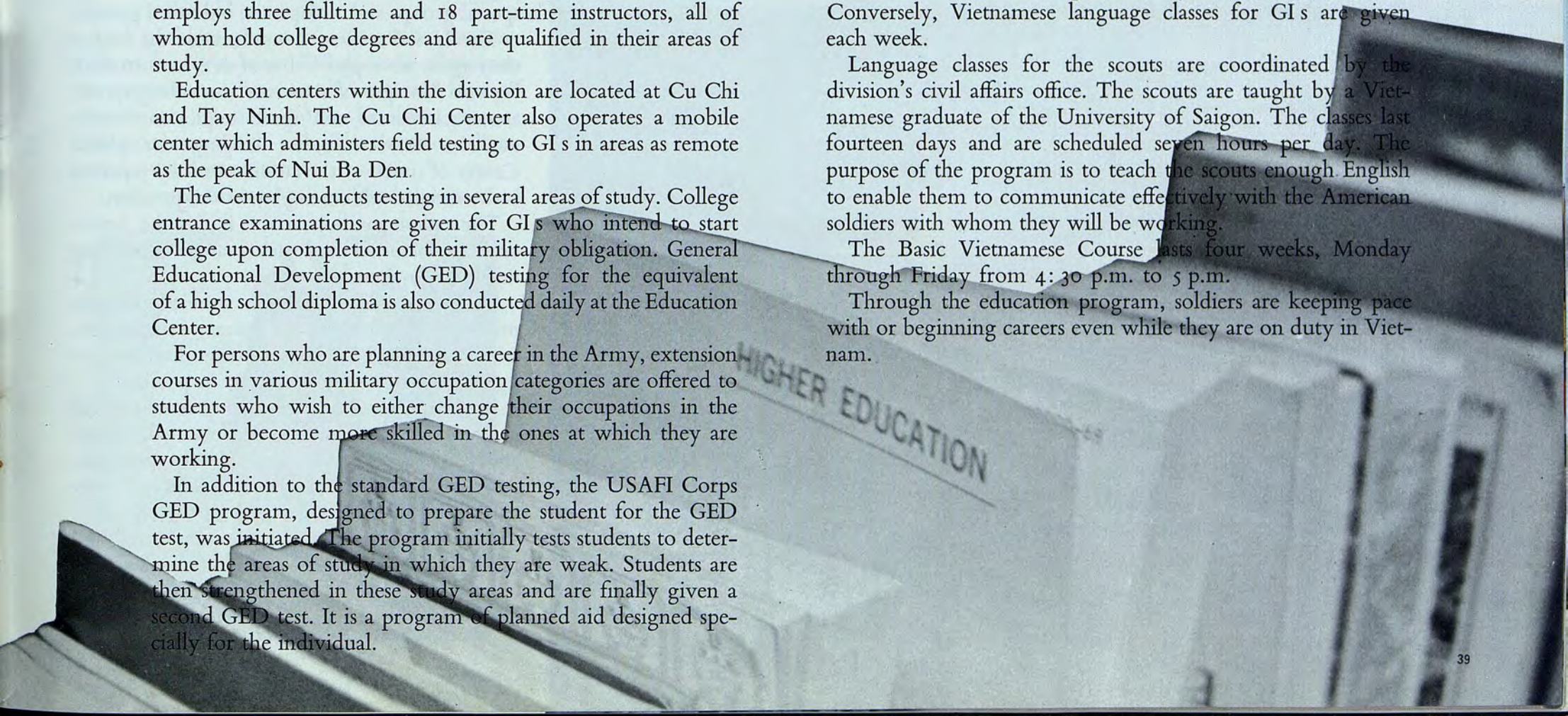
Regular college courses are taught through the University of Maryland, Far East Division. The courses are fully accredited and count toward a college degree.

Language classes in English for Vietnamese scouts working with U.S. units are also provided by the Education Center. Conversely, Vietnamese language classes for GI s are given each week.

Language classes for the scouts are coordinated by the division's civil affairs office. The scouts are taught by a Vietnamese graduate of the University of Saigon. The classes last fourteen days and are scheduled seven hours per day. The purpose of the program is to teach the scouts enough English to enable them to communicate effectively with the American soldiers with whom they will be working.

The Basic Vietnamese Course lasts four weeks, Monday through Friday from 4:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Through the education program, soldiers are keeping pace with or beginning careers even while they are on duty in Vietnam.



