UPTIGHT

United States Army, Vietnam • FALL, 1970

Serving With Pride...

Each issue of Uptight will salute a major unit serving in Vietnam, selected randomly, highlighting the unit's history and depicting the unit patch or service insignia.

U.S. Army Medical Command, Vietnam

The United States Army Medical Command, Vietnam, today is providing the fighting man in Vietnam with the very best medical care that has ever been available in a combat zone.

In hospitals and laboratories stretching the length and breadth of this land, extensive medical treatment and research is being carried out, while helicopter pilots perform dustoff medical evacuations, speeding patients to emergency care within minutes.

The U.S. Army's medical care in the Republic of Vietnam began more than ten years ago with a small dispensary in Saigon and has grown into the U.S. Army Medical Command, Vietnam, under the professional guidance of many highly skilled doctors and nurses. The medical command controls 165 medical support units with over 9,000 personnel and is tasked with the mission to provide medical service support to members of the U.S. Army, Free World Military Assistance Forces and other categories of personnel as directed.

The credit for their fine record in Vietnam goes to the men and women of the U.S. Army Medical Department. The department is made up of the Medical Corps, the Medical Service Corps, the Nurse Corps, the Medical Specialist Corps, the Dental Corps and the Veterinary Corps.

A great deal of praise is due the men and women of the U.S. Army Medical Command, Vietnam, for their efforts to live up to the motto of the Army Medical Department... "To Conserve The Fighting Strength."

UPTIGHT

VOL. 3, NR. 2 FALL, 1970

THE FEATURE MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY, VIETNAM

Major General George L. Mabry, Jr., USARV Chief of Staff, will depart the Republic of Vietnam in September for his new assignment as Commander, U.S. Army Forces Southern Command, at Fort Amador, Canal Zone. Major General Mabry has held his current post since April 1969. He came to USARV from Germany where he served as Commanding General of the 8th Infantry Division.

Commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U. S. Army Reserve in 1940, General Mabry has compiled a distinguished military career, during which he has been awarded every American decoration for valor. His assignments include combat service in World War II when, as a battalion commander with the Fourth Infantry Division in Germany, he earned his country's highest decoration, the Congressional Medal of Honor, for bravery in combat.

General Mabry is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College, the Armed Forces Staff College and the National War College. On completing this tour in Vietnam, General Mabry said, "In the past eighteen months, I have reaffirmed my conviction of thirty years' service that our most precious commodity in a combat theater is the U.S. soldier. The many young men who have served in this theater have again proven that freedom is worth fighting for and they have met every challenge."

COMBAT AND SUPPORT

HUMAN INTEREST

SPECIAL FEATURES

UPTIGHT is an authorized biannual publication of the U. S. Army, Vietnam. Its mission is to provide factual, timely and in-depth information of interest to members of the U. S. Army, Vietnam. Articles of general interest may be submitted for consideration to: Editor, UPTIGHT, Information Office, Headquarters, USARV, APO San Francisco 96375. Direct communication with the editor is authorized. Unless otherwise indicated material published in UPTIGHT may be reprinted provided credit is given the magazine and the author. Opinions expressed in UPTIGHT are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

CREDITS: Front Cover—A Buddhist abbot celebrates the birthday of Buddha in Hue. Photo by SP5 Gary Kato. Back Cover—Children in a Saigon park. Photo by SP5 Stan Grayson, USARV-IO.

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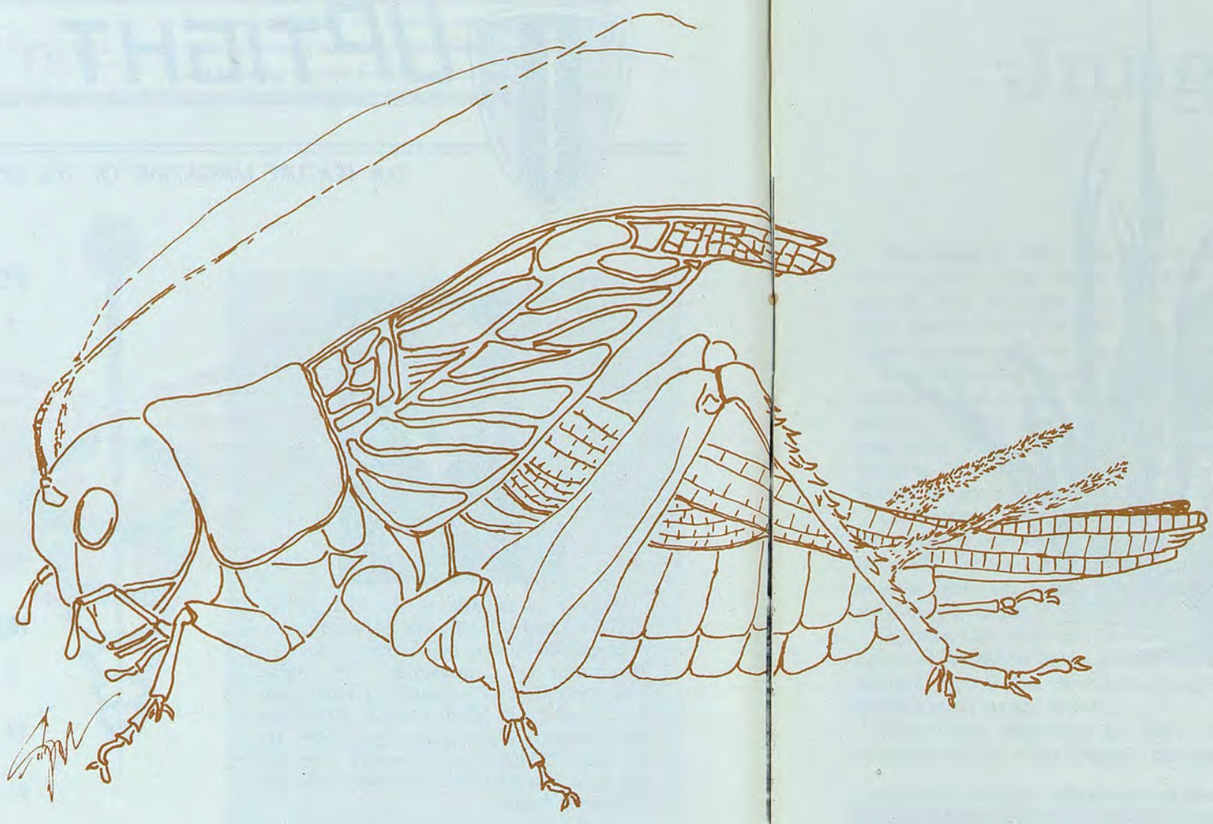
The Truth About Crickets



By SP5 Joe Ott
UpTight Staff Writer

Intrigued by the brilliant, multi-colored patterns of the butterfly or the dancing bumblebee, man has marveled at the insect world for centuries. A more fascinating world is hard to imagine -- nine-tenths of all Earth's creatures are insects. This vast cosmos of miniscule creatures supplies man with a variety of colors and sounds, to include the delightfully cheerful chirping of the cricket.

Numerous times in many lands the cricket's gay little song has been woven into the legends and literature of the people. In old England it was considered a sign of good luck to have a cricket chirping on the hearth. It was unheard of to kill one. Charles Dickens concluded his classic, "The Cricket on the Hearth," with a tribute to this gay little troubador: 'I have loved it for the many times I have heard it and the many thoughts its harmless music has given me."

Crickets are prized for their cheerful song, their fighting ability and as a gourmet's delight. In the Orient, the tuneful males are caged for their song, and cricket fighting has been a favorite pastime in Southeast Asia for more than a thousand years.

South Vietnam's annual rains mark the beginning of "cricket season" in this country. With the arrival of the monsoons, men and women search the marsh-lands carrying jars and cans in which to put the small black insects -- a sure sign that "cricket season" has arrived.

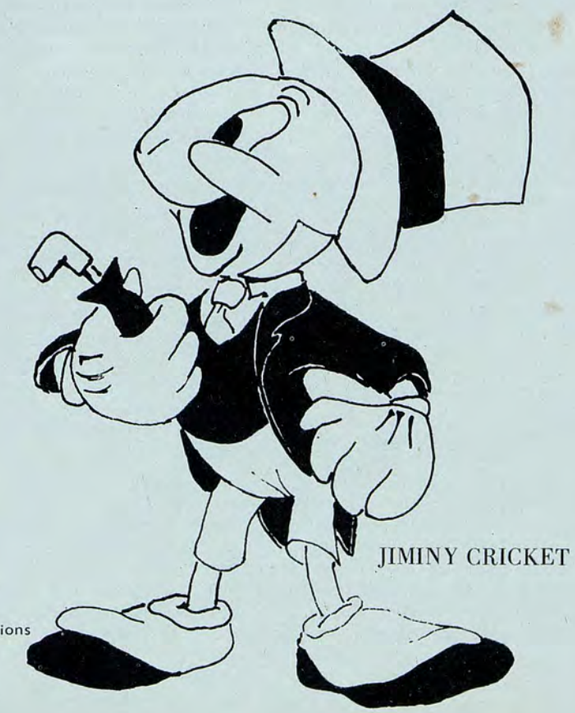
Vietnamese children have few store-bought or ready-made toys and derive much of their amusement from the cricket. It is for this reason that the adult Vietnamese will take these active little insects home to their children as presents, where they are kept as musical pets, as well as fighters.

When children have acquired a sizeable "flock" or "herd" they separate the tough ones from the weaker ones, using the principle of "survival of the fittest." They carry the insects around in intricate little cages or match-boxes with a few blades of grass. Only the male cricket is prized, because he is the one who does all the chirping and will fight to the death when engaged by another male cricket.

The sport of cricket fighting in South Vietnam probably originated in ancient China. "Whenever the autumnal season arrives," says an ancient Chinese manuscript dated 742 A.D., "the ladies of the palace catch crickets in little golden cages." Today it is not infrequent that a prize fighting cricket may be valued at $100 or more.

Here in South Vietnam children and adults alike will take an individual cricket and challenge someone else's, with a small or sometimes large wager on the outcome. Two male crickets are placed in a confined area where they are teased and provoked into fighting. Crickets are often classified as heavyweights, middleweights or lightweights.

If the two contestants fail to fall upon each other at once, the referee will make use of a "cricket tickler" -- a long thin straw or hair. Tickling the hind legs and tails of the insects with the hairs causes the crickets to leap toward each other and the fighting soon begins. Battling with their sharp jaws and sometimes kicking like angry mules, the black insects continue the fight until one is dismembered or dead. The winning owner then collects his purse, which may range from five piasters to a ceiling limited only by the personal wealth of the gamblers.



JIMINY CRICKET

Walt Disney Productions

Not only are the pugnacious attitudes of the males contested, but their jumping abilities are also subject to wagers. The old adage "as spry as a cricket" carries great truth. Not only can a cricket leap a hundred times the length of its body, but it can start with the suddenness of an exploding bomb. Jumping contests are quick and sudden with the measured distance being that of a single leap. Sometimes, if a timekeeper is available, the winner will be the "hopper" that covers a specific distance in the quickest time. "Ticklers" are often allowed.

In the wild, the little black chirpers are more numerous around quiet, damp, dark areas such as under boards, rocks and shady sides of buildings. They are particularly fond of hiding in bunkers and under the surrounding sandbags, perhaps because of the availability of C-ration leftovers. Once captured, they're kept in intricate cages and fed lettuce, rice, crushed chestnuts and bits of fish with a drop of honey now and then as a kind of tonic.

There are about 1,500 species of crickets in the world, varying from one-eighth to three inches in length. However, all males use a common method for producing their soothing tones. The most commonly heard song is the calling song, which attracts the female and repels other males. This chirping is made by rubbing an upturned scraper on one forewing, along a row of 50 to 250 teeth on the underside of the other forewing.

The dominant frequency in the sound depends upon the number of teeth struck per second, and varies from around 1,500 cycles per second in the largest species to nearly 10,000 cycles per second in the smallest. This filing back and forth thus causes the wings to vibrate and produces the air waves which we hear as shrill chirps.

Only the adult male sings. The females lack the equipment for

chirping and the children of the crickets are seen, not heard. They have no wings and are thus voiceless. The name cricket comes from the French and means, literally, "little creaker." The Vietnamese call them Con-de and sometimes refer to the cricket as "the world's first musician."

Another Oriental saying, with a touch of connubial humor about the little fellows, reflects the wishes of many berated husbands: "HAPPY ARE THE CRICKETS' LIVES, FOR THEY ALL HAVE VOICELESS WIVES."

The cricket is much more than just an interesting insect. It can actually be used as a kind of scientific instrument. Some Vietnamese elders claim to be able to tell the temperature of the air by the cricket's chirp. They can prove that "over the range of 55 to 100 degrees F., a cricket is a fairly reliable thermometer."

Their method is quite simple -- "count the number of chirps in 14 seconds and add forty." The elders also insist that the Con de chirps the loudest when the weather is warmest.' Not just an Oriental folk tale, this method of determining temperature is also employed in North America where the snowy tree cricket is nicknamed the "thermometer cricket."

There is another variety of cricket that is sought all year long, not because of its cheerful song or pugnacious attitude, but because of its edibility. Light tan in color, it is one of the largest crickets in Vietnam and ranges from one to three inches in length.

Today Vietnamese people consider insects great delicacies eating them only occasionally. It has been said that their high salt content gives them both appeal and food value. In South Vietnam crickets, as well as grasshoppers and cicadas, are eaten with relish when the family can afford the delicacy.

In American delicatessans one can buy chocolate covered bees and ants from Switzerland, tinned grasshoppers from Japan, fried agave worms from Mexico, pickled rattelsnake and, of course, caviar. Just as some Americans prize these delicacies, the Vietnamese consider this large species of cricket as a delectable gourmet food.

Its preparation begins with decapitation and dismemberment. Stuffed with a peanut and dipped into a flour and egg batter, it is fried to a golden brown and usually eaten with a salad of sorts, soy sauce, fish juice and, of course, nuoc mam. Crickets are also served individually as an hors d'oeurve delight or as an entree.

Cricket season in Vietnam is at its height during the months of May, June and July, depending upon when the monsoon rains introduce themselves in full force. During the days prior to the rains, the chorus of the male crickets is at its height. The females are busy laying their eggs which remain dormant, sometimes for many months, before entering the nymphal stage. Depending upon the species, the cricket nymphs will undergo six to twelve molts before reaching the adult stage.

Life expectancy once adulthood is reached ranges from six to eight weeks. With mating completed and a new generation insured, the "first of the fiddlers" then face the heavy monsoon rains, and their inevitable death, with a tuneful song of good cheer. ▲

Jungle For Lunch

By SP5 Peter Elliot
20th Engr Bde-IO

They carry no rifles. They have no heavy artillery. They don't maneuver with finesse and, when they do move, they can be heard for miles around. Too big and awkward to react quickly, they just plod along, grunting and groaning, knocking down trees the size of houses as they go.

The frightening monsters in question are the Army engineers' land-clearing bulldozers---massive machines with awesome power that exist on a steady diet of jungle vegetation. Their mission: to chew up dense overgrowth blocking Vietnam's roadways and more important, to destroy the enemy's jungle hiding places.

Land clearing in Vietnam was spawned of necessity, for the engineers here face jungle as thick as any on the face of the earth. Yet roadways have to be cleared for traffic, trees must be felled and foliage removed if Viet Cong ambushes are to be prevented.

To meet this challenge, engineers have pitted the most powerful bulldozers in the world, 31 and 57-ton Caterpillar tractors, against the shroud-like jungle of Vietnam. The jungle doesn't stand a chance.

Since their beginning in 1967, the land clearing bulldozers of the 62nd Engineer Battalion have gobbled up roadside vegetation and leveled Viet Cong staging areas with the voracious appetite of a hungry elephant herd. In III Military Region alone, their massive clearing operations have flattened over 500,000 acres of jungle---an area slightly larger than the state of Rhode Island.

In 1967-68 the "Jungle Eaters" of the 60th Land Clearing Company leveled over 17,500 acres of jungle, ending the booby-trapped horror of the Ho Bo Woods northwest of Di An.

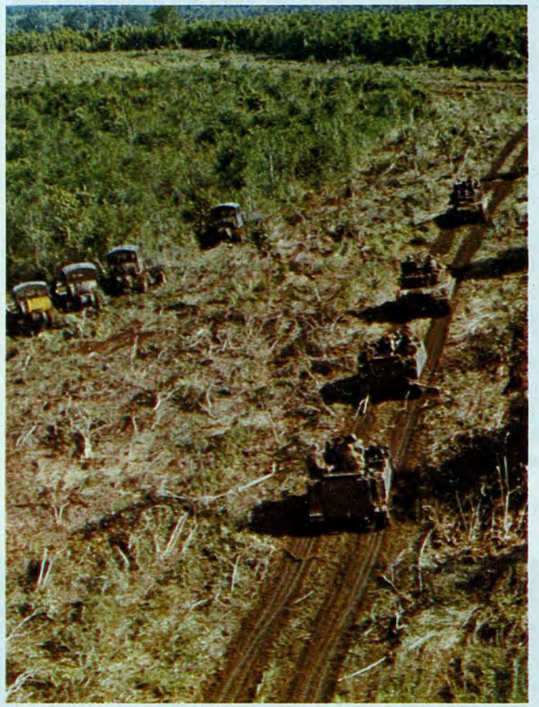
Similarly, the Renegade Woods west of Tay Ninh and the infamous Iron Triangle area have been rendered useless to the Viet Cong who once took refuge in the dense overgrowth. Enemy activity has now all but ceased in these areas.

