



II FIELD FORCE
VIETNAM
LTG JULIAN J. EWELL
COMMANDING
GENERAL
LTC A. R. MORGAN
Information Officer



Angels in Red Hats

508th Infantry



The Red Devils

Jungle boots and helicopters have replaced jump boots and parachutes, but the "Fury from the Sky" spirit of the First Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry continues to thrive in Vietnam today.

With the First and Second Battalions (Airborne), 505th Infantry, the "Red Devils" of the 508th form the Third Brigade of the "All American" 82d Airborne Division. And like their parent unit, the "Red Devils" have helped to write the modern history of airborne warfare.

October 20, 1942, saw the activation of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Camp Blanding, Florida. Fourteen months later, the 508th arrived in Ireland and joined the 82d. D-Day, June 6, 1944, soon arrived and the "Red Devils" blazed their way into history on the Cotentin Peninsula. For their part in the Normandy Invasion, the regiment received the Distinguished Unit Citation.

By the end of World War II, the 508th had fought in the Ardennes-Alsace and crossed the Rhine into Central Europe.

These exploits are now symbolized in the crest of the 508th Infantry. The blue shield of infantry is crossed by a diagonal silver stripe recalling the crossing of the Rhine River. On that stripe, a red lion commemorates the fierce combat in France. Engraved upon a silver scroll the 508th motto, "Fury from the Sky," completes the emblem.

Since the end of that era these crests have appeared on the epaulettes of paratroopers ready to deploy rapidly to trouble spots anywhere in the world.

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, was such a spot when the "Red Devils" landed on April 30, 1965. Spearheaded by the First Bn, 508th Inf, the 82d Airborne blunted the rebellion and by the end of October, the battalion had returned to Fort Bragg, N.C.

Two years and four months later, the men of the First of the 508th were in combat again—this time in Southeast Asia. Since that day in February, 1968, the enemy has felt their punch from the Central Highlands to the rice fields of III Corps. Although nylon canopies no longer transport them to the enemy, when the "Red Devils" catch "Charlie," "Charlie" catches hell.



DRAMA TEAM

P. 5

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COMMANDING
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LTC A. R. MORGAN
Information Officer
MAJ W. R. GOODRICH
Deputy Information
Officer
SSM E. C. BRADLEY
Sergeant Major
16TH PUBLIC
INFORMATION
DETACHMENT
CPT G. T. COX
Editor, *The Hurricane*
CPT J. O. HANEY JR.
Assistant Information
Officer
1LT T. A. SILEO
Press Officer
1LT C. R. BABCOCK
Radio-TV Officer
SFC H. Taylor R-TV
Supervisor; SFC D. E.
Kidd Information Super-
visor; SP4 D. E. Ripley
Administrative Special-
ist; SP4 J. S. Puckett
Broadcast Specialist; SP4
P. Dunn Broadcast Special-
ist; SP4 K. Heinrichs
Information Specialist;
SP4 C. R. Houser Broad-
cast Specialist; SP4 D.
Sokol Information Special-
ist; SP4 D. L. French
Personnel Specialist; SP4
D. L. Fleming Informa-
tion Specialist; SP4 S.
Wood Information Special-
ist; SP4 J. F. Green-
field Information Special-
ist; SP4 J. M. Herman
Information Specialist;
SP4 M. Ritzman Combat
Artist
53D SIGNAL
BATTALION
Photo Support

Staff Sergeant Nguyen Thi Kim Quynh (front cover by Sp/5 Jerry Cleveland) is part of the Vietnamese strategic reserve. The 20-year old Saigon beauty is a parachutist with the ARVN Airborne Division, Vietnam's ready reaction force. SFC Don Kidd reviews the unit beginning on page 30.

Charcoal production in Binh Tuy Province is depicted on the rear cover. (photo by Sp/4 Sullivan) Binh Tuy, which has a model Chieu Hoi village program that has made considerable headway recently, is reviewed on page 33.

Also featured are Phuoc Tuy's Cultural Drama Team (pg 5) and the Thu Duc Boys Home (pg 14). Germany sponsors 15 social and community development centers across Vietnam, one of which is the facility at Thu Duc, aimed at rehabilitating delinquent minors.

Cultural drama teams combine folk singing, magic shows, and short plays in support of the GVN.

The Editor



DINH QUAN

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BOYS HOME

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BINH TUY

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lion.
One of the major construction is Cam Ranh Bay on the South Sea, 185 miles northeast of S. Work at this site is recalled by c ny old-timers as their toughest j summer the temperatures climb 110 degrees, and during the mc season 60 mile-per-hour winds the site with rain and wet san

RMK-BRJ

Paul Bunyan Builders of Vietnam



*RMK has developed
into the most massive
construction concern in history.*

by Sergeant First Class Don Kidd

The most ambitious construction venture in history is seven years old this year. Its cost has exceeded \$1.4 billion and it has been accomplished by joint efforts of four construction companies with the clumsy name of RMK-BRJ, the four that compose it.