Expo 70

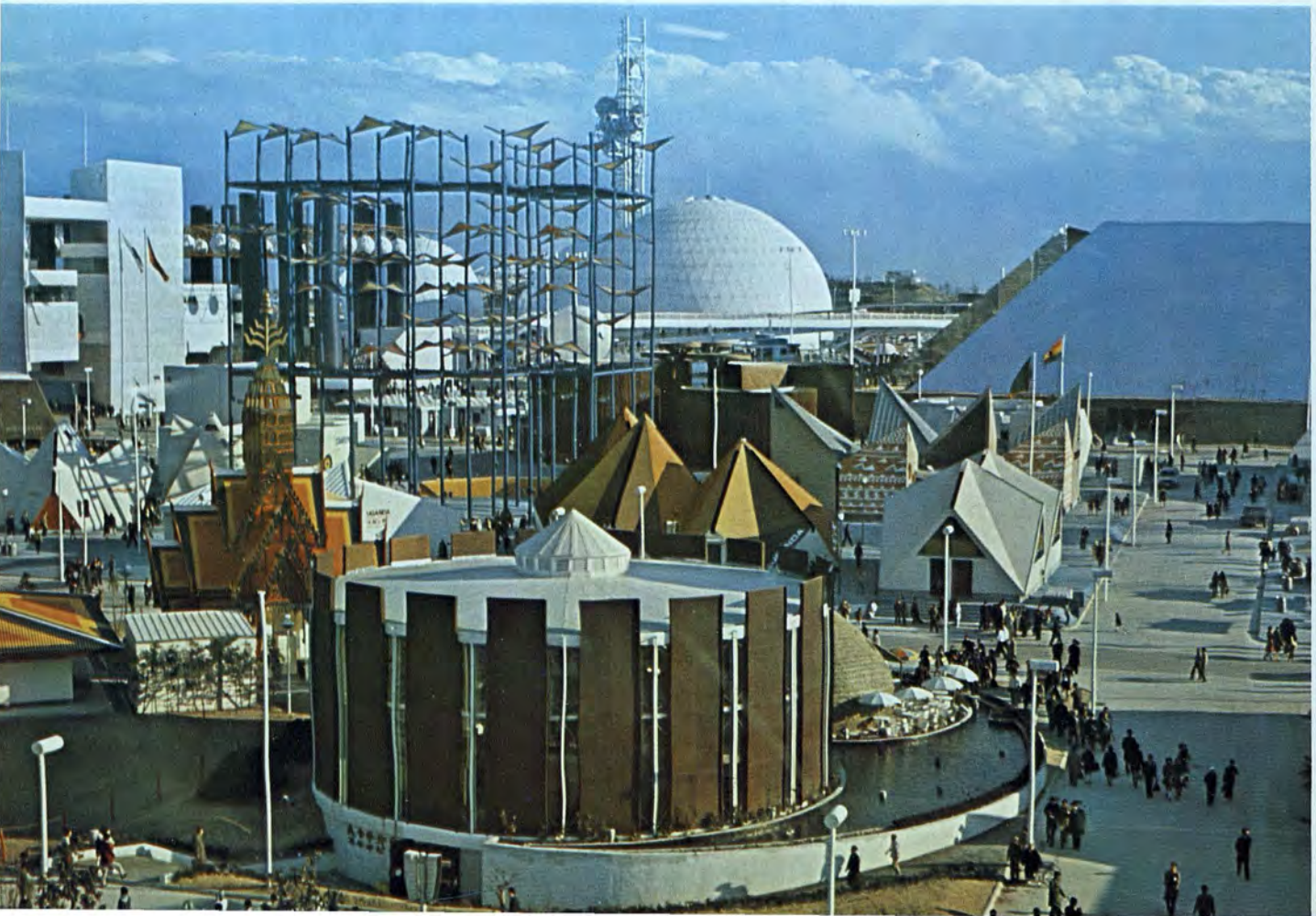
Expo 70, Japan's big blast to kick off a new decade, was designed for the Japanese, but if you are a GI on R &R in Osaka, Japan, you'd never know it.

While most of the 50 million people expected to tour the first world's fair ever held in Asia will be Japanese, foreigners will have an easy time finding their way around.

Most of the railway signs to get you to Expo, and most of the signs inside the massive 830-acre site, are written in both Japanese and English.

Fair officials have given crash courses in English to the pretty Japanese girls who man the information booths and serve as guides at the fair. They can answer almost any question about the fair or will find out answers they don't have.