In the wake of the land clearing plows, a semblance of stability has returned to the local populace. With the jungle pushed back, Vietnam's national highway system is thriving with commercial traffic, delivering timber and produce, harvested from soil once choked with foliage, to urban markets.

The land clearers' primary weapon is the 31-ton D-7 Caterpillar tractor, fronted with a 12½ foot-wide Rome

A gigantic D-9 bulldozer bulls its way into dense vegetation.

D-7's clear land near Song Be.



plow. Each of the 62nd's land clearing companies, the 60th and the 984th, is equipped with 30 of these massive machines.

The Rome plow is a gigantic five-ton instrument capable of pushing aside anything nature places in its path. A three-foot triangular spike, known as a "stinger," juts out of the lower left corner. Using it like a lance, a seasoned operator can reduce a towering tree to a million toothpicks in a matter of minutes.

Recently, on an experimental basis, the D-9 bulldozer, twice the size of the D-7, was introduced to Vietnam's jungles. It weighs 57 tons and can claw out a 16-foot section of jungle in a single pass.

In heavy, double-canopy jungle, the D-9 is devastating. Where the D-7 cuts 10 acres of jungle in a work day, the D-9 sweeps away 30. "It's like driving the atom bomb," said one seasoned driver.

"It rolls right over trees that the D-7 would have to go after with its stinger," said Specialist Four Tom Grogan, a D-9 operator. "And it has better weight displacement per square inch, meaning it goes over mud in which the D-7 would bog down."

There are several ways to utilize a Rome-plow company.

A D-9 carries a tree that fell in its way.

The most common technique is the strip or road cut. The plows, sometimes 30 at a time, are placed in a steplike formation with the plows staggered to the right. Following the lead plow, which is equipped with a compass and radio, the dozers flatten vegetation in 100-meter swathes.

A second technique is block cutting, similar to mowing a lawn. The initial cut, called the "race track," outlines the area to be cleared. The plows run counter-clockwise in continually smaller squares with the blades pushing the debris to the right.

During the Cambodian invasion, a third land clearing method was developed to locate North Vietnamese bunker complexes. The plows worked from a wagon-wheel format, using their night defensive position as the hub. From there, with armor units backing them, the plows branched out in all directions like the spokes of a wheel. Hundreds of supply caches were unearthed by these sweeps.

For the soldiers operating the tractors, land clearing is a brutal business. It is made more difficult by a host of jungle enemies that consume men and machinery like a macabre plague.

Nature is as unrelenting as the Viet Cong. The thickly-woven jungle with its protruding vines and creepers smothers the tractors, obscuring the driver's vision and dumping hordes of insects into the cabs.

Captain Jim Hinebaugh, company commander of the 60th land clearers, knows about insects first hand. Driving the lead plow, he was battering down a tree in the double-canopy jungle near Song Be when globs of red ants entered his dozer. He suffered numerous bites before he could escape.

Yet the half-inch red ants and nests of bees are only a minor irritation. At times, bands of monkeys leap on the tractors from falling trees. If bitten, operators must undergo a painful series of rabies shots. Men bitten by snakes, especially the banded Krait and King Cobra, are in even more serious trouble.

Cuts through dense bamboo are a nightmare. The shoots are crawling with vermin and Bamboo vipers. Bamboo shavings infiltrate the cab and cause myriad small lacerations and a furious itching.

Roaming bands of Viet Cong remain the most lethal threat. The jungle is their home, and the ponderous plows are easy targets for rocket-propelled grenades.

"It is difficult to defend against the RPGs," said Staff Sergeant Dick Koutch, a platoon sergeant with the 60th. "They don't aim for the tracks or engine," he said, "they go for the cab, trying to get the driver. In Cambodia documents were found which put a price on a Rome plow operator's head. It makes you think," he added.

Mines are something a land clearing unit lives with. While they can destroy the tracks and blow holes through the

An operator sharpens the plow on his bulldozer.

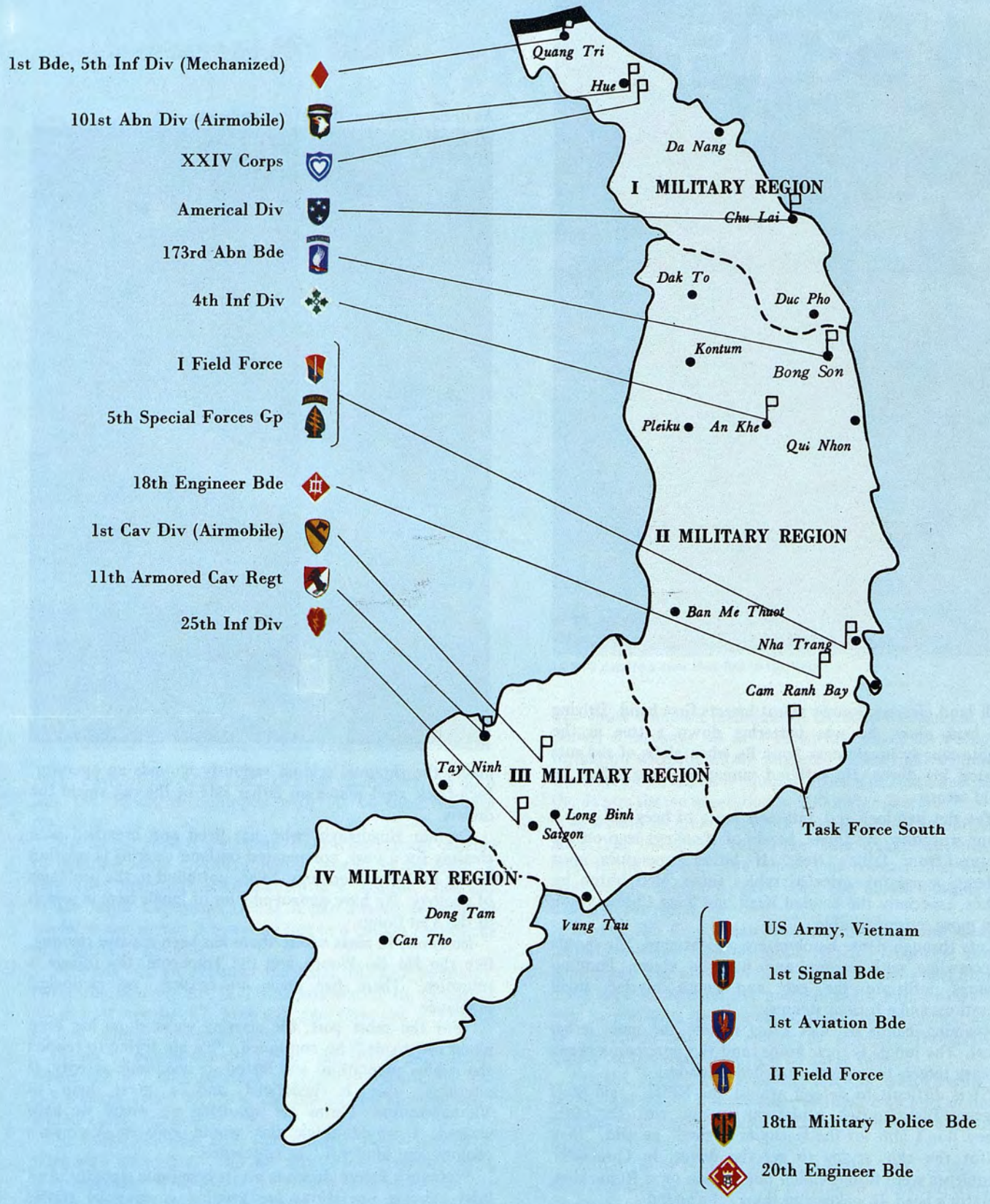
blade, the shrapnel seldom seriously wounds an operator. Inch-thick steel plates on either side of the cab shield the drivers.

Captain Hinebaugh, who has lived and breathed land clearing for a year, commented on land clearing in relation to the problem of ecology. "I am not blind to the problems of ecology. We have destroyed a lot of jungle here in search of the Viet Cong.

However, in areas where there has been massive clearing, like the Ho Bo Woods and the Trapezoid, the foliage is returning. There has been no erosion, no ecological inbalance."

"For the most part, the clearing we've done has been along old roads," he continued. "We are trying to reopen the rubber plantations and introduce economic activity. If anything, this is beneficial and a great help to Vietnamization. Farms are springing up where we have cleared. I would think this would enhance Vietnam's ecology, not hinder it," he concluded.

Vietnam's future depends on its economic stability. And land clearing operations are keeping commercial traffic flowing by freeing highways from ambush and opening new farmlands to rural villagers. ▲


1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mechanized)
101st Abn Div (Airmobile)
XXIV Corps
Americal Div
173rd Abn Bde
4th Inf Div
I Field Force
5th Special Forces Gp
18th Engineer Bde
1st Cav Div (Airmobile)
11th Armored Cav Regt
25th Inf Div
Quang Tri
Hue
Da Nang
I MILITARY REGION
Chu Lai
Dak To
Duc Pho
Kontum
Bong Son
Pleiku
An Khe
Qui Nhon
II MILITARY REGION
Ban Me Thuot
Nha Trang
Cam Ranh Bay
Tay Ninh
III MILITARY REGION
Long Binh
Saigon
Task Force South
IV MILITARY REGION
Dong Tam
Can Tho
Vung Tau
US Army, Vietnam
1st Signal Bde
1st Aviation Bde
II Field Force
18th Military Police Bde
20th Engineer Bde

Battle Report — a quarterly summary of major unit actions

Laden with equipment, a machine-gunner negotiates a jungle stream.

The third quarter of 1970 was characterized by isolated incidents in which U.S. forces encountered sharp enemy resistance, particularly in the northern provinces of the Republic of Vietnam, while generally light and scattered action prevailed elsewhere in the aftermath of the Cambodian campaign.

Action tapered off for U.S. forces in Cambodia during the closing weeks of June as the men continued to add to their impressive tally of captured enemy weapons and supplies. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong apparently tried to muster an offensive in the northern sectors in response to the Cambodian thrust, but their operations, although sharp, appeared to be scattered and localized. By June 30, all American units were out of Cambodia as ordered by President Nixon.

On July 9, in light of the success of the Cambodian operations, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announced that more than 50,000 troops would be withdrawn by Oct. 15 as part of President Nixon's proposed 150,000 man pullout by next spring.

Following an attack on a large enemy concentration around the abandoned Marine base at Khe Sanh in July, troopers of the northern American units prepared themselves in August for what appeared to be an enemy buildup, particularly in the area immediately below the demilitarized zone and the region near the Laotian frontier.

Meanwhile, men of III Military Region engaged in scattered enemy action as they continued to uncover caches in the Republic–greatly reducing any threat to the greater Saigon area.

I MILITARY REGION

Although American units in I Military Region did not participate in the Cambodian operations, sustained enemy action prevailed through the third quarter of 1970, affording little rest for the men operating in the northernmost provinces.

In one of the largest actions in the Republic of Vietnam during the week which ended June 7, the Americal Division, operating in the southern part of the military region, killed 41 enemy soldiers June 3 in scattered actions throughout the division's area of operation.

On June 10, troopers from the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) killed 21 enemy soldiers following an early

Deep in the jungle, a soldier pauses in silence.

morning ground and mortar attack on Fire Support Base Tomahawk from an unknown-sized enemy force.

Two days later, elements of the Americal Division's 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, killed 43 enemy soldiers during three separate contacts 21 miles west of Tam Ky. Five individual weapons and one crew-served weapon were recovered during the action.

The following week, helicopter gunships from the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) killed 25 NVA soldiers June 18. Action began in the early morning when Cobra gunships of A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, spotted an unknown-sized enemy force and engaged them with minigun and rocket fire, killing 13 of the enemy. The action took place about 30 miles southwest of Quang Tri.

After two weeks of comparatively light action, a night defensive position of a 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) company was hit with RPGs, satchel charges and small arms fire from an undetermined-size enemy force 25 miles west of Hue July 2. The 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry, soldiers fought back with small arms and machine guns, killing 15 of the enemy.

The engagement on July 2 proved to be a preview of things to come as quick reaction by troopers of the same division led to a total of 209 enemy deaths in stepped-up activity during the week ending July 12. Much of the action centered around the abandoned Marine defensive position at Khe Sanh in the northwestern part of the military region. Helicopter gunships and ground forces of A and D troops, 2nd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry accounted for the largest single enemy death toll--139--in an engagement July 8 four miles southwest of Khe Sanh.

Enemy activity tapered off for a few days, but on July 23 in the mountainous jungles of western Thua Thien Province, an element of the 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry, of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), was hit with RPGs, 82mm mortar and small arms fire from an unknown-size enemy force. Artillery and air strikes supported the Screaming Eagles in the battle 25 miles west of Hue. The combined efforts resulted in 61 enemy soldiers killed.

Fifteen enemy soldiers were reported killed Aug. 3 during a 1:30 a.m. attack on the night defensive position of C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Armored Cavalry. The 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) tankers were in positions three miles southwest of Cam Lo in Quang Tri Province when the undetermined-size force struck. Cannoneers of the 108th Artillery Group and helicopter gunships supported the cavalrymen. The following items were captured after the contact: three individual weapons, five crew-served weapons, five bangalore torpedoes, 19 RPGs and one radio.

In their area of operations Aug. 9, Americal Division soldiers found an enemy hospital complex 14 miles northwest of Tam Ky. Men from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, found two tons of rice, 200 pounds of medical supplies and an assortment of books and propaganda material.

II MILITARY REGION

The third quarter of 1970 found U.S. units of II Military Region disengaged from Cambodian operations, but stepped-up enemy activity back in the Republic of Vietnam demanded the most from soldiers in this largest of military regions.

Ivymen of the 4th Infantry Division achieved a major success June 2 in the Central Highlands. Aided by helicopter crewmen in the battle 24 miles southwest of An Khe, the men killed 28 NVA.

Action was moderate for the paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade during the second week in June. A total of 34 enemy soldiers were killed. Eight individual weapons and one crew-served weapon were captured. The largest single toll was inflicted June 12 by a drop of selective ordnance from a Chinook helicopter in northern Binh Dinh Province. Brigade soldiers the following day found 12 enemy bodies in the area.

During a day-long action June 19, 4th Infantry Division soldiers, aided by artillery, trapped enemy ground elements by setting up blocking positions. Twenty-nine Communists were killed. Members of Company B, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry, after an initial contact with enemy soldiers, quickly went into blocking positions around the contact area 20 miles north of Camp Radcliff. Artillery closed in the gaps between ground elements to form a rough triangle in which the enemy soldiers were trapped.

After a four-week lull, action increased sharply for soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division during the week ending July 26. Division troops killed a total of 43 enemy soldiers in their area of operations July 24 alone. An element of the 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry, working in support of the 1st Battalion, 12th Inf., made contact with an enemy element of undetermined size 18 miles northwest of An Khe. Repeated contacts ensued throughout the afternoon in the area. Supported by artillery and air strikes, the battalion's infantrymen killed 39 enemy soldiers before contact was broken late in the afternoon.

Six days later during a heated battle 23 miles south of Pleiku, air and ground elements of A Troop, 7th Squadron,

17th Air Cavalry, supported by tactical strikes, killed 44 NVA soldiers.

During a day of intense fighting Aug. 8, the Ruthless Riders of A Troop, 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, moved into the hilly region 13 miles northeast of Pleiku City and engaged an estimated enemy platoon, killing 20. The troop started working at the base of a hill where enemy elements were known to be operating. While following a trail, they discovered a large number of pack and weapon-carrying soldiers who immediately opened fire. Cobra gunships rolled in over the area, firing rockets and miniguns, followed by two U.S. Air Force strikes and artillery fire. As the artillery fire ceased, men of A Troop's aero-rifle platoon were inserted, along with an ARVN Ranger element. At the end of the afternoon engagement, there were 20 enemy dead and five soldiers detained. Captured were six individual weapons, three crew-served weapons and 2,500 small arms rounds.

III MILITARY REGION

With military operations divided between those in Cambodia and the Republic of Vietnam during the third quarter of 1970, the men in units of III Military Region found themselves engaged in a number of diverse military missions. As enemy action subsided following the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Cambodia, American soldiers continued to uncover a large number of enemy caches back in the Republic.

The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) continued their fruitful operations in Cambodia during the week ending June 7. Skytroopers from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, found a 150 bunker hospital complex and motor pool 20 miles north of Quan Loi, eight miles inside the border June 2. The hospital was equipped with two laboratories, an operating room, three kitchens and four classrooms containing numerous medical texts. Medical supplies found included test tubes, blood samples, syringes, plastic bags, blood pressure test bands and a complete field medicine kit.