RMK-BRJ—or just RMK as it is popularly known—is almost a byword in South Vietnam today. But few know that this huge corporate effort is a joint venture of four veteran construction firms: Raymond Inter-

national Inc., of New York; Morrison-Knudsen International Company, Inc., of San Francisco; Brown & Root, Inc., of Houston, Texas; and J.A. Jones Construction Company of Charlotte, North Carolina.

In the United States they are competitors but here they are partners who have become prime contractors for the Office in Charge of Construction (OICC) of the US Naval Facilities Engineering Command.

Through the OICC, RMK-BRJ handles projects for all military commands and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The

men and women of RMK-BRJ provide the fighting troops with the construction support they need, and they also are providing the economic infrastructure the nation needs to rebuild and grow. They have built concrete by the end of October, the progress months later, the men of the

combat again—this time in 1967, from the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Although nylon canopies ed them to the enemy, when the troops lie, "Charlie" catches hell. than

The sand itself was a major construction problem, for it comes in uniform almost spherical grains, making it almost impossible to pack. Under a \$125 million program RMK built deep-water piers, jet runways, an Army logistics base, hangars, barracks, a hospital, utilities, wells, warehouses, roads and tank farms. Between the day ground was first broken and the day the first squadron of jet planes landed on the new airfield, only 13-weeks elapsed as RMK worked against time to meet an accelerated completion date.

At the peak of the construction program, the work numbered 3,700 square feet of building, 150,000 cubic yards of excavation, 150,000 cubic yards of dredging, 250,000 square feet of asphalt concrete pavement, and 5,500 cubic yards of portland cement concrete placement. Cam Ranh Bay is now one of the finest seaport-airport complexes in Southeast Asia.

Danang, 370 miles northeast of Saigon, in the heart of US Marine territory, is still under construction and is RMK's biggest project and will continue to be the site of more work in the foreseeable future. The OICC assigned RMK the task of building nearly \$200 million worth of facilities, including a huge logistics center, an air base and a seaport.

Problems at Danang have included enemy mortar barrages, land mines, sniper harassment, high ground water, and heavy monsoon rains. In spite of this, RMK has built deep-water piers, an extensive road network, two 3,300-meter runways, fuel storage depots and lines, a 550-meter long, four lane highway bridge, and elaborate communications installations.

Chu Lai, a few kilometers south of Danang is the site of a Marine Corps air base. The area was so insecure that no night work was possible. RMK workers faced abnormal monsoon rains here four times the normal precipitation, and precautions had to be taken to prevent the spread of a plague epidemic from a nearby village to the RMK workers' quarters. Under a \$40 million program, RMK's work at Chu Lai included runways, hangars, tank farms, barracks and roads.

Another project was Phan Rang, on a plateau flanked by mountains off the South China Sea 160 miles northeast of Saigon. Living in tents for a year, RMK workers completed a \$45 million program that included construction of an airfield for US Air Force jets and a rear-echelon base for the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). The huge base included a 3,300-meter

permanent runway, 410,000 square feet of buildings, a sewage treatment plant, a 6,000 kilowatt power plant as well as distribution lines, hangars, a control tower and many acres of ammunition dumps. The job was completed in 1966.

To accomplish this and other work, RMK-BRJ to date has used: 10 million cubic yards of rock, or about five times that required to build the great pyramids of Egypt, 22 million gallons of gasoline and 50 million gallons of diesel fuel, which is sufficient to keep a fleet of 300 tractor-trailers and 500 sedans operating night and day, for nearly two years.

Also, 164 million board-feet of lumber, or enough to build more than 8,000 two-bedroom frame houses, 26 million cubic yards of sand, which could create a beach 150 yards wide and one foot deep extending from Norfolk, Virginia, to Miami, and 16 million sacks of cement, or enough to build a double-lane highway from New Orleans to New York City, has been used.

Currently, RMK-BRJ completes about \$15 million worth of construction each month throughout the country. This figures out to almost \$1,000 worth of construction completed each minute of the 60-hour work week in effect at job sites.

The tremendous quantity and variety of construction equipment assembled in Vietnam in support of RMK-BRJ's role in the United States' nation building program is unequalled in history.

Nobody knows how many camel carts, stone chisels and lifting devices the Egyptians used when they raised the great pyramids, but it couldn't touch RMK-BRJ's inventory.

RMK-BRJ has more than 7,000 pieces of major equipment with a dollar value of \$119.3 million. The inventory ranges from dredges, crushing plants and asphalt plants, to bulldozers, graders, scrapers, trucks of all kinds, rollers and fork lifts.