Center of the exposition is Expo's Festival Plaza with the giant Tower of the Sun and the three-level Theme Pavilion. The Theme Pavilion sets the pace for the Japanese concept of the World's Fair: Progress and Harmony for Mankind.



Also located in Festival Plaza is Expo Hall, where entertainment from all over the world is scheduled throughout the 183 days of the fair (March 15 through September 13). Entertainers appearing at the fair include Sammy Davis, Jr., the Swingle Singers, Mary Hopkin, the Fifth Dimension and Andy Williams.

Surrounding Festival Plaza are 92 Pavilions from more than 75 countries, four international organizations, 12 states, provinces, cities and special groups and 12 Japanese industrial groups.

The U.S. Pavilion, housed under the largest clear-span, air supported roof ever constructed, features "Images of America" including sports, arts, architecture and space exploration with satellites recovered after circling the globe. Center of much of the attention of the Japanese is the moon rock on display in the pavilion.

The tallest pavilion at the fair is the Soviet with its hammer and sickle atop a building nearly 110 meters tall.

Several pavilions feature movies. Canada presents a live show in the center of its pavilion and Switzerland has chosen to use hundreds of lights to decorate the outside of its pavilion.

Inside the pavilions are examples of art and industry in the countries represented, shows about the countryside, examples of products, descriptions of the people and usually lovely native girls dressed in the garb of the country.

Don't overlook the Japanese industrial exhibits during your visit. Some of them feature creative shows that are as fascinating as anything offered by the countries.

Progress and Harmony For Mankind

In any case, be prepared to stand in line for the most interesting pavilions.

On the north side of the fairgrounds, the Japanese have built a large garden area where you can get away from the bustle of the fair. There are pools and flowers and benches so you can sit down and relax.

If you want more excitement than what is provided in the pavilions, you might try Expoland, southeast of Festival Plaza. It features roller coasters, Ferris wheels and other rides to churn up the old adrenaline.

One problem you won't have is finding any kind of food you want. While some restaurants are expensive, others aren't, and any kind of cuisine can be had. Some pavilions operate their own restaurants using the decor of restaurants in the host country.

Transportation within the fair helps save on foot wear; but, you'll be humping it a lot anyway, so use transportation when you can. Free rides are available on the monorail which operates around the perimeter of the fair and you can ride the moving walkways which carry visitors between major areas inside the fair.

Also available, at small expense, are electric cars driven by pretty female drivers and an aerial cableway that is great for an overall view.

The information centers at the fair may help save standing in some lines. They provide information about which parts of the fair are congested at any given moment.

The fair has plenty of bank and money-changing facilities, clinics and telegram and telephone services.

Tickets are only 800 yen (about $2.23) but take lots of yen to pay for food, souvenirs, cable car rides and the unexpected.

How to Get There

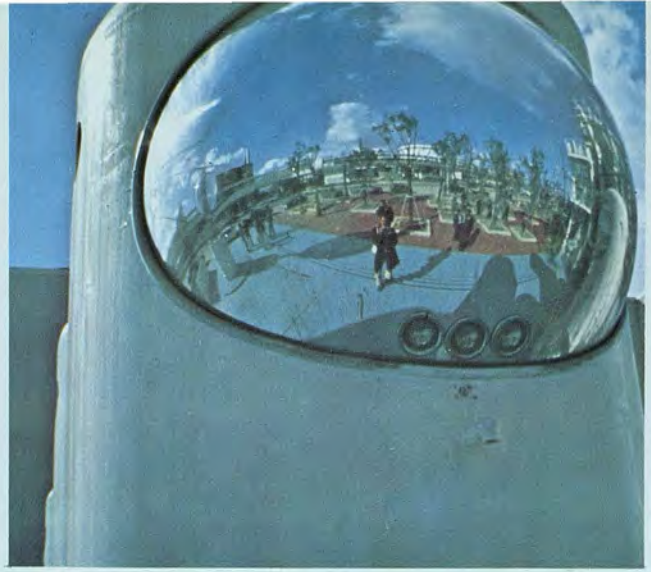
If you're a GI in Vietnam planning a trip to Osaka, Japan, and Expo 70 during his R&R, there are several plans of action.

You may decide to take a tour (tours are offered by the USO in Tokyo and by the R&R center at Camp Zama). Or, you may decide to stay in Tokyo for your R&R and run down to Osaka for a brief look at Expo. Or, you may plan to stay in Osaka and take a good look at Expo and the surrounding Japanese countryside.