Two days later Skytroopers reported killing 35 enemy troops in an action that also resulted in the capture of 11 individual and three crew-served weapons.

An element of the 25 Infantry's 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, reported receiving small arms fire, automatic weapons and mortar fire from an estimated two enemy platoons June 7 in an area seven miles northwest of Phum Krek. Artillery, gunships and tactical air strikes supported the Americans. In another operation, the 25th's Company C, 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry, found and evacuated 1,375 tons of rice from an area five miles southeast of Memut.

Go Devils from the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, discovered a weapons cache 16 miles southwest of O Rang two days later. The find yielded 120 85mm field gun rounds, 860 37mm antiaircraft rounds, 139 Chicom claymore mines, 30 bangalore torpedoes, 40,000 feet of time fuse and 22,500 blasting caps.

The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment opened the week by finding 41 tons of rice June 10 in an area 14 miles northeast of Memut, Cambodia.

Skytroopers killed 11 enemy and uncovered 33 tons of rice June 12. Members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, found 22 tons of rice and 10 tons of salt in a cache 20 miles north of Song Be, some four miles inside Cambodia.

Two days later, 1st Air Cavalry Division troopers at Fire Support Base David repelled an early morning ground attack, killing 28 NVA. It was the first time the base, located about two miles northwest of O Rang and four miles inside Cambodia, had been attacked since it was established in mid-May. The black pajama-clad enemy opened fire at 2:50 a.m. with B40 rockets, 82mm mortars and automatic weapons after two of their number tripped a flare in the perimeter wire and were killed by guards of the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry. Artillery was directed on the enemy positions and an AC119 "Shadow" gunship and flareships also supported in the action until contact was broken at 4:45 a.m. Skytroopers recovered nine individual weapons, four crew-served weapons and 150 Chicom grenades.

Cache finds continued in the Skytroopers area of operations during the week ending June 21. A reconnaissance platoon of Company E, 5th Battalion, 12th Infantry, discovered 81 tons of rice hidden in seven huts 19 miles north of Song Be, three miles inside Cambodia. Another of the major caches uncovered that week was one 30 miles north of Song Be and two miles over the border. Members of Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, found and destroyed a cache containing 70 75mm recoilless rifle rounds, 400 82mm mortar rounds, 300 60mm mortar rounds, 200 RPG rounds, 16,800 AK47 rounds, 40 antitank mines, 20 two-pound satchel charges, 500 Chicom hand grenades and five tons of rice.

Continuing in their search, the men of Bravo Company found two enemy huts yielding 33 tons of unpolished rice in the same area.

In an area 32 miles north of Song Be, six miles inside the Cambodian border, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, on June 23 uncovered three holes in the jungle floor that yielded 300,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 1,600 mortar rounds, 1,100 rifle grenades, 700 hand

Mounted atop an APC, 25th Infantry Division soldiers search a rubber plantation near Tay Ninh City.

grenades, 500 recoilless rifle rounds and 69 122mm rocket motors with warheads.

Cavalrymen of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, working 33 miles northwest of Quan Loi and 13 miles inside Cambodia June 25, discovered a large enemy cache site, the contents of which included 103 SKS rifles, 101 120mm mortar rounds, 535 75mm rounds, 1,938 RPGs, 942 rounds of 37mm ammunition, 1,110 85mm artillery rounds, 332,820 AK47 rounds, 106,680 .30-caliber rounds, 4,409 Chicom hand grenades, 216 antitank mines and 169 pounds of explosives. The cache was found along what was believed to be an enemy supply route from the interior of Cambodia.

Sweeping an area 21 miles north of Quan Loi and less than a mile inside Cambodia 1st Cav. soldiers of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, on June 26 discovered an enemy cache that included 532,000 AK47 rounds and 2,323 pounds of C4 explosive.

With all U.S. units having returned to the Republic by President Nixon's June 30 deadline, it was only a short time before American troops were actively engaged in missions in their Vietnam area of operations.

A major cache was uncovered 21 miles north of Phuoc Binh July 12. Skytroopers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, found and evacuated a cache containing 218,000 AK47 rounds, 9,600 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 17,255 rounds of .51-caliber ammunition and one Chicom generator.

Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), found and evacuated an arms cache six miles northwest of Bu Gia Map. The following items were evacuated: 199 SKS rifles, five Chicom light machine guns, 92,040 7.62mm rounds, 8,585 .51-caliber rounds and 1,200 pounds of C4 plastic explosive.

During July 14-18 Redcatchers of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade uncovered a series of wheat flour caches, the largest being discovered by men of Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry, eight miles northeast of Ham Tan which contained 14.25 tons.

Skytroopers from the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) reported killing 24 enemy soldiers in two separate actions July 24. In the largest of the two, troopers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, operating 19 miles east of Phuoc Vinh, established contact with an enemy force of undetermined size. Air strikes and artillery supported the men. Twenty of the enemy soldiers were reported killed.

The following day, units of the Cav.'s 2nd Brigade, supported by air strikes, killed 15 enemy soldiers on an old trail system 13 miles northeast of Song Be.

Units of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) reported killing 20 enemy soldiers during scattered fighting Aug. 4. Eight miles west of Bu Giap Map, Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, also that day found a 68-building base camp and a small cache.

Tropic Lightning soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division killed eight enemy soldiers and destroyed 50 enemy bunkers, 18 fighting positions and a tunnel during scattered actions that centered around Dau Tieng Aug. 8.

Shortly before midnight the following day, an element of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, at Fire Support Base Gwen, 24 miles northeast of Ham Tan, was attacked by an undetermined-size enemy force. The enemy initiated the battle by firing 10 rounds of 82mm mortar shells and several RPG rounds at the Redcatcher positions. The shelling was followed by a ground attack. Helicopter gunships and artillery fire supported the Redcatchers during the attack. Enemy losses were unknown immediately after the action. ▲

An infantryman scans the terrain in front of him for signs of enemy movement.

Brief Bursts — late information affecting you!

VOTE INFO Would you like to vote in the general election this fall, but feel you don't know enough alout the candidates to make an intelligent selection? The League of Women Voters will provide nonpartisan voter information on state and local elections. To get the information write to the League at 1730 M Street, Washington, D.C. 20136.

LETTER CONTEST The 1970 Freedoms Foundation Letter Writing Contest is open to all active duty and reserve servicemen. You could win up to $1000 by writing a letter to the foundation on the subject: Freedom—Privilege or Obligation? Send your entry, not exceeding 500 words, to Freedoms Foundation, Valley Forge, Pa. 19481, by Nov. 1.

SCHOOL OUTS Army officers and EM requesting early separation to attend school may now be released up to 30 days prior to the day classes convene. Previously officers could only get 15 days and EM were allowed 10 days. Info on early outs to attend school is found in ARs 635-100 and 635-200.

PT TEST No more low crawl, grenade throw or 150-yard man carry on the Army's PT test. The bent-leg sit-up and that old favorite, the push-up, are on the way in as events in the test perodically taken by all under-40 soldiers (except in Vietnam).

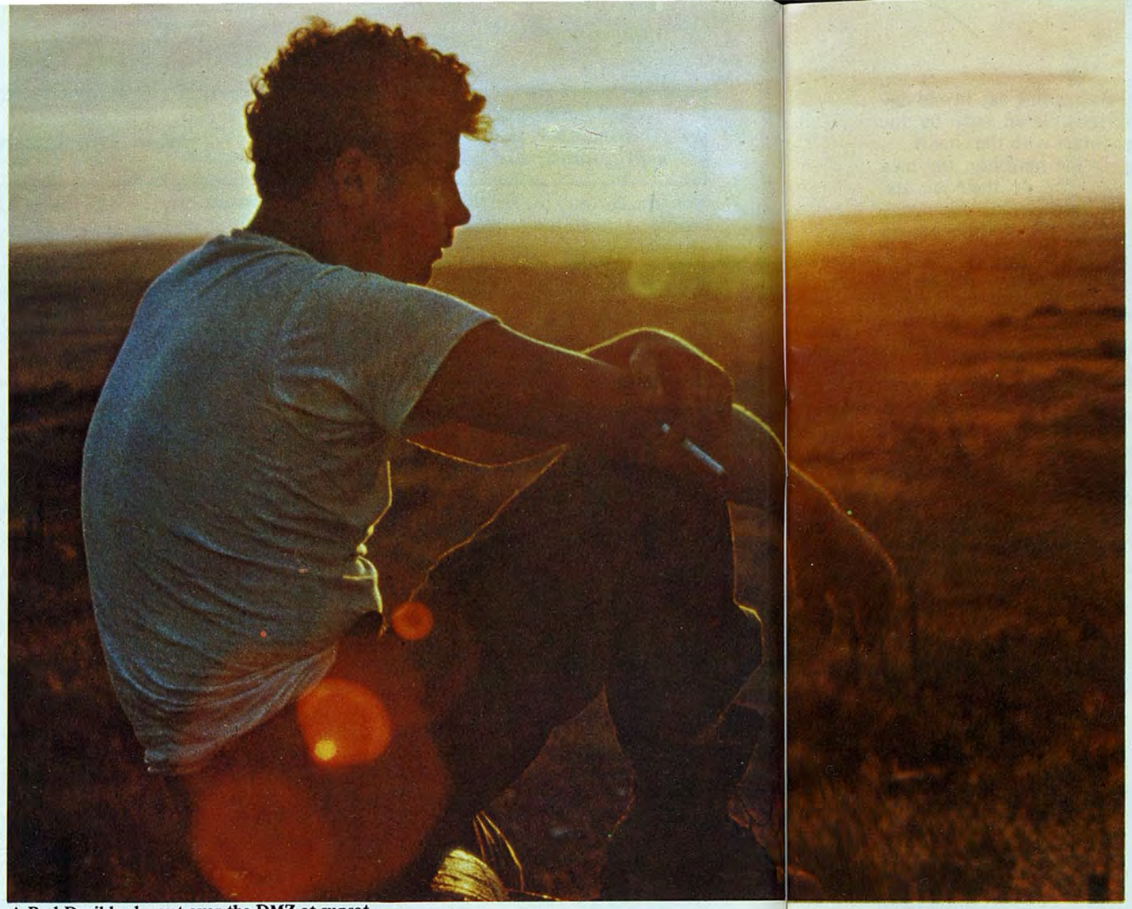
CHEAP FARES Soldiers can now fly from Los Angeles or New York to Europe at very low rates through the United Service Club, a non-profit organization. Rates are as low as $69 for the New York to Frankfurt flights. Further information is available from the club at Box 4087, McChord AFB, Washington 98438.

BOOTSTRAP Time to complete requirements for a college degree under "Operation Bootstrap" has been increased from one year to two years. If you can complete the requirements for either a bachelor's or Master's degree within 24 months, and are willing to agree to spend some more time in the service, the Army may allow you to go ahead and get the degree. Regs have also been changed to allow soldiers participating in the program to move to the college or university location in PCS status instead of permissive TDY. This means the government picks up the tab for moving expenses. By the way, the program is open to EM and NCOs as well as officers.

RIFLE ROD The newest idea in rifle cleaning gear is a flexible bore rod for the M-16 rifle. The proposed rod would be made of a soft synthetic material with a small diameter steel core. The rod could thus exit from the rifle's ejector slot to attach the cleaning patch or brush without having to remove the bolt. It could be stored in the M-16's stock cavity or in a belt carried pouch.

"Z"

By SP5 Jim Westbrook
1st Bde 5th Inf Div-IO
Photographs by
SP4 Gary Holbrook



A Red Devil looks out over the DMZ at sunset.

A soldier patrols the DMZ at dusk.

It was just about dusk and the sun was slowly disappearing behind Dong Ha Mountain. The APCs and tanks pulled up to their final resting place for the night. In their circular night defensive position, the soldiers began unpacking--a time-worn ritual that they practiced almost daily. It is part of their lives here along the De-Militarized Zone.

In another 30 minutes it would be completely dark at Fire Support Base Alpha-Four. The C-rations will have been heated, eaten and the cans thrown away. After consuming supper, the nightly vigil begins--the lonely task of guarding the "Z" against enemy infiltration from the north.

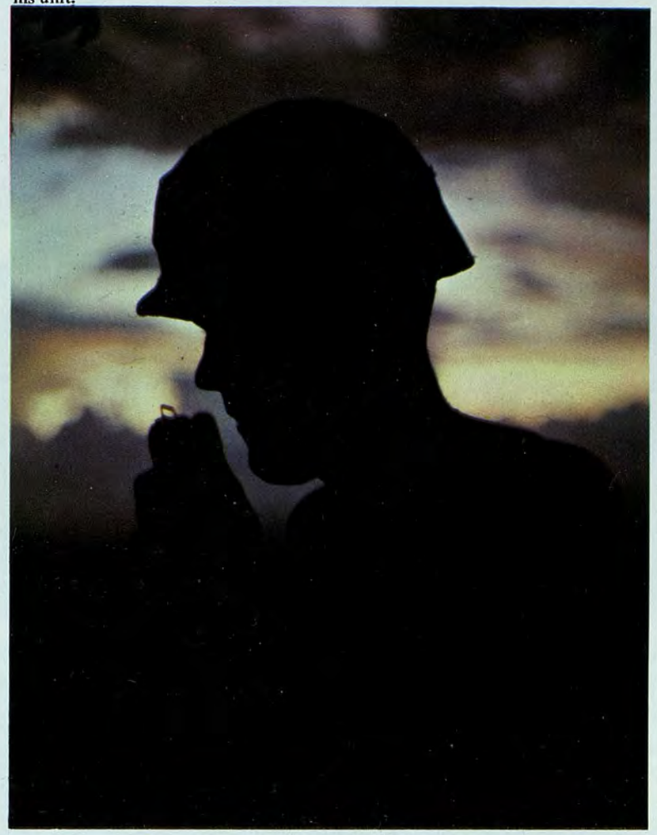
Nightly watches for enemy movement are nothing new as far as the rest of South Vietnam is concerned. The same defensive tactic is employed throughout all four military regions. Some might even say that essentially there is no difference between duty on the "Z" and in other areas of South Vietnam. But try to convince the "Red Devils" of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) that life on the DMZ is the same as anywhere else. They wouldn't agree.

Loneliness is a way of life for soldiers at the DMZ's remote fire support bases. Constantly in the field patrolling or trudging along side their APCs and tanks, they stay out, sometimes for days, in search of their elusive foe. "Charlie" may not be seen for a month at a time, but the "Red Devils" know he's there, waiting patiently for his chance to move.

In this war of constant accent on north and south, there is a genuine distinction associated with living and working just below the DMZ, a short distance from North Vietnam. One such distinction at FSB Alpha-4, the northernmost U.S. Army installation in the Republic of Vietnam, is the unique view. Less than three miles from Alpha-4, just across the Ben Hai River, is North Vietnam where, on any given day, an oversized North Vietnamese flag flies proudly in the breeze.

Nothing new to the men who live on the "Z," the enemy flag has become the major tourist attraction, of sorts, in I Military Region. The sensation of taking in the view at

Silhouetted by the darkening horizon, a Red Devil radio operator makes a call to his unit.

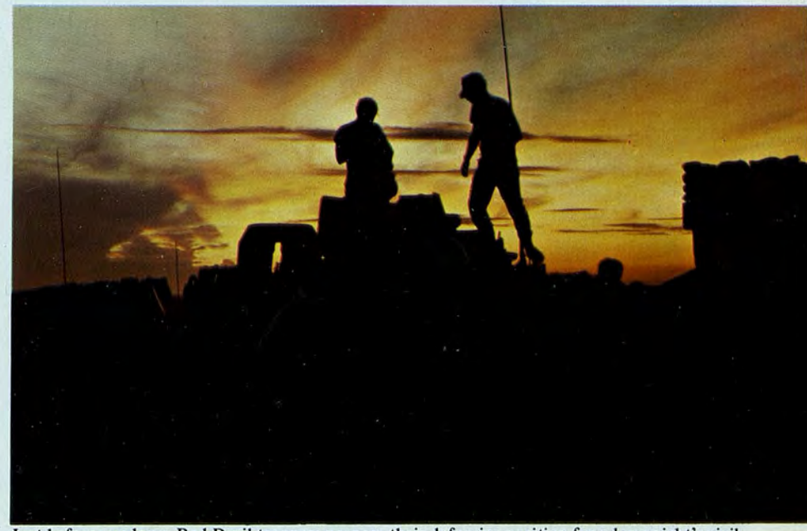


Alpha-4, known years ago as Con Thien, was summed up by an APC crewman from Fire Support Base Charlie-2, one mile south of Alpha-4. "When you're at Alpha-4, you have the feeling of not being able to go any farther north," he said.

If one could get any closer to the DMZ, he would be in it. Yet visitors, especially newsmen, always want to get closer. Inevitably, their first inquiry is "How far are we from the DMZ?" One need only point a finger north to answer that question.