Spread out among RMK-BRJ's more than 28,500 employees, this equipment represents an investment of \$4,000 per worker—a good bit more than the cost of a hammer and saw—and it gives a graphic example of the size and scope of the projects which require such an array of machinery.

Contractors agree that it is certainly the largest, most varied, fleet of equipment ever assembled under one contracting concern.

Keeping the equipment in top operating condition requires a great variety of spare parts. Since September, 1968, this has required the issue of an

*Ben Luc Bridge construction
near Saigon*



*Resurfacing of
the Saigon-Nha Be Highway.*

RMK-BRJ



RMK-BRJ

average of \$1 million worth of spare parts a month, according to John Stadler, construction equipment manager. In March a total of 71,779 line item parts from 368 different manufacturers with a total value of \$17 million was in stock.

Construction experts have estimated that with RMK-BRJ's earth-moving and dredging abilities, the Suez Canal could have been built in a year and a half. With its incredible capability of pouring concrete, the Washington D.C. Beltway could have been paved in 60 days, and the asphalt for the New Jersey Turnpike could have been laid in 30 days.

"Our major jobs could never have been completed without the Vietnamese," says former general manager Frank S. McGarvey. "The Vietnamese did most of the big building."

McGarvey describes the Vietnamese worker as conscientious and eager to learn. When adequately trained, he is able to perform a variety of jobs with a high degree of efficiency.

Now 50 per cent of the recruits be-

ing trained under RMK's formal training program at three school sites in the country are women, and a number of women also are receiving on the job training. They are being trained for other jobs such as, automotive electricians, light-duty mechanics, machinists. Some are even proving proficient as heavy equipment operators.

RMK will continue its training program for the foreseeable future, because labor turnover is high. Last year for instance, about 10,000 construction workers left their jobs for one reason or another, including military conscription, while 14,000 new employees were hired.

So far RMK has provided training for more than 100,000 Vietnamese employees on the job and in formal training programs in nearly all technical branches of mechanics and in clerical fields.

RMK-BRJ's work force currently consists of 2,400 Americans, 2,000 "free-world journeymen," mainly Koreans and Filipinos and 24,000 Vietnamese.

Skills imparted by the training will remain long after the joint venture leaves Vietnam. Also to be left, as a legacy to the people of Vietnam, are the completed projects so many Vietnamese workers have worked on.

The Vietnamese people will inherit not only the vertical structures, but more important, they will fall heir to 41,600 kilometers of new or improved highways, some of the finest seaports in the world, and rivers that have been dredged for commercial vessels.

It has been said that every type of useful facility known to man has been constructed by RMK-BRJ. The fruits of the compatible combination of four construction firms' resources will be remembered and utilized by the Vietnamese government and people for many generations to come.

An American newspaperman who has been covering Asia for more than twenty years once said, "Once the voice of the bulldozer is heard throughout the land, it is never the same again."



PHUOC TUY AND THE CULTURAL DRAMA TEAM

by Specialist 4 Ken Smith

As the curtain opens, an attractive Vietnamese girl dressed in native black pajamas steps from the wings and walks to center stage in front of the microphone. She looks out at 2,000 villagers, all sizes and ages crowded in front of her, and smiles brightly before starting to sing. Everyone's attention is focused on the beautiful lass and for that moment at least, her winning charm has won the "hearts" and "minds" of the people before her.

The talented singer is Thai Thi Hoai My, a member of Phuoc Tuy

Province's Cultural Drama Team, a group dedicated to enhancing the Vietnamese Government's prestige at the village-hamlet level. My's songs and smiles are providing some of the most effective "firepower" for the team. The team has nine entertainers, five men and four women, who sing, dance and perform magic tricks and comedy skits in support of the government. In addition, the performers chat, stay overnight with their audiences, and return as often as their demanding schedule permits.

My, with a piercing soprano voice,

launches into a traditional Vietnamese song. Older people, mostly farmers, are rarely treated to live entertainment and are quite taken with the music—so deeply ingrained in their culture. The children, often somewhat inattentive to it, are glued to My's pretty face and genuine smile. She stands, singing on a small wooden stage about twenty feet wide, elevated three feet off the ground. In the right wing is a young man strumming a guitar accompanied by another man on the drums. They sit behind a green, white, red and blue curtain which is drawn after each act. Children lean up against the stage and the throng bunches behind them. The scene looks like a jamboree except for the armed soldiers surrounding the people.

Fourteen Armed Propaganda Team (APT) troops, spaced about ten feet apart, with M-1 carbines strapped on their backs, carefully scan the villagers. All having been former VC they know who and what to watch for.

"Actually we've never had any



trouble from the audience," said Nguyen Van Thao, an excellent singer and comedian who is the team's leader. "One time we were performing during a village election however, and we took some AK-47 rounds and grenades. That's the only time I can remember though."