If you are going it alone, plan to make your hotel reservations well in advance.

The USO can get hotel rooms in Tokyo if you give them a month's notice; but, if you want to stay in Osaka (about 300 miles and a $12 train ride from Tokyo), you'd better write your hotel as early as possible. Chances of getting a room at a Japanese Inn may be better and will be a real experience.

Getting to the fair from Tokyo is easy. Take a taxi to Tokyo Eki (station). There follow the signs to the Japanese National Railway (JNR) New Tokaido Line Ticket office. Go to the information desk (where English is spoken) and they will direct you to the correct ticket window.



Trains run between Osaka and Tokyo about every 20 minutes until 8 p.m. The clean, fast bullet train covers the 300 miles between Tokyo and Osaka in about 3 hours and 10 minutes.

At Shin-Osaka station, simply follow the signs to the Expo 70 subway and in about another 15 minutes you'll be at the site of the Fair.

One of the best ways to see Expo for someone visiting Japan for the first time is on a pre-planned tour. Tours in Japan are available in just about every combination.

The USO offers tours directed by the Japan Travel Bureau with as much or as little supervision as you want. There are combination tours with part of your time in Tokyo and part in Osaka. The USO

Story and Photos by

SP4 Charles C. Self

even offers one tour with a sea cruise from Tokyo to Osaka and hotel accommodations on the ship while you visit Expo.

At Camp Zama, package tours include visits to Famous Japanese sites plus jaunts to Expo. You can sign up for two- to six-day tours after you arrive in Japan.

Full information about touring is available by writing to the R &R Center, Camp Zama, A.P.O. S.F. 96343, or to the Tokyo USO, A.P.O. S.F. 96503.

Tours cost anywhere from $94 to $250 and usually include all meals, transportation and accommodations. Also, the tour takes care of the language problem by providing people who can speak English.

United States Postage

FREE

SHIPPING RATES

There are four principle ways to mail packages to the States. Here are the details and expected cost for sending a 25lb stereo amplifier, valued at $200.

SURFACE MAIL
Items up to 70 lb.
6-8 weeks
25 lb. amp—$5.20

SURFACE AIR MAIL (SAM)
Items up to 5 lb.
8-10 days
25 lb. amp—too heavy
(same as Surface rate)

PARCEL AIR LIFT (PAL)
Items up to 30 lb.
8-10 days
Sent air mail-space available
25 lb. amp—$6.20

AIR MAIL
Items up to 70 lb.
7 days
25 lb. amp—$20.08

INSURED
Gov't will make good losses up to insured amount.
Add $.60 for $200

REGISTERED
Helps to guarantee delivery by making all handlers accountable for item.
Add $1.30 for $200.

HOLD BAGGAGE
Military personnel may ship home certain goods free of charge if they hold ETS or PCS orders. Not handled by APO.

"The Mail is Where it's At"

By SP 4 Bert Herrman

Photos by SP 4 Joe Loper

Reassurance, love, news, memories—correspondence is the lifeline between the soldier and the world he has left behind. The 25th Division APO (Army Post Office) system supports this lifeline, handling 35,000 letters per day.

Two officers and 46 enlisted men are initially charged with moving the mail. They are stationed at APO's in Cu Chi, Tay Ninh and smaller outposts. Many have received postal training at Fort Benjamin Harrison. Battalions and companies have mail clerks, too, especially charged with bringing the troops their share of letters, gifts, goodie packages and the reassurance that someone back home cares enough to bother.

No Charge

Several tons of mail go back to the world each day from the 25th Division. Free postage on letters from military personnel is a big encouragement for even the laziest writers. Some families find that the son they thought might never even send a card floods them with lengthy letters. The government will post without charge properly addressed letters to any place in the free world.

The letters may be any size and may contain incidentals such as magazine clippings or photographs. However, letters that appear to contain too many "incidentals" may be returned for postage.

Free military mail travels as regular six cent surface mail when it reaches the states, even if it is marked Air Mail. But, since most surface mail in the U.S. is transported by air anyway, it can

be expected to reach its destination in six to seven days.

Besides letters headed for the States, the APO handles thousands of packages containing both exotic items from the Orient and familiar goods, purchased at low PX prices. Proper wrapping is sometimes a problem. Packages should be closed securely. Registered items must be wrapped in brown paper with all edges sealed with paper tape. But, the biggest problem of outgoing mail is not this cut and dried.