The "Z" is a muddy ribbon of water separating two scarred and battered "buffer strips." The terrain in the surrounding area is made up of grassy, gently rolling hills that sweep away east to the Gulf of Tonkin and to rugged mountains in the south and west. These are the mountains that divide the heavily-populated eastern coastal strip and the vast, deserted Khe Sanh Plain that borders on Laos.

Although the view from the DMZ is just as breathtaking as it was before, the "Red Devils" spend most of their time providing security to the 300,000 residents of Quang Tri Province, an area covering some 3,000 square miles



Just before sundown Red Devil troopers prepare their defensive position for a long night's vigil.

in northern I Military Region. The First of the Fifth's concerted effort has brought a relative tranquility to Quang Tri Province, a tranquility that seems all the more unusual when one considers how close the area is to the very source of South Vietnam's problems.

But above all, the first and foremost job for soldiers on the "Z" is to stop infiltration from the north and bring peaceful stability to the people of the province.

All across the countryside, "Red Devil" ground troops weave their way through valleys and around hilltops, combing the bush for signs of "visitors" from the north. Meanwhile, the ever-present armored columns churn across the powdery wilderness, like giant gophers burrowing through soft earth, leaving clouds of dust or splattering sheets of mud in their wake.

Covered with dirt and burned from the sun's rays, when "Red Devils" return to their fire bases for a stand down, pleasures are few and simple. A hot meal, a change of clothes and a shower are just about all the things a soldier could ask for on the "Z".

He gets precious little else. USO shows seldom work their way this far north. The few films that do are worn and spliced beyond enjoyment. Even "Stars and Stripes," taken for granted by those in less remote areas, sometimes doesn't make it to Quang Tri.

When the men of Alpha-4 and Charlie-2 return to the base camp, only their location changes. The isolation, the loneliness and the environment remain virtually the same. One soldier puts it this way: "It's especially bad at night looking out at this desolation, thinking about home and knowing that when you wake up in the morning nothing will be changed."

Perhaps that is the worst of it, the monotony, the feeling that nothing will change, the routine day in and day out that is punctuated only by the frightening contact with the enemy.

But despite the hardship, the men who man the DMZ do their job and they do it well. One company commander said: "They don't ask for much in return--a shower, a hot meal, a letter from home. They will be the first ones to tell you they don't like it here, but then they turn right around and go out and do the best damn job possible."

The men on the DMZ are not supermen. They are the gas station attendant, the college student, the fellow you went to school with, the man who will sit next to you on your flight home. They miss their girls, they long for a good pizza, they have their dreams of what it will be like when they get back to the world. They are lonely, bored, scared, courageous, proud. They are like you only they are different. They are the men who man the DMZ. ▲

Red Devil infantrymen patrol the grassy hills of Quang Tri Province.

FALLSCHEER

Faces . . .

Photographs by
SP4 Robert Kunes
SP4 Len Fallscheer
SP4 Brian Kelly
SP5 Stan Grayson

KELLY

KELLY

FACES

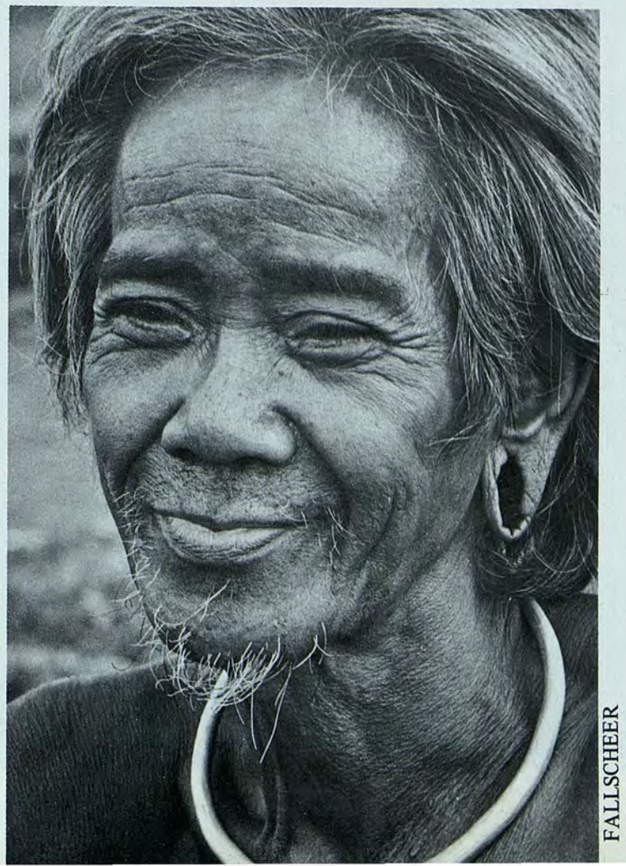
Known by the regions of the nose
the definitions of the mouth
expressiveness of eyes young teeth
soon to pass to old gaps cheeks pinched
in declevities of missing molars
crowds of faces apparitions lips pursed
to speak spread in smiles tensed in thought
eyes large dimples and moles bristling hair
brows furrowed cheeks smooth to touch hesitant
expressive sharing one bond identifiable
in their faceness resplendent with life
variously haunting the spaces between pathos
and joy shyness and hope the tears of the young
reflected in the creases of the old wrinkles of smiles
and squinting against sun shall end in those of age
inscrutable and passive revelations of lives

By SP4 William Ward

GRAYSON

KELLY

KELLY



FALLSCHEER

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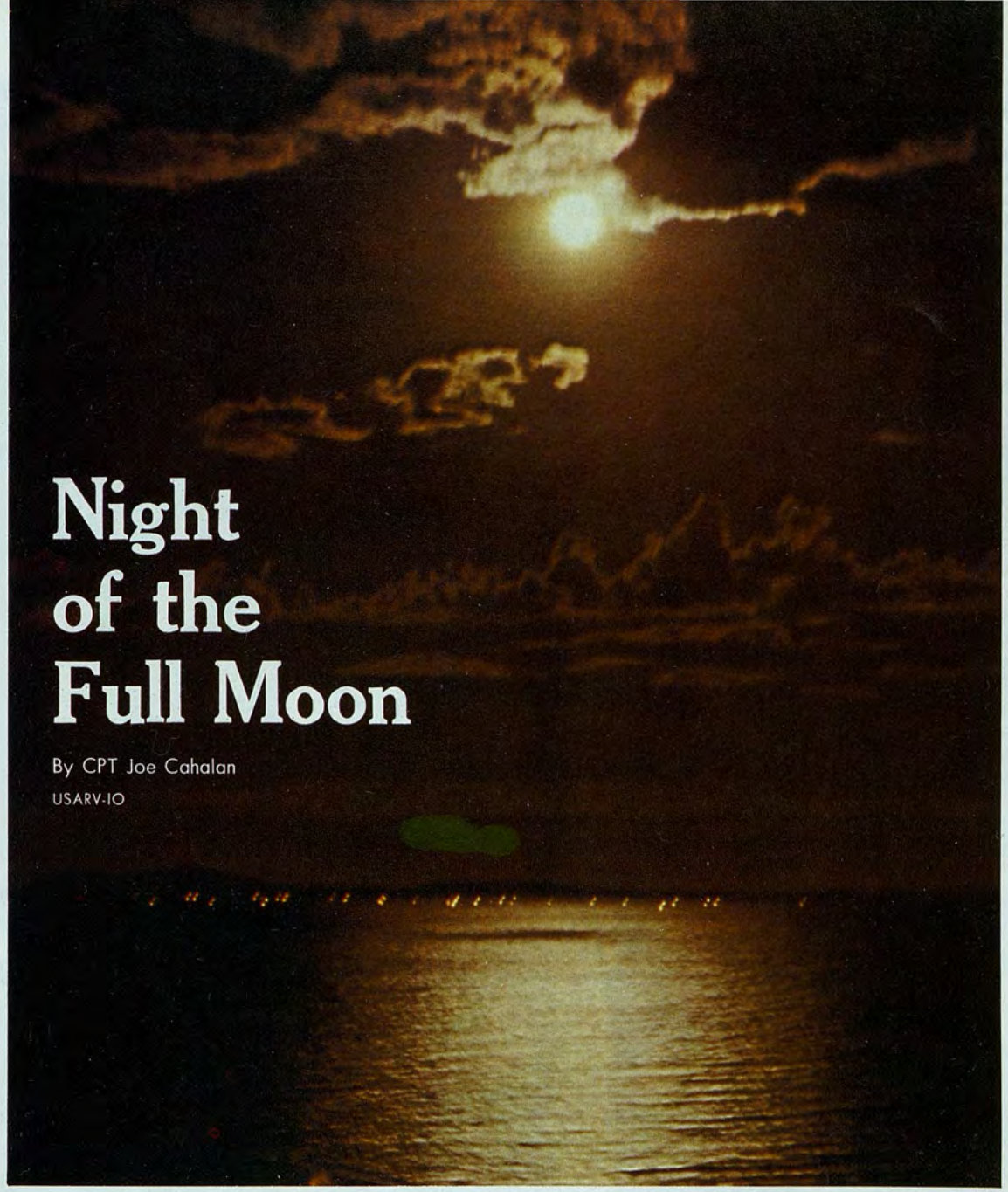


Night of the Full Moon

By CPT Joe Cahalan
USARV-IO

A hot orange sun peeks its head over the Nui Chop Chai mountain range in Binh Dinh Province and casts the first rays of morning light on the still slumbering town of Bong Son. From all outward appearances, this is just another day in Bong Son, a town nestled in a valley in northern II Military Region just outside the perimeter of LZ English. Soon the village will awaken and its people will begin to tend their shops, care for their young and work their farms.

But this is no ordinary day. At 6 a.m. the morning stillness is shattered. The large brass gong in the town's pagoda is rung nine times. Nguyen, a ten-year-old boy, wakes abruptly, rubs the last vestige of sleep from his soft brown eyes and bounds from his bed excitedly. He knows that today is a special day. It is May 19, Vesaka Day, the night of the full moon, the day on which Vietnam's 16 million Buddhists commemmorate the birth of Siddhartha Guatama, the lord Buddha.

To the small boy and his fellow believers, the ringing of the gong this morning signaled the dawn of the day in their religion and culture. It is Christmas and Hanukkah, Mardi Gras and July 4 all rolled into one.

All week long the town of Bong Son has been preparing for the birthday of Buddha. On May 12, the Buddhist Congregation Union decorated the town with brightly colored flags and banners that urged the people to "pray for Buddha." Trucks mounted with loudspeakers spread the word to every nook and crany in Bong Son that the celebration of Buddha's birthday was only seven days away. The town's women have worked long hours preparing traditional Vietnamese dishes to be served at the feasts on Vesaka Day. Young girls, no different than others the world over, debate which Ao Dai they will wear on the big day. Young men make designs to attract the young women of their choice at the coming celebration. And the monks of Bong Son patiently remind their followers that behind all the festivities and joy, Buddha's birthday is a solemn occasion and a time for meditation and contemplation.

Five days before the celebration, Nguyen and his five brothers and sisters are called together by their father. Similar gatherings are being held in hundreds of other households

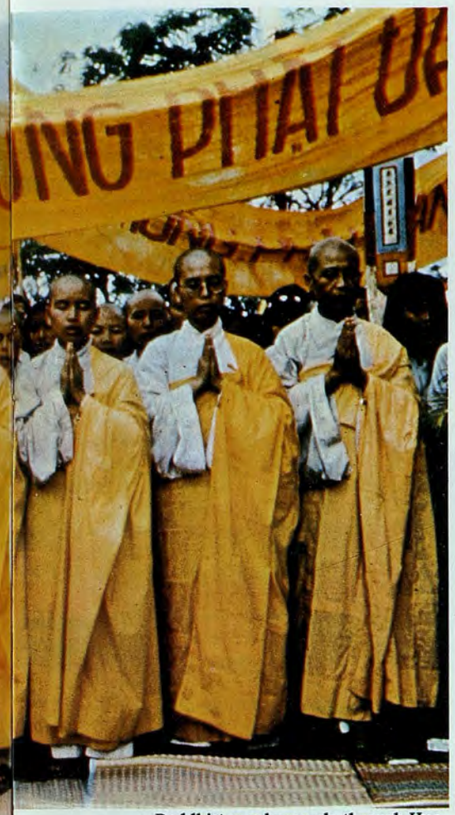
throughout the town. Nguyen's father reminds the family that the celebrations which will soon take place have deep religious significance. Soon the town will pay homage to Buddha, the Enlightened One, the man who 2,514 years ago had been born and who had in turn given birth to one of the world's foremost religious movements.

Some of what the father tells his children is lost on the young, much the same as the true meaning of Jesus is lsot on the Christian young amidst the expectation of Santa Claus or the courage of the Maccabees is lost on the Jewish young during the holiday season. But some of the solemnity is communicated. Hoa, a little girl of eight, asks her father if she may be happy during the festivities. The amused father patiently explains that she should indeed be happy for it is a blessed event. Trieu, aged 12, asks if he can bring the Buddha a birthday offering. The father explains that they will indeed bring offerings to express their love of Buddha and their devotion to his teachings.

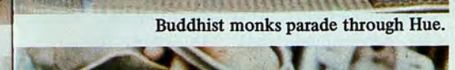
The two days immediately preceding the birthday are days of giving in the name of Buddha. Fruits, candy and rice (800 kilos of it supplied by the nearby 173rd Airborne Brigade) are distributed to the poor of the town, to the less fortunate who live in nearby refugee camps, to those in hospitals and jails and to the victims of the war that has ravaged the town of Bong Son for more than 20 years.

The day of the full moon finally arrives. Nguyen dresses quickly and wakes his brothers and sisters. They must be at the pagoda by 8 a.m. when the ceremonies begin. At the insistance of Nguyen, they leave their home 45 minutes early to walk the 200 yards to the pagoda. Already the streets are full. Scores of families from nearby villages had camped out the night before in the courtyard surrounding the pagoda or in the open field across the street. Nguyen and his brothers and sisters take their places and wait--not very patiently--but they wait.

Promptly at 8 a.m., the pagoda's brass gong is rung again and the throng grows silent. The pagoda's abbot, the most respected religious leader in the community, starts a procession to the altar of Buddha. He begins the slow, almost eerie, chant that is so familiar to Buddhist gatherings. The other monks and then the novices follow the abbot to the high altar. All are dressed in the same ceremonial garb -- the bright orange robes called "casas." It is the same type of robe which the lord Buddha wore in India 25 centuries ago and is the most sacred material

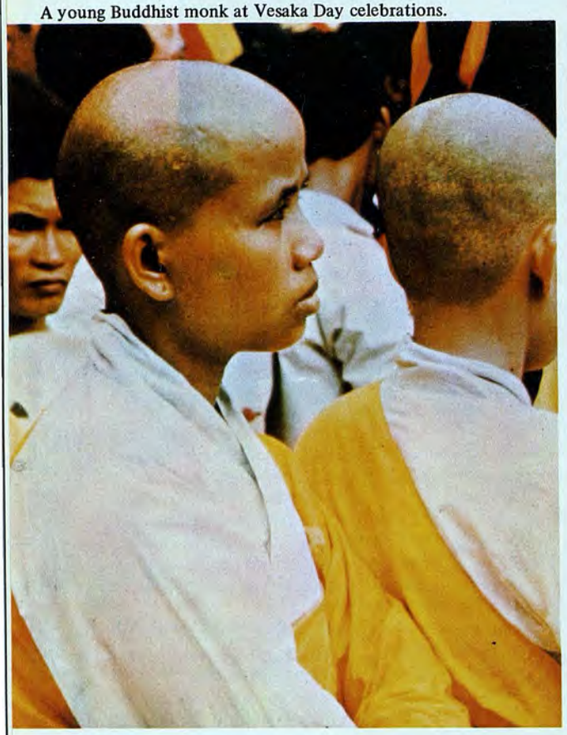


Buddhist monks parade through Hue.



Monks pray to the Lord Buddha during Vesaka Day celebrations in the streets of Hue.

A young Buddhist monk at Vesaka Day celebrations.



Residents of Hue watch the Buddhist celebration from curbside.

possession which has been passed down through the ages.

The other monks and then the worshippers join in the chant. The rich, repetitive rhythm of the "sutra" thickens the air as it is intoned into a microphone and amplified across the temple courtyards and into the tree-lined streets of Bong Son. The echo of brass gongs, the unified chanting of the kneeling worshippers and the heavy sweet aroma of burning joss sticks fill the air and connote a sense of piety and mystery, joy and peace.

The service is brief. There is a sermon by the abbot, a few prayers and more chants as the monks leave the altar. Then the people of Bong Son celebrate the birth of Siddhartha Guatama. There is a parade, music, parties and feasts. At 3 p.m. the monks again gather at their pagoda and pray for the Buddhist dead. At 6 p.m. there is still another service--this one to implore the lord Buddha to intercede for peace. At night Nguyen and his brothers and sisters will display their arts and crafts works in the pagoda's courtyard for all the villagers to see. At 10 p.m. the festivities are over and the town of Bong Son sleeps.

Similar scenes are being repeated throughout the republic of Vietnam. Wherever Buddhists live, no matter how small or poor or isolated the hamlet, the memory of Buddha is revered on the day of the full moon. A good example may be found in the tiny hamlet of Duong Lieu, which lies in a remote area some ten miles south of Bong Son and LZ English. The entire population numbers only 62 people. All are Buddhist, though many of them have mixed true Buddhism with Christianity -- perhaps from the influence of American soldiers who may have happened upon the hamlet or perhaps from the teaching of french missionaries who may have passed through in bygone years. The resultant blend of cultures allows the village elder, Nguyen Huynh Tien, to proudly display pictures of Jesus, Mary and Joseph along side the statue of Buddha. To the old man, there is no apparent contradiction, no reason to explain the paradox, no embarrassment at mixing the religions of east and west.

His face wrinkled and his body bent by his 77 years, his eyes remain bright, alert and hopeful. Nguyen Huynh Tien is a man whose dream is coming true. Three more of Buddha's birthdays will pass first, but eventually the hamlet of Duong Lieu will have completed its own pagoda. The old man eagerly explains that the 62 Buddhists who live in the hamlet have spent some 30 million piasters and seven years building their pagoda. In three more years the project, the most important thing in Nguyen's fading life, will be finished and the hamlet of Duong Lieu will have a fitting house of worship in which to pray to Buddha.

The American visitor looks at the thatched huts, the children in need of medicine, food and education, the hopeless poverty. He wonders how the villagers could spend so much of their meager resources and energies on the pagoda. He is tempted to ask why, but then he thinks of the gold and marble cathedrals and temples in American cities, even in the midst of poverty. He holds back the question and saves it for another time and another place.

The celebration of Buddha's birthday is every bit as important to the people of Duong Lieu as it is to the people of Bong Son or Hue or Saigon. But in the remote hamlet, it is celebrated more quietly. There is no music and no parade, no banners and no loudspeakers. At 6 a.m. Buddhists from the surrounding villages of My Phuong and My Loi begin to assemble

Throngs of celebrants carrying banners and flags parade through Hue on Buddha's birthday.

at Duong Lieu's unfinished pagoda. By 7 a.m. the hamlet's population of 62 has swelled to more than 500. The brass gong is rung and the ceremony begins.

Offerings are brought to the altar. There is rice and fruit, nuts and vegetables. Then the ceremonial gifts are offered by the hamlet's children. A little boy places incense on the altar to symbolize self-purification and self-dedication. A little girl brings flowers to symbolize the shortness and frailty of life. Candles are lit to symbolize the teachings f Buddha which bring light to the mind and drive away ignorance.

That night when the visiting Buddhists have gone home and only the 62 residents of Duong Lieu remain, they gather around Thay Tu, a middle-aged man with deep-set eyes. The villagers explain that Thay Tu is a mystic blessed with supernatural powers and a profound compassion for all things living. While fires flicker and the group grows still, he tells his story of the Buddha, a story that the elders have heard many times before and the young will hear many times again. But no one grows tired of it, just as Christians do not grow tired of hearing of the birth of Christ and the Jews never tire of hearing of the eight-day seige in which the Maccabees successfully defended their homeland. It is an old story, yet ever new.

Thay Tu tells of the birth of Siddhartha Guatama in 563 B.C. in a flower-filled grove of hardwood trees outside the provincial capital of Kapilavastu, amidst the foothills of what is today Nepal. The boy's father, an Indian prince, took great pains to shield the youngster from any of the seamy and tragic side of life, but Siddhartha grew suspicious of his charmed life.

Only the sounds of chirping crickets and a gentle breeze blowing through the rice paddies can be heard as Thuy Tu tells the villagers how Siddhartha, at the age of 29, renounced the world to seek the enlightenment of Buddhahood. First entering a hermitage, he later studied with two Hindu ascetics and for six years he practiced self-mortification and medication. For the six years he ate only one grain of rice or one sesame seed a day, practiced holding his breath and subjected himself to such extreme self-denial that many who saw his weakened body thought he was dead.

The people of Duong Lieu listen intently as Thay Tu repeats Buddhist tradition which holds that Siddhartha "slept on thorns and amidst corpses, and his body was so weakened that his skin was blackened; when he sought to touch his stomach, his hand took hold of his backbone. The skin of his head was cracked and whithered like a bitter gourd by the wind and sun."

After six years, Siddhartha realized that such extreme self-denial was placing too much stress on the physical at the expense of the mental. He determined that the road to enlightenment lay in the Middle Way, a life of moderation, a road between the extremes of devotion to sensual pleasures on the one hand and self-mortification on the other hand. For 29 days the Buddha entered a state of mystic rapture and reached enlightenment.

And so the mystic ends his story of the Buddha, a story that has been told this day in hundreds of pagodas throughout Vietnam. Wherever Buddhists live, there had been celebrations. In Saigon, some 250,000 Buddhists had paraded in the streets. In Nha Trang, there had been a solemn procession to the huge statue of Buddha which dominates the architecture of the city. And in Hue there had been majestic ceremonies in the scores of pagodas that dot the ancient imperial city.

That night Nguyen, the little boy of Bong Son, and Nguyen, the old man of Duong Lieu, sleep peacefully with the knowledge that the lord Buddha has been well-honored on his birthday. The moon that rises over Vietnam this night is a little less full and a little less bright than last night's moon. The night of the full moon, the birthday of Buddha, Vesaka Day, is over. ▲

The unique architecture of the Sydney Opera House is framed by Harbour Bridge.

Australia

Down Under and Beautiful

By SP4 John Hoober
UpTight Staff Writer

It's the city and country with everything. For those who crave the bright lights and excitement of the big city, then Sydney, Australia's famous port and probably the most action-packed place in the Southern Hemisphere, is the answer.

Sydney Harbor, a drowned river bed with innumerable inlets, provides a setting duplicated by few cities in the world. If photographing beautiful scenery, dining on sumptuous delicacies, and quenching your thirst with a cool drink in luxurious surroundings describes your lifestyle, there is no better way to spend a day than on a cruise of Sydney Harbor.

Among the sights to focus your lens on are the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Taronga Zoo Park and, of course, Harbour Bridge, Sydney's world famous span which reminds the visitor of San Francisco's own Golden Gate Bridge.

From the skyscrapers in the financial district to the magnificient new opera house, downtown Sydney is a hub of activity any hour of the day. Just ask a local cab driver. He'll offer you an opinion on anything from the best buys in kangaroo products to the latest scandal at King's Cross.

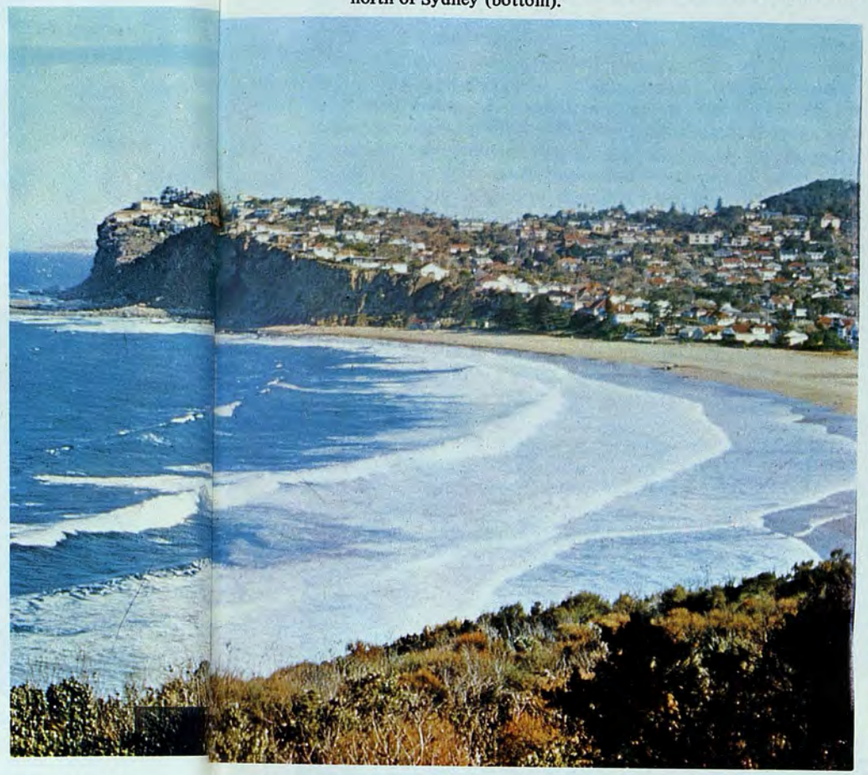
King's Cross, better known as simply "The Cross," is the center of Sydney's swinging nightlife, where the many clubs feature rock music, as well as the finest in beers and liquor. Live big-name entertainment, at a reasonable cost, can be found at the Silver Spade in the Chevron Hotel.

Bearded poets and mini-skirted females roam the busy streets and narrow alleys, while rows of flashing neon signs lash out at the passerby advertising exotic restaurants, discotheques and burlesque shows. As far as nightlife is concerned, New York's Greenwich Village and the Soho District of London have nothing new on The Cross.

For the salt water enthusiast, the "Land Down Under" is a paradise. The cliff-lined beaches surrounding Sydney provide an outlet for instant enjoyment and relaxation. Some say that the surf around Sydney is better than at Waikiki.

Clean stretches of golden sand are evidence of the 342 days of sunshine that Sydney averages each year. Picturesque as well is the scenic Barrenjoey Peninsula, skirting the coast north of Sydney.

The Atlantic City atmosphere, if that's your dish, prevails at Surfer's Paradise, in the heart of Australia's Gold



A beautiful tree shades the lawn in the Royal Botanic Gardens (left). Below, one of the many coves along Sydney's North Coast. The skyscrapers of downtown Sydney shimmer in the evening sun (right). Private yachts lay at anchor in a quiet bay north of Sydney (bottom).

Coast about 500 miles north of Sydney. While not yet the equal to its American counterpart as far as luxurious motels and a boardwalk are concerned, the cleanliness of its beaches and the wholesome atmosphere of its patrons attracts thousands of visitors to the Gold Coast every year.

Perhaps the most famous of all Australian tourist attractions is the Great Barrier Reef. Its magnificient coral islands and natural inlets are photography firsts. Stretching along the Queensland coastline roughly from New Guinea to Brisbane, the Great Barrier Reef is actually a series of individual ridges running for about 1,250 miles and encompassing an area of some 80,000 square miles. In some places the coral reefs are 50 miles wide.

Nowhere else in the world are there coral reefs comparable to the mighty Great Barrier. The isles, shelves, shoals and quiet pools teem with unusual marine life and indescribable beauty. This is the place to do anything and everything you've ever wanted to do on or under the water--swim, fish, sail over coral reefs or gaze at the underwater world from a glass-bottomed boat. For the serious skin diver, the reef is sheer Utopia.

If you're a fisherman, the crystal clear waters all along the Australian coast are home for many sought after fish, such as the red emperor, sweetlip, parrot fish, silver bream and reef cod. Angling in Australia is confined mostly to the coast, since the many "lakes" that dot maps of the countryside are, for the large part, drainage basins for grazing livestock.

The once-prosperous river trade has all but died out, except for short stretches along Australia's eastern coast. Inland waterways are now open for little else than exploration.

From the air the Australian interior looks like an immense pink dome, owing to the unusual color of the sand and clay. The outdoorsman would feel right at home in Australia. At the R&R Center in downtown Sydney, hunting trips and camera outings can be arranged, in advance, to the "outback," where horseback riding, mountain climbing and home-cooked meals are a way of life. And there's no scene in all the world to be likened to an Australian sheep-shearing shed in full operation. To the

There are some avid sportsmen who have travelled half-way around the world to spend more than $1,000 for the privilege of hunting wild boar, mountain goat and trophy fox in the fabulous Australian outback. The foremost hunting guides and the best of equipment are yours for $100 or less if you choose to pursue big game animals through the rugged mountains and bush country. Arrangements for trips to the outback or Gold Coast can be made through Proscenia, a recreation and tourist agency located in the R&R Center hospitality lounge.

As with several well-advertised areas in the Pacific Northwest, it is possible to sunbathe along the coastal beaches of Sydney in the morning and ski in snowfields larger than those in Switzerland in the afternoon. The Snowy Mountains, commonly referred to as the Southern Alps, are located southwest of Sydney and feature world-famous slopes to challenge both the novice and the

expert. Once again, Proscenia is your key for obtaining accomodations and equipment at reduced rates.

It is said of Australians that they have to find reasons for being inside in the daytime. The climate naturally encourages the national cult of competitive sport whether it be tennis, cricket, soccer or football--either Rugby League, Rugby Union or Australian Rules. One way to tell what part of Australia a person comes from is through his references to the code of football played in his home town.

But it is horse racing, the sport of kings, that reigns as the number one spectator sport Down Under. In fact, Australia ranks second only to the United States in the number of races run annually. The higlight of the racing season is the Mebourne Cup, held each November in that prestigious city. The roll of past winners includes the names of many great thoroughbreds headed by that of Carbine, whose feat of carrying 146 pounds in record time is well known by every Aussie turf fan.

For a change of pace following an afternoon at the track (if the betting windows haven't rendered you penniless), take a girl for a moonlight cruise of Sydney Harbor in a chartered motor yacht. Each turn of the bow brings new and picturesque sights into view, and what better way is there to get on better terms with that lovely young lady you met at the R&R Center or waiting on tables at that downtown pub.

If you remember one thing when out on the town with the Sydney folk, remember the Australian passion for equality -- they don't take kindly to snobbishness and usually won't tolerate a "stuffed shirt."

Plan to devote at least one day to touring and shopping in Sydney's downtown area. Bargains in kangaroo products, opals and of course the traditional Australian boomerangs are among items readily available.

As expected, the quality of the woolen products is above reproach--among the world's best made. The purchase of 100 per cent wool fabrics is more than common in this land of more than 170 million sheep.

The restaurant connoisseur will experience an enjoyable dilemma choosing between excellent seafood and juicy steaks. Australian rock oysters and lobsters are world renowned for their tastiness and Aussie prime beef has a taste all its own. Entrees from any menu can be washed down with select wines from the vineyards near Adelaide or a pitcher of that much talked-about Australian beer, with its tangy and definitely lively flavor. More than one soldier has left his heart at a Sydney pub, drinking and discussing the issues of the day with friendly Aussies.

One will find that although tipping is not regarded as obligatory, it is customary to tip food and wine waiters 10 to 15 per cent of the bill for good service.

While known for its ever-present sunshine, Australian weather can be misleading. Evenings in Sydney can become quite cool and the serviceman visiting the island continent between May and September is advised to bring either a sweater or light jacket. For the forgetful, a clothing outlet at the Sydney R&R Center provides a leasing service which rents most of the clothing necessary for a stay in Australia.

An idea for one night during your stay Down Under might be a pre-arranged outdoor barbeque at a remote bushland location. This is where you can learn to throw that newly-purchased boomerang as well as meet kangaroos, wombats and koalas face to face in their native habitat. And what better way to close out the evening than with a sizzling steak grilled as only the Australians know how.

Australia is truly a traveler's paradise, if you can stand being called "mate, bloke" or "joker" for a week. But the warm, cordial and outgoing attitude of the people from the Land Down Under makes up for any minor confusion in language and custom for the American in Australia. ▲

A quiet canalway winds its way through the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Americal helicopter gunships fly in formation to the abandoned Kham Duc runway.

Back To Kham Duc

Flying over the mountains at Kham Duc in I Military Region, one can almost momentarily perish the thought of being in a country in turmoil. The serenity of the bluish-green terrain captivates the mind as a land of awe and tranquility.

Then, quite abruptly, from the placid world of the mind, the reality of Vietnam is once again regained as the aircraft passes over the crest of a mountain revealing a 4,000 foot runway. There, seven miles east of the Laotian border, lies a stretch of hardtop which has been reoccupied by American forces after two years of enemy dominance.

In May of 1968, elements of a 5th Special Forces unit and a Civilian Irregular Defense Group operating at the American airstrip here were defeated in an enemy attack and forced to evacuate, as Communist forces overran the airfield-basecamp. It lay abandoned until July 12 of this year when elements of the Americal Division staged a combat assault to regain the dormant airstrip.

The remants of the 1968 battle at Kham Duc still haunted the deserted area as the lifeless hulks of wrecked airplanes construction equipment and helicopters cluttered the skirts of the runway.

Captain Robert Henderson, special forces aid detachment commander at Kham Duc from October of 1967 to the time of the attack, was aboard the last plane to leave the runway during the emergency extraction as enemy forces broke through the base camp perimeter. He recalled that "the enemy was coming from all directions, surrounding the camp." The Second Battalion, First Infantry of the 196th Brigade was dispatched to the area and assisted in the successful evacuation of civilians and American troops from the airstrip, which suffered heavily from the intense rocket and mortar barrages.