Contraband

Sending packages home is an exciting event; but, soldiers sometimes get carried away with their spirit of sharing. Weapons, Government property and narcotics are among the confiscated goods, which soldiers in various frames of mind have illegally attempted to send back to the United States.

Division APO's conduct visual inspections and sweep packages with mine detectors. Further on their way, packages meet a fluoroscope that X-rays through boxes and wrapping and can detect anything from an AK-47 to a poncho. Packages are also sniffed by specially trained dogs with a keen sense of smelling trouble.

Customs officials in SanFrancisco are authorized to open any item considered suspicious.

Incoming Mail

It takes three to five days for incoming mail to arrive from home to the 25th Division soldier (a day is saved at the International Dateline). Just a few hours of this time is spent at the APO, where sorting is rapid and efficient.

Timetable: A Letter From Home

—It takes up to three days for a letter to get from your hometown to Seattle or San Francisco. If it's coming from the north it goes through Seattle and if it's coming from the south it goes through San Francisco even though it all says "San Francisco."

—Most mail goes airmail even though it is sent at surface rates.

—It takes one day to sort mail at the San Francisco or Seattle APOs.

—Air mail from the states takes one to one and one half days to reach Saigon.

—Letters come to Cu Chi from Saigon by truck. It takes about two hours. They fly to Tay Ninh from Saigon in even less time.

—Sorting at the Cu Chi or Tay Ninh APOs takes about two hours.

—From the APO letters go to battalions to companies to you in less than 24 hours.

TOTAL TIME: 3 to 5 days.

Some mail is held up from its destination because of insufficient, outdated or incorrect mailing address. If the problem can be solved by locator cards on file with the APO then letters are corrected and forwarded. Otherwise it is sent back to San Francisco, where an Automatic Distribution Mail System looks through its computer memory and digs up the last address shown for the addressee and types up a mailing label. If the letter still can't be delivered the letter is returned to sender or held indefinitely until an address is fed into the computer.

Information for forwarding is supplied by the individual soldier through postal locator cards filled in at the time of address change. If a man doesn't fill in three of these cards, he may not receive all of his mail.

To the Troops

Getting the mail to the troops is the job of the

Timetable: A Letter Home

—After you mail a letter it is delivered to the APO within 24 hours.

—Mail is broken down into general categories and the first three zip code numbers at the APO—it takes about 10 hours.

—The mail reaches mail planes at Saigon in from three to sixteen hours after that depending upon the plane schedules.

—It takes one day for the mail to reach San Francisco.

—Within three days of a letter's arrival at San Francisco it is delivered to the address you sent it to.

TOTAL TIME: 6 or 7 days.

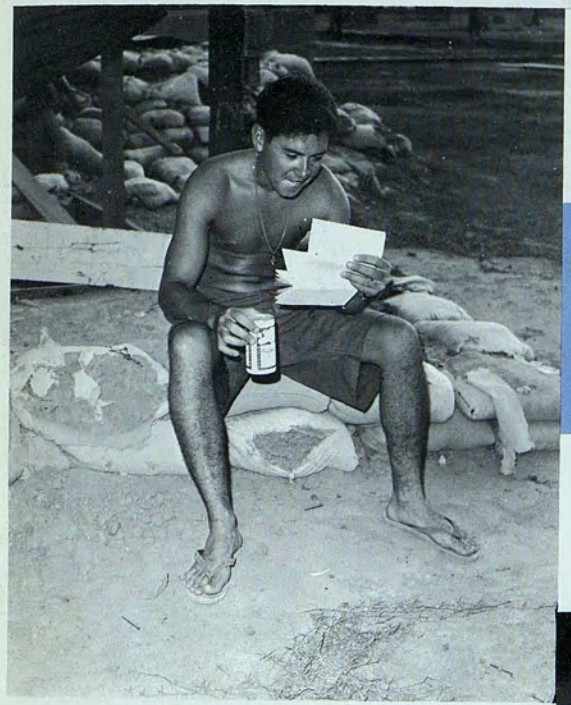
battalion and company mail clerks. Battalion clerks pick up the mail at the APO. From there they truck or fly it to battalion headquarters, where it is sorted by company or battery and, in turn, picked up by company mail clerks. They transport the big red mailbags to company mailrooms or fire support bases.