The "Legionaires" of the Second of the First Infantry have returned to Kham Duc, accompanied this time by U.S. Army engineer and artillery support, logistics personnel and equipment, South Vietnamese soldiers, U.S. Army Rangers, a U.S. Air Force mobility unit and a SeaBee Construction team.

Kham Duc was blistering hot, barren, and dangerous when Americal soldiers arrived on July 12, with nothing to look forward to but long hours of back-breaking work. To complicate matters, the enemy had planted more than 150 booby-trapped mortar rounds around the airstrip, as well as burying them in the runway itself. After explosive ordinance teams removed the booby traps from the strip,

engineers began packing and patching the holes in the runway to meet the incoming aircraft schedule.

All along the strip, sweat-soaked men with shovels and picks worked in the blazing Vietnamese sun. Dump trucks loaded with dirt and rock, bulldozers and earth movers hurried to repair the airfield in time, working from the crack of dawn until the sun's last glistening rays disappeared at dusk. The hardtop was repaired on schedule and readied for the arrival of C-130 cargo ships loaded with supplies to sustain the Kham Duc operations.

Runway repairs completed on time, the first supply plane swooped over the mountains and touched down, skidding over the once highly explosive strip--the first allied aircraft to land at Kham Duc since May 1968. "It felt pretty good to see him land," beamed Captain Aaron Evans, commanding officer of Alpha Company, 26th Engineers. Air Force Staff Sergeant Jessie Ritchie, who was aboard the airplane, described the landing as "real good," adding that similar flights would be capable of transporting up to 400,000 pounds of ammunition per day.

The construction crews, infantry and artillery units 'dug in" at the Kham Duc airstrip in the same place where the Special Forces were in 1968.

Water purification units were once again operating from a small underground water outlet and logistics poured in from resupply crafts. Everyone worked together to build from the ground up. "It would take a long time to get this place back to where it once was," observed one engineer.

Much evidence of the enemy's presence in the area was found during searches by the 26th Engineers and patrols conducted by elements of the Second of the First. Large caches of ammunition, including a find of 1,420 rounds of .51 caliber ammo, were uncovered.

Rising perpendicular to the runway is a mountain called Kala which was bombed by B-52's the day before the assault in July of this year. With the trees atop the mountain blown away by the airstrikes, the 6th ARVN Regiment, working with American coordinators, inserted on Kala to set up a base camp and take advantage of the highland.

With the ARVN securing the high ground around the airstrip, and with ARVN and American units operating in the area, a near secure feeling now prevails at Kham Duc. But this feeling was virtually unknown when the troops first landed there. "I didn't know what to expect. And believe me, I was scared," claimed Private First Class Earl McDaniel.

But there was one man who did have a idea of what to expect. The area was not unfamiliar to him. Master Sergeant David H. Doughty, spent some time at Kham Duc and its vicinity nearly four years ago.

Now on his second tour in Vietnam, Sergeant Doughty scanned the seemingly impregnable terrain as he recalled, "I was here for two weeks in September, 1966, when I served with the Fifth Special Forces." A member of a reconnaissance team, Sergeant Doughty knew only too well the difficulties and danger of the dense jungle underbrush and the eerie triple-canopy ceiling which characterizes the region.

Soldiers of the 6th ARVN Regiment insert on LZ Kala, overlooking Kham Duc.

Americal infantrymen await orders to move out, following insertion at Kham Duc.

Sergeant Doughty noted some of the things U.S. units discovered on the first day of this recent takeover. "We found a trench complex that had been used recently because the engineers found new rucksacks medical supplies and fresh fish." He estimated that the enemy had used the area as a fighting position as recently as a day before the Americans moved in. "A lot of physical work goes into building a base camp like this," he continued.

"Two of the most hated things the Army has to do is to dig dirt and fill sandbags--but these guys are really putting out and getting a lot accomplished.

Aside from a few men who had been to Kham Duc in the past, there was other evidence of American presence in the area. Members of the 3/82nd Artillery found an old 105 millimeter howitzer round on the northwest side of the runway.

There was something very unique about the round. Painting on the shell casing indicated that it was the 100,000th round from Alpha Battery, 3/82nd Artillery. The battery was forced to leave the round behind during the hasty evacuation years before and it never had the opportunity to fire it.

The men who returned to dig in at Kham Duc on July 12th are no longer newcomers or transient travelers. They have once again, made the remote firebase their home--at least for a while. The physical mental and strain of securing the area is over, but the men must still perform their daily tasks and maintain a constant vigil at the westernmost outpost of the Americal Division. ▲

A trooper "talks down" a CH-54 "Sky Crane" carrying a howitzer for initial operations at the Kham Duc airstrip.

Minh Mang's Palace

By SP4 John Del Vecchio
101st Abn Div-IO

A monument overlooking the moat

An ornate palace pillar

Surrounded by pine trees, the Emperor Minh Mang's estate stands abandoned near Hue.

As one travels west on Highway 547, west past the woodcutter's camp and across the Pohl Bridge and the Song Huong River, west to the very edge of the coastal plain where the mountains begin to rise, one finds enclosed within a ten-foot concrete wall the aged palace of the emperor Minh Mang.

The countryside in and around the ancient, imperial city of Hue is dotted with architectual remnants of Vietnam's colorful history. The castles, palaces and tombs of the Vietnamese emperors reflect this nation's past glories and struggles. Emperor Minh Mang's palace is such a place.

Minh Mang reigned over a united Vietnam from 1820 to 1841, a period characterized by a second wave of European colonization.

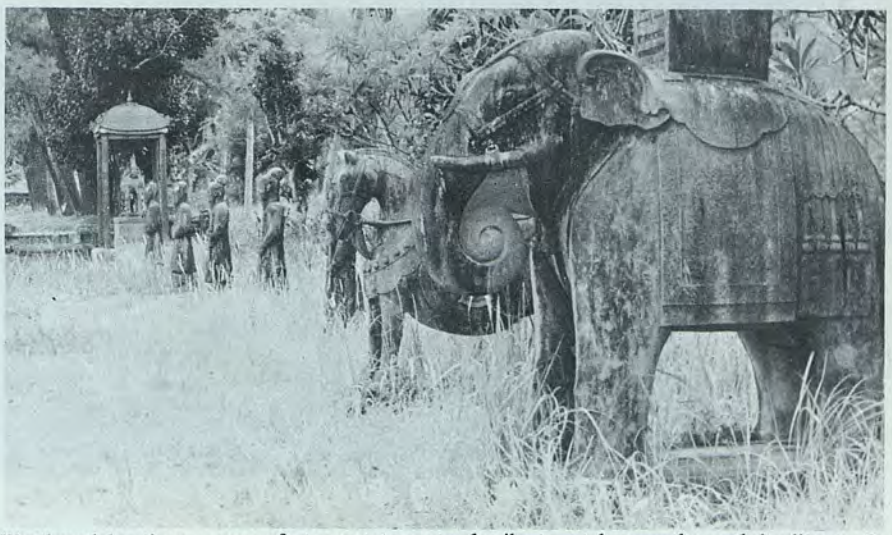
In Vietnam, French Catholic missionaries were pushing for colonial interests. French businessmen were envious of the British opium trade in China and French naval officials felt threatened by the Spanish in the Phillipines and the British in Hong Kong.

During the early years of his rule Minh Mang followed a policy of isolation which kept Vietnam ignorant of advances in technology and weaponry. He was disenchanted with western influences in his Confucian state and by the middle 1830's the emperor was persuing a policy of persecution against the foreign missionaries.

To approach the emperor's palace, one must leave the highway and walk through the small village of Ap Lien Bang. A mysterious feeling is evoked in the visitor as he walks down the narrow dirt path to a small, ornate gate subdued by time to a faded gray.

One enters the quietness of Minh Mang's 19th century courtyard, crosses a narrow stone bridge over a lush moat covered with water lillies and passes into a second courtyard. The court is made of one-foot-square blocks of stone.

In two opposing, symmetrical rows 14 stone figures – an elephant, a charging horse and five wise war lords on either side – stand watch over the walkway leading to Minh Mang's sepulchre.



Weathered by time, a row of stone statues stands silent watch over the path leading to the Emperor Minh Mang's tomb.

As you climb the steps to the first temple, you become aware of the sounds of your own footfalls. All is quiet. In a marble tomb the emperor rests.

Across a second courtyard lined with feast halls is the building in which the emperor's guests slept. French dignitaries and Chinese envoys spent many a night here, practicing and preparing the presentations they would give to the monarch the next day.

Beyond this building another balanced courtyard introduces the throne room. The stillness in the air grows more intense as you cross the court and approach the stone dragons, guarding the steps to Minh Mang's seat of power.

The throne room is dark. The red and gold laquered walls and pillars decorated with five-clawed dragons, symbolizing ultimate power, create an eerie feeling. From within this same throne room, the Emperor Minh Mang gave the orders which condemned seven French missionaries.

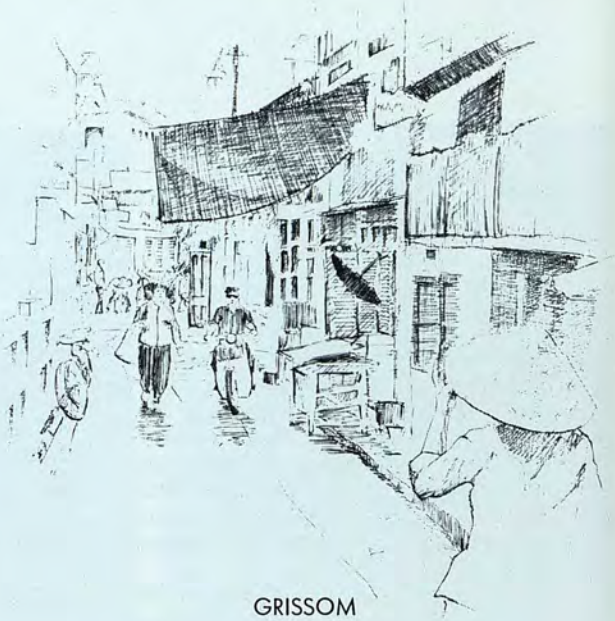
Behind the throne room and across yet another courtyard stands a tall, ornate structure, the top floor of which Minh Mang used as a study. It was in this room that the emperor made his important decisions.

Minh Mang had concentrated the supreme powers in his office. He was the "Illustrious Mandatary of Heaven" and he did not have to consult the will of the people in order to make a decision. The mandarins at each echelon of officialdom performed their duties according to what they believed to be in keeping with the natural order and, of course, in keeping with the directives of the emperor.

At the base of the steps leading up to the towering study lies a giant moat, spanned by a long, narrow bridge to the foot of the inner wall where, for some reason, the total silence seems to forewarn an impending storm. A soft breeze sways the wide leaves of the banana trees surrounding the moat, but still there is complete quiet.

The Emperor Minh Mang's palace and gardens are untouched by the sounds of the Song Huong River and the rumble of military vehicles thundering back and forth on Highway 547. Only the singing of birds, the gentle wind in the trees and the click of your footsteps on the stone walk penetrate the peaceful tranquility of the emperor's palace. ▲

GRISSOM



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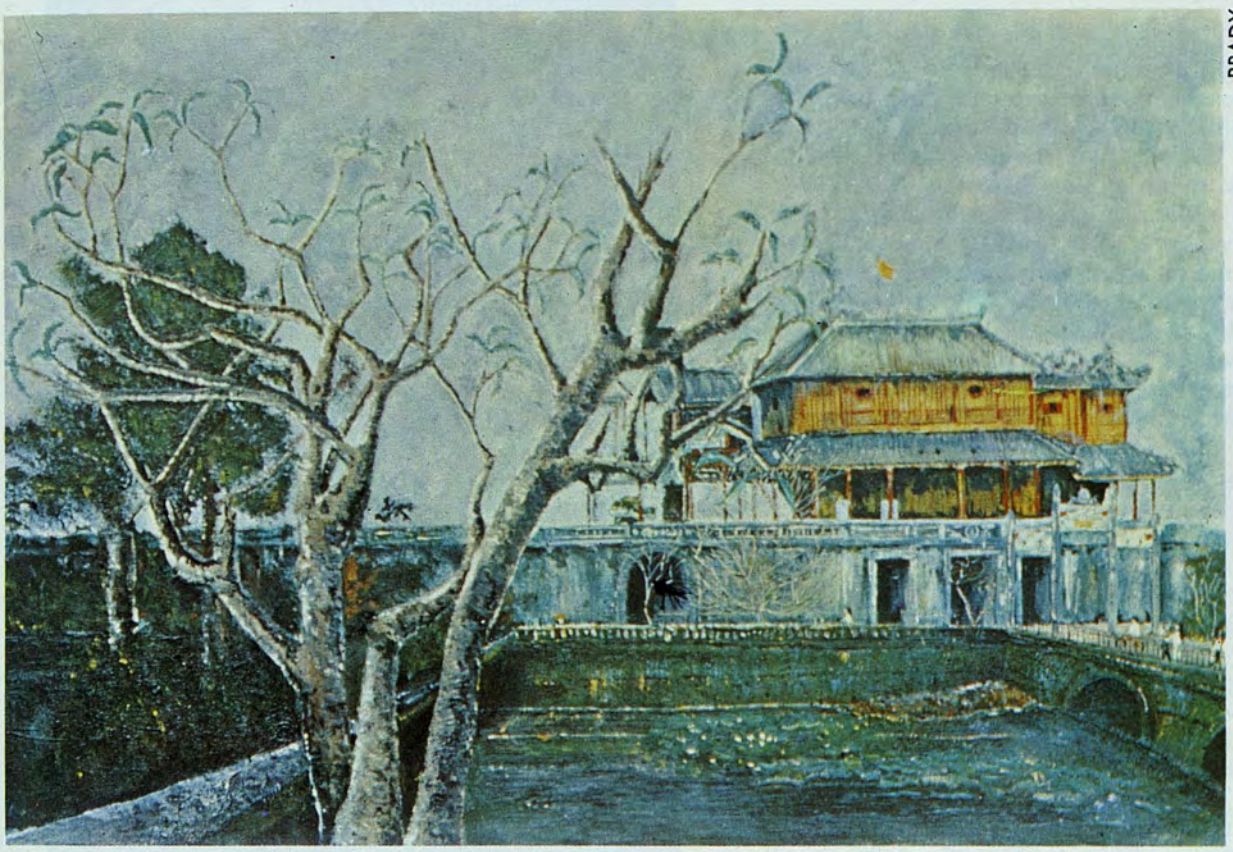
Art: People and Places

BRADY



BRADY

GRISSOM

Impressions by
SP4 Michael Brady
101st Abn Div-IO
and
SP5 Kenneth Grissom
SEAPC

GRISSOM

A Tale of Rice

By SP4 Steve Warner
UpTight Staff Writer

A Skytrooper packs rice to the pick up point.

A serving of rice is a simple thing to many people. To an American, it might mean something different, for a change, with the evening meal. To a Japanese, it may be taken for granted as a common staple. But to a Montagnard tribesman, born and raised deep in the Cambodian jungle, it is a way of life.

When an American infantry unit happened upon a North Vietnamese rice cache in late May, just across the Cambodian border, the significance of rice met with varied interpretations. For Bun Loeung, a Cambodian Montagnard, the rice meant sustenance for his wife and infant son. For the soldiers who discovered it, the rice meant extra work that they hadn't planned on. And to the troops at Fire Support Base Neil, where the cache ended up, the rice meant a miniature circus every two days.

Alpha Company, 5th Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) found the rice after they had been in Cambodia nearly a month, most of the time tromping through the jungle in search of "Charlie" and his supplies.

On this particular day the Skytroopers spotted a small hut where it appeared someone recently had been living. As one trooper recalled the discovery, "We checked a little further down the trail and ran into the rice, stacked neatly in 110 and 220 pound sacks, on three raised hootches with some sort of plastic covering the stacks."

With 41 tons of rice discovered, the Americans turned their attention to clearing a landing zone out of the jungle. Swinging machetes, they rapidly cleared the area of underbrush. But the giant hardwood trees that remained demanded a heftier weapon. Each tree was literally blown out of the ground, sawed into negotiable sections and removed.

Even with the aid of a chain saw and a small motorized wagon, the project took six days.

After the landing zone was cleared, the soldiers continued to work. Under the supervision of special Army riggers, the men found themselves transformed from lumberjacks into stevedores, charged with removing the bags from the hootches and loading them onto the shipping palets. But unlike the stevedores back home, the soldiers found themselves the object of sniper fire on several occasions as they headed off to work.

The actual removal of the rice from the jungle floor was accomplished in a series of two-minute dramas. Out of nowhere, great twin-engined Chinook helicopters swept in over the tree line, hovering just long enough to snatch up the rice-laden palets and exit through the green jungle canopy.

With the rice airlifted out, the men of Alpha Company headed back into the jungle. Moving the rice had been hard work, but it had also broken the monotony of humping through the jungle and made a few days pass a little quicker than usual. For the men of "Alpha," the faster the days passed, the sooner everyone would be "back in the world" with their families and friends.

The rice they found meant a bit more than hard work to Bun Loeung, the Cambodian Montagnard. In fact he might consider the rice cache a matter of life and death.

Unlike the Americans, Bun Loeung's family was not

10,000 miles away. His wife and infant son lived with him in the Cambodian jungle and both might have starved without the rice discovered that week.

When the allied thrust into Cambodia had begun in early May, Bun Loeung and the other villagers had found themselves unintentionally caught in the middle of a giant squeeze play. The North Vietnamese Army, desperate for rice and finding the villagers unwilling to sell it because of a shortage, began to take the precious staple by force. At the same time, allied artillery fire and bombing convinced the villagers that they should abandon their scattered hamlets and fields and relocate in one huge village close to the 5th of the 67th's base camp, Fire Support Base Neil. The confused tribesmen thus found themselves stripped of their basic food and denied the ability to procure more.

As events worked out, Bun Loeung's need for the rice offered the 5th Battalion a neat solution to a mounting problem. Transporting captured enemy supplies back to Vietnam was tying up a great many helicopters. The more rice the battalion could distribute locally in Cambodia, the less need there would be for the helicopters to haul it back to storage areas in South Vietnam.

The battalion's proposal to distribute the rice to the local population quickly received the approval from higher headquarters. But problems still remained--how much rice should be reserved for the refugees and how could they be assured that the rice would not end up being seized by the North Vietnamese all over again.

Bun Loeung and hundreds like him poured into the refugee village. On some days the village's population increased by 40 people. After consulting the refugees, a projected population maximum of approximately 650 was established for the village and 12 tons of rice delivered to FSB Neil for that purpose.

To solve the second problem the battalion decided to store the bulk of the rice at the fire base and distribute it only in amounts sufficient to last two days. The result was that every two days the villagers had to climb the hill separating them from the base to receive their rice ration.

Just outside the gate they were met by the battalion interpreter, a marine on loan to the Army. After exchanging greetings and small talk, the interpreter would lead the group to the huge pile of rice bags just within the fire base perimeter.

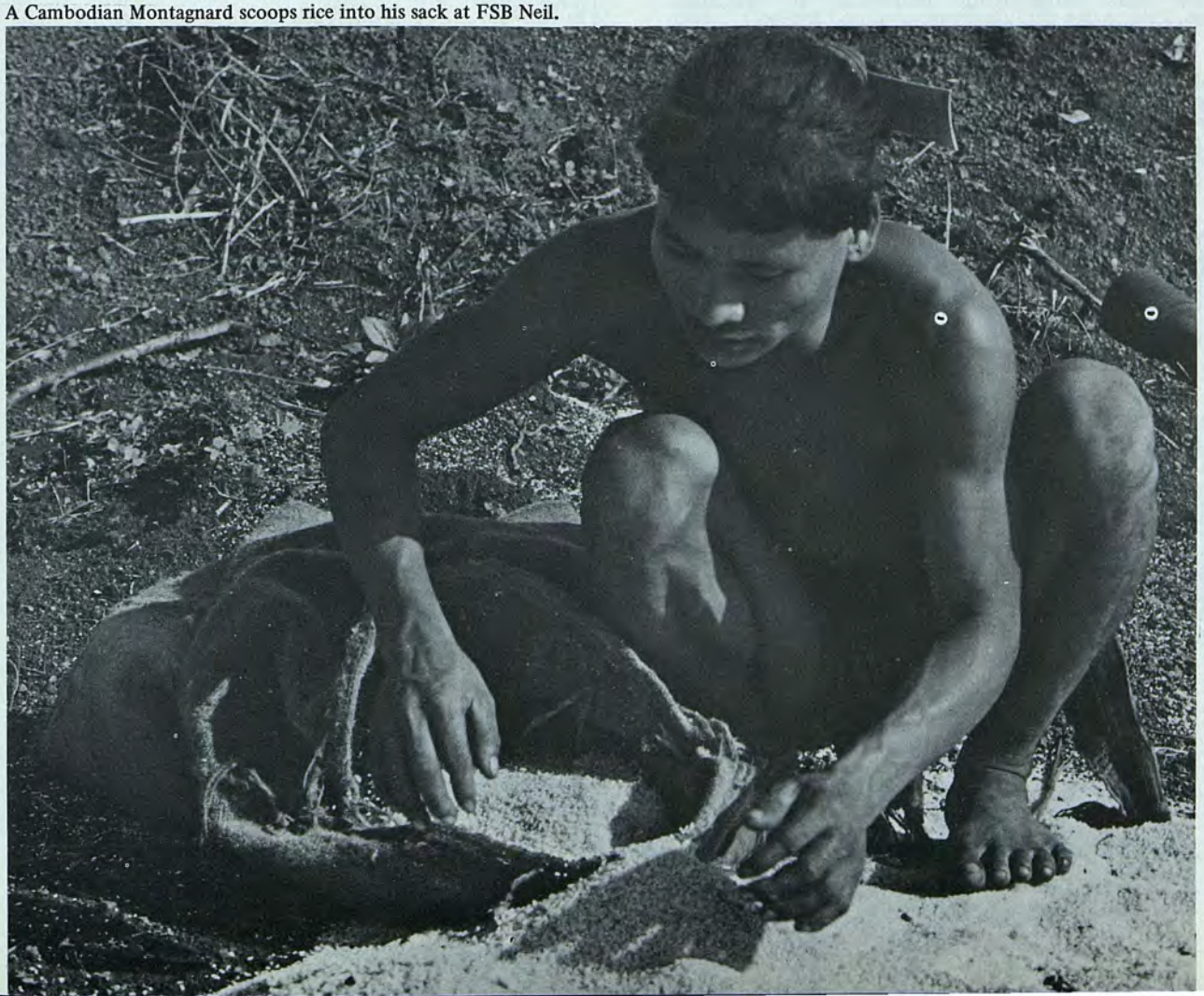
If the weather was bad or the trail slippery from rain, the villagers cut the sacks open and scooped the white grains into large baskets which they then carried back to their village below.

If the weather was good, Fire Support Base Neil was in for a treat. Accompanying the long file of villagers, clomping their way up the winding trail, would be an ox cart and a lone elephant.

Whenever the elephant came, a crowd of laughing, camera-toting soldiers suddenly gathered from nowhere and, for ten or fifteen minutes, the circus came to FSB Neil. One day amidst cries of delight, a grinning soldier cautiously approached the grey behemoth to offer him an orange. With a flip of his trunk the orange disappeared, as did the two which followed in close succession.

On another occasion, as the villagers struggled to hoist

A Cambodian Montagnard scoops rice into his sack at FSB Neil.



the huge sacks of grain onto the kneeling elephant's back, he began to rise, thinking their shouts of "up' meant for him to stand. Shutters snapped as the soldiers scrambled back and forth to capture the "perfect shot" for the folks back home.

Each trip was a glorious show, a wonderful break in the monotony of working on a fire base and a unique treat for troops just back from the field. But all too quickly the rice baskets would be full, the rice sacks secure, and the loin-clothed men, colorfully dressed women, ox cart and elephant would be on their way back down the hill to their village. On one occasion a soldier, captivated by the sight of an elephant, exclaimed, "That's what I should have been, an elephant driver. Except I'd miss those four gears."

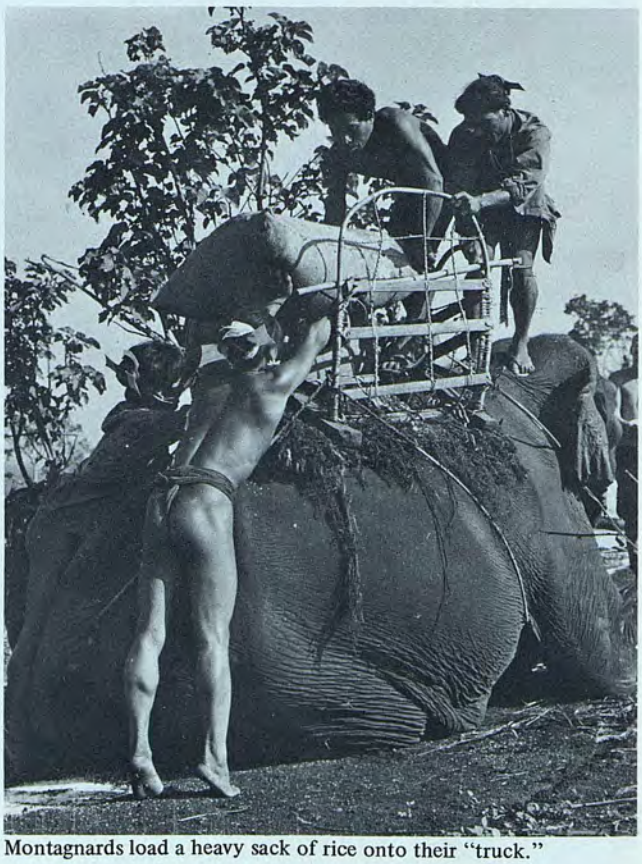
In a sense the rice cache cycle ended there at the fire base gate. Alpha Company's rice was back in Bun Loeung's hands. But what happened to the rice after it left the base was the most interesting part of the rice's journey.

Upon their arrival at the village, the bags of rice were welcomed by a crowd of men, women and children clutching an infinite variety of empty containers. Several men took charge of the distribution and, one by one, each household head would step forward to receive his share of the rice. Last but not least, the elephant, if he had been cooperative, would receive his share--an entire 220-pound sack of rice.

Turned over to the village women, the rice was destined for any one of a number of fates. Some was simply poured into large fresh bamboo stalks, cooked over an open fire and eaten with greens, bits of pork, chicken or duck. The rest would be pounded into flour in giant mortars and made into bread or noodles.

There was something marvelous in watching freshly-extruded rice noodles fall into a pot of boiling water in the heart of the Cambodian jungle--with a war going on all about. It was even more marvelous if you knew the story behind the rice. ▲

The offer of an apple by a 1st Cav soldier receives no more than a passing glance, as the Montagnard's elephant chews contentedly on his rice ration.



Montagnards load a heavy sack of rice onto their "truck."

Tiger, Tiger

By SP5 Stan Grayson
USARV-IO

Down in the Mekong Delta, where the brown rivers lace their sluggish way to the South China Sea, Soc Trang Army Airfield swelters amid the rice paddies.

There are no U.S. infantry units in the Delta anymore and it is up to the ARVNs and their U.S. air support to secure the region which produces two-thirds of Vietnam's rice.

The airfield is home for the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion, the "Guardians of the Mekong," whose helicopters rove all over IV Military Region. They have them all at Soc Trang---the bristling gunships, assault ships laden with their rocket pods, sleek Cobras and stubby observation choppers. These are the 13th's warbirds, their bodies streaked with gunsmoke. Nose cones bear the companies' escutcheons, bosomy women, leering shark mouths, warriors and Vikings.

The oldest helicopter company in the Delta is there too---the 121st Assault Helicopter Company, the "Soc Trang Tigers," who came to the Delta in 1961. Fighting in a war that has created few legends, the "Tigers" can lay claim to a helicopter famous throughout the Delta. Wherever aviators gather in IV Military Region, the story of the "Tiger Surprise" lightship is known to all.

The legend began in 1968 when the chopper, used primarily to lay smokescreens during ground assaults, was converted into a night fighter. Out came the smokelaying gear and the UH1-D "Huey" was equipped with a cluster of powerful landing lights, a minigun, 40mm cannon and machineguns.

"Its mission was to provide airfield defense during hours of darkness," said Captain Thomas S. Catalano, former adjutant of the 13th. "It could also be called to support any ground units under attack."

As the helicopter was being refitted, the call went out for a volunteer pilot. It was answered by Warrant Officer Robert L. Hoffmann II, who Captain Catalano described as "the boy next door."

"He was quiet and shy and rarely seen at the officer's club," Captain Catalano recalled. "He was quite a guy and the 'Tiger Surprise' became quite a bird."

Catalano explained that in the Vietnam war, light is one of the worst enemies of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army who view darkness as their special province for attacks. Flying at altitudes from 1,000 feet to below tree top level, the sudden beam of WO Hofmann's craft was to fatally surprise hundreds of lurking enemy soldiers.

"He made the 'Tiger Surprise' a full-time job," said Warrant Officer Rickey Thomas, who flew as Hofmann's co-pilot for several weeks. "He stuck his neck out all the time to get the job done. He was very skillful and very lucky."

WO Hofmann's missions were varied. When he wasn't patrolling the area around Soc Trang, he answered calls from beleaguered ARVN outposts. Time and again, the lightships's bright beam illuminated surprised enemy troops who were taken under fire by the gunners.

"On one occasion we received a report of a Viet Cong cadre meeting," Captain Catalano remembered. "Hofmann arrived at the location and found the meeting being held aboard a sampan manned by seven VC."

Lights blazing, guns firing, "Tiger Surprise" hovered in, sinking the sampan even as more enemy troops opened fire on the chopper from a treeline. The crew returned the fire before flicking off the lights and blending back into the night like a ghost.

Repeated incidents like this led the Viet Cong to place a price on Hofmann's head---he was a marked man. They set up a trap to ensnare their nemisis of seven months, but were too late. WO Hofmann completed his Army service and returned home safely. Another lightship, however, fell to the enemy trap.

With WO Hofmann safely in the U.S., the luck of the "Tiger Surprise" had run out. On a humid night in early May 1970, the lightship's new commander received a report of enemy movement. Warrant Officer Ed Skuza guided his ship down, sweeping at low level along the road to Soc Trang, hunting. Now the bright beam lanced out. It was 12:15 a.m.

Cruising easily above the "Tiger Surprise," another chopper crew witnessed what happened next. There was a sudden flash below them as a B40 rocket scored a direct hit on WO Skuza's rushing ship. It crashed heavily. Laden with ammunition, the "Tiger Surprise" exploded, a fierce pyre on the roadway below.

The other helicopter circled down to the wreckage. Over the radio they sent out the shocked message---"No survivors." Suddenly there was the rattle of small arms fire from below---enemy soldiers were still down there. The door-gunners opened up with their machineguns, scarlet tracers arcing through the night. The enemy disappeared.

Back down on the ground, the chopper crew saw the impossible---four dark figures stumbling dazedly, silhouetted by the glare of flames. One man hobbled on the stumps of legs, his feet completely gone. Two more were severely burned. The survivors were gathered into the Huey and quickly flown to the hospital at Bien Tuy. Only WO Skuza and his co-pilot lived.

The bodies of two crewmen were extricated from the lightship's remains the next day and the wreckage cleared away. When the shock of the loss wore off, the expolits of the 'Tiger Surprise" were tallied.

During its life span the lightship had proven itself more effective per hour than any helicopter in the Mekong Delta. "They were credited with saving 30 outposts which otherwise might have fallen,' Captain Catalano recalled. "That's in addition to some 1,000 enemy soldiers killed."

But the story of the chopper with the cigar-chomping tiger on its nose was not over. From the charred wreckage, its spirit rose Phoenix-like until a successor was outfitted in all the plummage of a night bird.

Once again the midnight skies above the table-flat Delta harbor their invisible warrior. At the controls now is 20-year-old Warrant Officer Robert Olson.

"The only time I've been shot up is during the day," said WO Olson. "Nights were tricky at first, especially adjusting your eyes to using the light, but I like my job."

WO Olson is young and, with youth's assurance, he says his job is no more dangerous than any other involving helicopters in Vietnam. Incredibly, under the spell of the Hofmann legend, one can almost believe him. ▲


The Pipesmoke Story
Cartoons and Story by SP4 Bronnie Smith 520th Trans Bn-S3
PIPESMOKE
PUSH BUTTON TO HEAR THEME FROM "THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN"
LOOK UP! YOU ARE IN PIPESMOKE COUNTRY!
SAIGON CREEK
BRONNIE SMITH
17 AUG 70

The muddy water rippled across a rice paddy in Binh Duong Province as the Huey slowly lowered itself to within a few inches of the shivering rice shoots.

Thirty yards from the hovering ship lay the wreckage of a light observation helicopter, half-buried in the knee-deep mud. Three members of the Pipesmoke recovery team scrambled from the hovering chopper and waded toward the downed aircraft.

Rigging an LOH was a simple operation under normal conditions, but from experience the riggers knew that pulling out an LOH stuck in two feet of mud was a tricky operation.

After removing the rotor blades and loading them aboard the lift ship, a head adaptor and sling was attached to the rotor head of the downed chopper. By this time the rigging ship, hovering over the LOH, was being "talked down" by one of the riggers. The sling was attached to the cargo hook on the Huey's belly and the rigging job was complete.

The Huey rose gradually, the sling became taut, and the lifeless LOH began to move. Swaying and spinning precariously, dripping with mud, the wrecked chopper became airborne. Within a minute, the two ships were nothing more than specks on the horizon, barely visible above the tall rubber trees of a nearby plantation.

Moments later the two specks appeared on the horizon at Di An -- Pipesmoke was delivering another extracted ship back to its unit.

Amid swirling clouds of dust, the lift ship pilot slowly and cautiously lowered the LOH to the ground. A crew member "talked" the chopper down, completing this most crucial part of the recovery. The pilot breathed a sign of relief as the recovered ship lay motionless once again as it had just minutes before in the distant rice paddy. The Pipesmoke crew was now ready to return to their base at Phu Loi.