Mail call is a highlight of the soldier's day. Whether at a regularly scheduled hour or when the mail arrives, it is a time of smiles, laughs, jokes and disappointments. As one troop put it, "Mail call is where it's at."

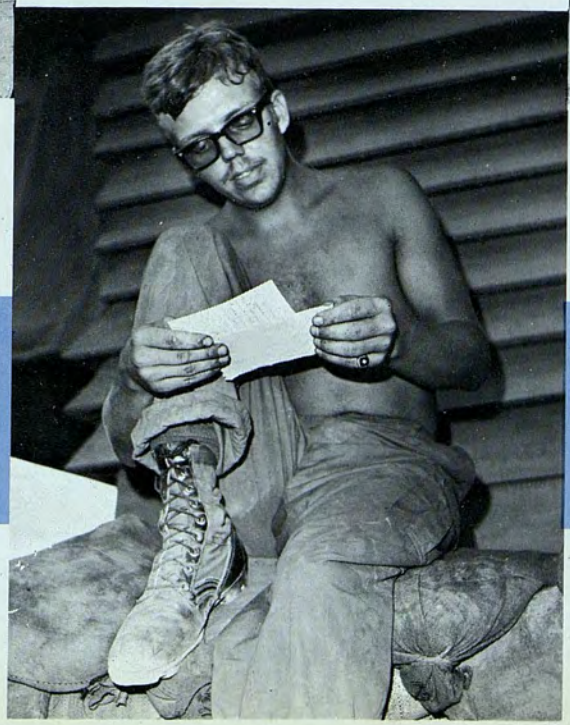
"That's the only thing to look forward to, except maybe DEROS."

"I feel kind of left out if I don't get any."

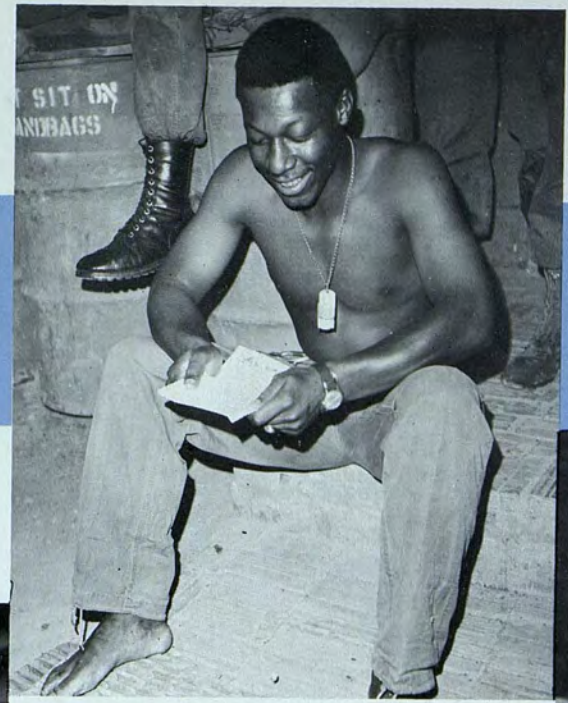
"Its groovy."



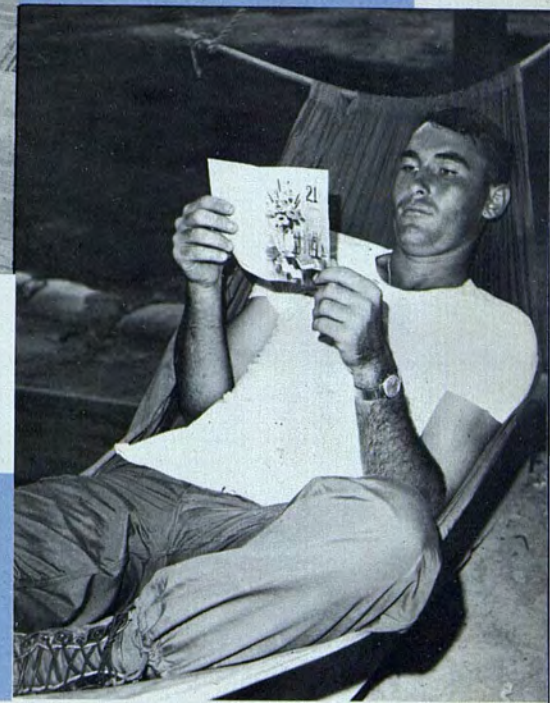
"Yeh!"



"My contact with the world."



"Mail is the best thing besides eating."



"It takes too long."