Many field missions, such as the one just described, find the Pipesmoke crews in unusual situations, in the rice paddies, rivers, canalways and dense jungle stretching across their operational area in III Military Region.

Specialist Five Calvin Schwartz, a long-time member of the Pipesmoke team, recounted the unforgettable day when "someone" blundered and felled a tree on an OH-58A "Ranger" the team was rigging.

According to SP5 Schwartz, the ship went down right in between three tall trees on top of a hill near Xuan Loc. "I think he (the pilot) purposely put the ship down there just to see if we could get it out," he said. "Anyway, we had to chop the trees down to enable the lift ship to get close enough to extract the downed aircraft. But somehow one of the trees didn't fall in the direction it was supposed to--it landed right on top of the Ranger's engine."

SP5 Schwartz explained that the engine cowling and engine were demolished from the impact of the tree. "I'm sure glad I wasn't the one who had to explain what happened to that engine," he laughed, "That was one mission we'll all remember that we'd like to forget."

Specialist Five James "Klink" Klingshirn, another veteran rigger with Pipesmoke, tells of one particular mission when one of the riggers, Specialist Five Silvio Calia, had some difficulty with his "monkey straps." A "monkey strap" is a belt that attaches to a band around the doorgunner's waist to guard against his falling out of the ship.

"We all scrambled from the hovering ship," recalled SP5 Klingshirn, "but Calia overlooked one important thing before he jumped---he forgot to unhook his monkey strap." The result was a scene similar to something out of a Three Stooges episode.

"It wasn't very funny at the time, though," Klingshirn added, "because we were under fire and everyone was hustling for cover."

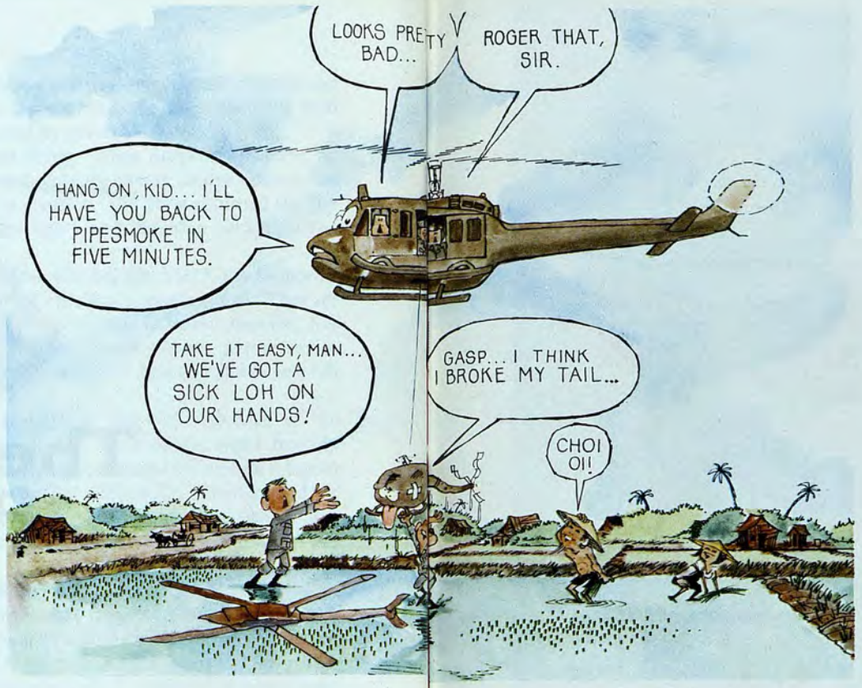
The Pipesmoke story dates back to winter, 1967, when the 605th Transportation Company at Phu Loi operated an aircraft recovery team. In February of that year the 605th became part of the 520th Transportation Battalion, consolidating the recovery capacities of each unit within the 520th. The result was a highly efficient, all-volunteer recovery team that has earned a reputation for professionalism throughout Vietnam with over 3,600 extractions to their credit.

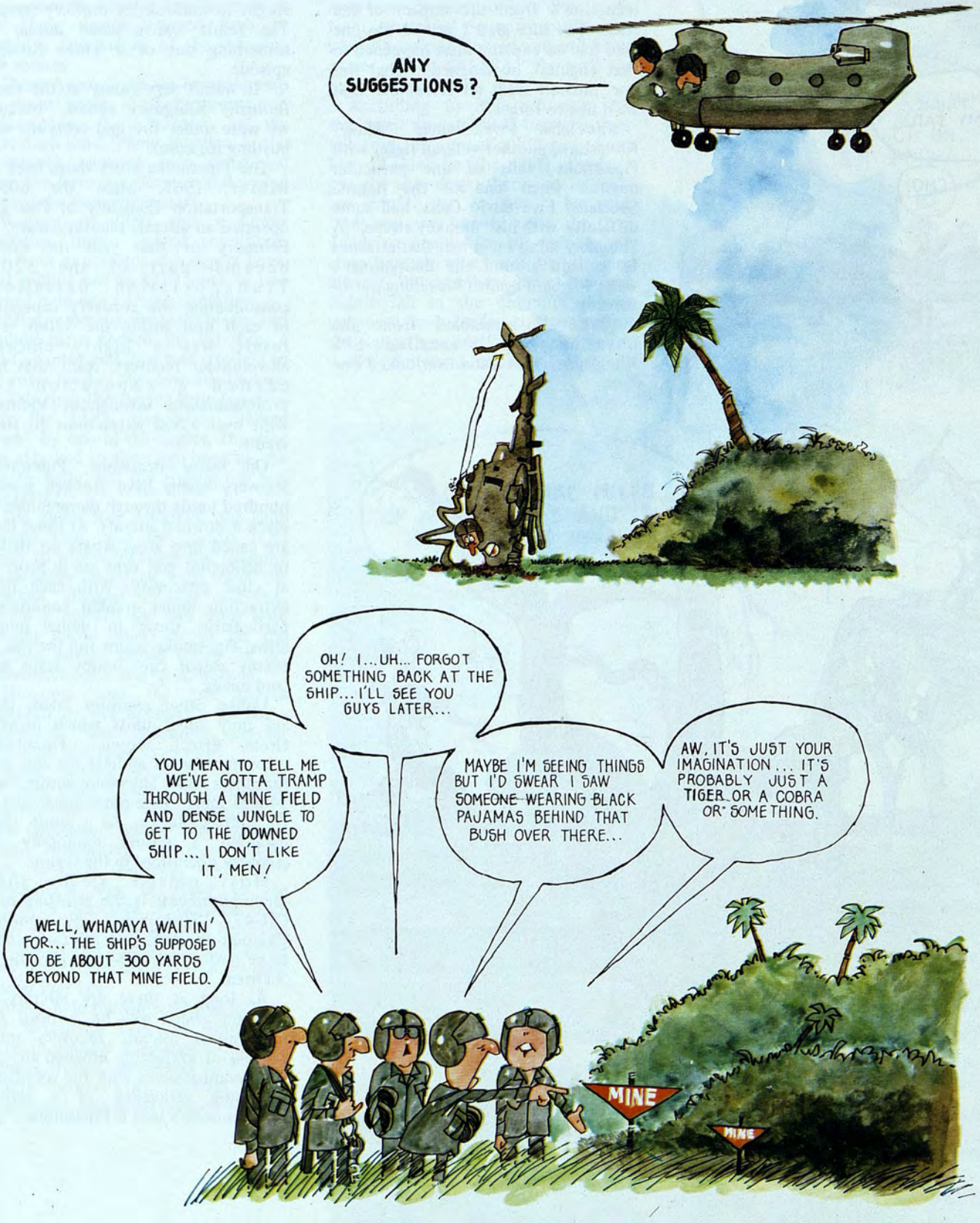
On many occasions, Pipesmoke recovery teams have trekked several hundred yards through dense jungle to reach a downed aircraft. At times they are called into areas where air strikes or helicopter gun runs are in progress at close proximity. With each field extraction under combat conditions, particularly those in dense jungle areas, Pipesmoke teams run the risk of enemy sniper fire, booby traps and land mines.

Unlike other recovery teams that aid only those units which provide them direct support, Pipesmoke recovers downed aircraft for any unit that loses a ship anywhere within their 14,000 square mile operational area in III Military Region. As a result, they maintain a virtual monopoly on recovery operations in the region.

Most notable among their accomplishments is the airlifting of a CH-47 "Chinook" by another Chinook--the first such operation ever to be performed by a recovery unit in Vietnam.

As long as there are aircraft in Vietnam there will be a need for professional aircraft recovery units capable of extracting downed aircraft from combat areas with the speed and life-saving efficiency of a skilled surgeon--such a unit is Pipesmoke. ▲




ANY SUGGESTIONS ?
OH! I...UH... FORGOT SOMETHING BACK AT THE SHIP... I'LL SEE YOU GUYS LATER...
YOU MEAN TO TELL ME WE'VE GOTTA TRAMP THROUGH A MINE FIELD AND DENSE JUNGLE TO GET TO THE DOWNED SHIP... I DON'T LIKE IT, MEN!
MAYBE I'M SEEING THINGS BUT I'D SWEAR I SAW SOMEONE WEARING BLACK PAJAMAS BEHIND THAT BUSH OVER THERE...
AW, IT'S JUST YOUR IMAGINATION... IT'S PROBABLY JUST A TIGER OR A COBRA OR SOMETHING.
WELL, WHADAYA WAITIN' FOR... THE SHIP'S SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT 300 YARDS BEYOND THAT MINE FIELD.
MINE
MINE

A soldier rides the surf at the China Beach R&R Center in Da Nang.

A Little Bit of Heaven

By SP5 Steve Brennan

UpTight Staff Writer

War is hell in general. To those in Vietnam, war is hell in particular. But in the midst of this hell, located on the brillant white sandy shoreline of the sparkling South China Sea, the China Beach In-Country R&R Center at Da Nang brings a little bit of heaven into the lives of hundreds of war-weary soldiers every month.

Entering the grounds through the wide gate of an attractive redwood fence, the soldier beginning his three-day beachcomber's holiday is treated to a view of neatly arranged, spotless buildings, varied and colorful floral arrangements, a beautiful beach and, of course, the beckoning blue waters of the sea.

Formerly the property of the U.S. Navy, the China Beach installation was transferred to the U.S. Army's Da Nang Support Command last spring. The facilities were closed during May while the staff members were selected and a complete remodeling was initiated. Officially opened in early June, the center continues to improve its facilities and expand the recreational and entertainment aspects of the R&R program.

Once on the compound, the vacationing soldier's first stop is in the spacious, well-appointed reception lounge and billeting office. Here the men are quickly processed by an efficient, courteous and very friendly desk staff. The men are assigned a bunk in one of the fourteen enlisted guest huts or the nine officer's rooms and issued their R&R center club pass. This little index-card-sized pass becomes their "ticket to happiness" for the next three days. It is used for identification and admission to the facilities of the center during their stay.

For the beach enthusiast these facilities are magnificient. Swimmers and non-swimmers alike can derive equal pleasure in the refreshing, calm ocean waters. The pure white beach and gradually sloping ocean floor provide beauty and enjoyment for all aquatic tastes.

If you are a little more adventurous, take your R&R pass and ID card to the lifeguard's beach hut, check out one of the fifty surfboards and challenge the crashing surf. A trip around the blue waters behind a powerful Boston whaler simply requires a swim to the floating raft that serves as a water skier's pick-up point.

If sailing is on your list of interests, there's no problem. The center maintains six sail boats and each afternoon gives instruction on the techniques of piloting these pleasurable little craft. Snorkling equipment is there for the asking and early morning fishing trips are frequently on the agenda of beach activities.

Even if the water doesn't appeal to you, bring a bathing suit anyway. The beach itself is too good to pass up whether you're involved in a fast game of touch football or quietly improving your tan on a comfortable beach blanket. And frequent glimpses of the bikini-clad lovelies dotting the beach make at least one stroll along the three-quarter mile stretch of sand a daily necessity for girl-watchers and camera buffs.

With a combined military and civilian staff totalling more

than 300, the center's facilities are not limited to beach activities alone. The air-conditioned reception lounge provides easy chairs, piped in music and up-to-date magazines for those who want a quiet place to relax, read or write letters. For even more solitude, the center's library facility is available at all hours. The library is soon to be expanded to include tape rooms, writing rooms, a lounge and an additional 4,000 volumes.

Located adjacent to the mess hall, an air-conditioned, glass-enclosed recreation room provides a fine view of the beach along with its seven full sized pool tables, three bumper pool tables and table shuffle board.

And what about that mess hall? After a trip to the serve-yourself salad bar, with its variety of tasteful delights to choose from, you don't have to leave your chair until the meal is over. Attractive and friendly waitresses take your order from a varied and complete menu. The breakfast menu has more than twenty choices every morning, from the traditional bacon and eggs to delicious Spanish omelets. Lunches and dinners offer a minimum of three entrees with a variety of side dishes and beverages. Complimentary beer is available at all meals, except breakfast, and the fresh-baked pies and cakes as well as homemade ice cream make dessert hard to resist.

Cookouts are every third night, with all the charcoal-broiled steak you can eat featured as the main attraction. Plenty of cold beer, great salads and desserts make this event, set in a beautiful pine grove on the beach, a must for everyone.

Worried about your waistline after all that delicious food? Well don't. Just put on your tennis shoes and head for the center's complete gymnasium. You'll find hand ball, tennis courts, volley ball, basketball and weight lifting all part of the program. Next to the gym there is a well managed USO with recreational and lounging facilities available.

If you're up for a little night life, the center offers that too. The "Surfrider Inn" opens at 9 a.m. daily and provides a wide variety of drinks and snacks. Entertainment is on hand nightly with gorgeous girls and some good sounds to groove on. The inn's huge patio, which commands a beautiful view of the water, is a great place to relax with a drink under the stars. Hot dogs and sandwiches are also available on the patio at night.

You can catch an early movie in the beautiful outdoor amphitheater (there are indoor facilities for rainy nights) or take in the late show after the club closes. Three different movies are screened nightly at eight, ten and midnight.

It may be difficult, but if you can tear yourself away from the beach one afternoon during your three-day stay, then take in the center's Da Nang bus tour. It's a must for shutter bugs and those who dig museums, temples and other cultural sights. The tour's final stop comes at the top of towering Monkey Mountain where the panorama of the sea, the harbor and the entire Da Nang area is a truly magnificient sight. While there, you can also tour the studios of AFVN if you'd like a glimpse of the network's radio and television operations.

Among the center's other attractions, you'll find a beer and soda snack bar located on the beach, a gift shop, two-day laundry service, an exchange right on the beach, a barber shop, a spacious officer's club and a come-as-you-are chapel.

Surfboard in hand, a trooper checks the waves at China Beach.

Established to provide commanders with a means to reward deserving enlisted men, junior officers and warrant officers with a short rest from their rigorous duties, the center has the capacity to handle 16 officers and 236 enlisted men during each three-day period. Since its opening in early June the center has averaged only 60 per cent occupancy, but as unit commanders become aware of the center's operation, the staff forsees further expansion of the program. Each unit in Vietnam is allocated a particular number of R&R's monthly by USARV Special Services. The center is now capable of entertaining 160 officers and 2,360 enlisted men each month.

Should you be planning an R&R at China Beach, take along some civilian clothes. You can wear your uniform, but "civies" are the rule, not the exception. You'll see very few uniforms in this relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The center is well-run, with an excellent staff whose only concern is to make your stay a pleasurable one. Improvements are constantly being made, with the partitioning and air conditioning of the enlisted men's beach huts the current priority project.

An in-country R&R is a wonderful experience and a great morale booster. The beach is great, the water and weather almost always beautiful, the food is delicious and the entertainment spectacular. The China Beach R&R Center is, without question, a little bit of heaven in Vietnam. ▲

Sailboats abound at China Beach.

Enjoying in-country R&R at its best, a soldier heads for the surf with his date.

Nevah Hoppen!

Only in the strange world of the combat soldier can humor come from the sources that "Nevah Hoppen!" If you have some ideas for funny captions for this picture, send them to "Nevah Hoppen," USARV-IO, APO 96375. If we use one of your ideas in the follow-up to this issue's picture, you'll receive personal copies of the next three editions of UpTight (sent to you anywhere in the world). Some of our gaglines for this picture:

- Phew! This guy must never wash his hair.
- Short!
- Hey, Sarge, have you got my breakfast ready?

Soaking some sun in her private pool, our Florida cutie thinks that swimming all alone is "numbah ten." Photo by Girlography-Around-The-World.

LAST ISSUE'S WINNERS

"Why didn't I take my R&R in Taipei?"
—SP4 Thomas W. Frech, 147th LEM Co

"I knew if I broke my mirror I'd end up here."
—SP4 Paul O. Yonkin, R&W Co OPS

"Let's see. No longer than the middle of the ear, horizontal to the ground, parallel to the nose..."
—PFC Gary Washburn, 509th Radio Research Group

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