Phuoc Tuy's team is relatively new and has been working only since November, 1968. Nevertheless, it has already achieved acclaim throughout the province and its performances are in constant demand by village chiefs.

My finishes her song and the curtains swish together. The people do not applaud—it is not the Vietnamese custom. Next, Thao appears to sing.

While Thao is singing, My is behind the backstage curtain busily preparing for her magic act. Actually she is only a stand-in for the regular magician who has recently been sick.

"This is only the second time I've ever done it," she claims, exhibiting one of her classic smiles. "The first time was yesterday, before about a thousand people. I was really scared, but somehow I did okay."

My gave up her lucrative nightclub career, for the paltry salary and the hard unglamorous work of the cultural drama team.

"I want to help my country against the communists," she commented. "I think this is the best way for me, coming to the hamlets and villages and performing for these people who never get any entertainment. And actually, what I enjoy most is teaching the children songs."

But the work of the team is not limited to performances. Arriving in a village in the morning the team members begin by working with the children—teaching them patriotic songs and encouraging them to lead good lives and to be loyal to the government. During the day they help the villagers with various projects such as digging drainage ditches, preparing fences, washing babies and tending to sick and wounded soldiers. They are assisted in the latter by an accompanying Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP) team.

Following an afternoon or evening performance, the team spends the night in village homes. It's this personal, intimate touch that distinguishes the work of the cultural drama team from other methods of psychological warfare.

"I believe we're having an effect on them," My said. "In living with the

Lovely Thai Thi Hoai My leads children in a song "The best part of my job"

CLEVELAND

The team performs to a full house (left) while APT members get to know other long time hamlet residents

CLEVELAND



Team drummer, Nguyen Van Hong, (above) doubles as barber (right) for an encore

CLEVELAND



people we personally talk with many VC families. Although it's hard to tell if they will or not, many have told me they were going to *Chieu Hoi* because of the impression we made."

"The only other real way we can measure the team's effectiveness," commented Major Michael Currie, Psyops Director in Baria, the province capital, "is through village elections—by the number of people that vote and whether there are even candidates running or not. So far this year the villages have had an average turnout of 94 per cent for their elections."

Thao finishes his long traditional Vietnamese ballad and is followed by a girl with natural long black hair, black pajamas and no makeup. The performer's appearance is supposed to be natural and similar to the villager's in the audience. Heavy make-up, mini-skirts or anything that might make them appear "big-city" or superior is forbidden.

The same considerations are given to the show. The people are never made to feel inferior and their customs and traditions are always observed.

Though the adults listen intently to the girl singing, the children are beginning to get somewhat anxious. The time is now ripe for My's magic tricks.

She comes on stage with a table and an assortment of objects, accompanied by Thao acting as her assistant. With the guitarist and drummer playing in the background, My holds up a glass of milk. All eyes are immediately riveted upon it. She then inserts a stick and raises it high, the glass somehow becoming suspended from it. The kids are totally fascinated. They are laughing too as Thao,



who has an excellent feel for slapstick comedy, dances around the stage flashing exaggerated looks of wonder at My's gravity-defying trick.

The children's eyes are practically popping out as My proceeds to pluck pigeons from an "empty box," make them disappear, and create flowers out of handkerchiefs. Thao clowns continuously and the kids are thoroughly entertained.

"It's one of their favorite things in the show," beamed My backstage, as about 25 of her now devout fans crowded around and stared, half expecting her to begin pulling objects out of the air.

Meanwhile the APT team is carefully looking over the crowd, probably spotting certain individuals and deciding how they should be approached after the show. The APT is an integral part of the team's "personal touch" approach.

They obtain the names of suspected VC sympathizers from the hamlet or village chief and visit them. To them there are three classifications of VC: hard core, those who simply do not favor the GVN, and those who have merely been swayed by communist propaganda. The APT first visits the house of those in the last two categories. Once inside they "perform" according to the situation.

Huynh Van Nghiem, an APT deputy company commander, tells what goes on: "If their son is in the field we send in a young man. He acts very friendly and glad to see them. This often reminds the family of their son and what it was like to have him around, and eventually many promise they'll get their son to Chieu Hoi the next time he comes home.

"If the father is out fighting we send an older man. He pays particular attention to the kids, talking to them, picking them up and holding them. It often has a similar effect, especially on a mother and grandmother who are left alone with their children. Some families cry when we arrive because their son or father is already dead. In this instance we take a very sentimental, sympathetic approach."

Van Nghiem continued: "Many families are afraid to Chieu Hoi for fear of VC retaliation. They claim the VC have been known to kill Hoi Chanhhs, and not just with guns, sometimes they even use stones and sticks. But we assure them that regional and popular forces provide security in the area, and that if they want to, they can move into the Chieu

After show team member distributes GVN material to a youthful audience



CLEVELAND

My, Vo Van Huan (left) and Nguyen Gan Xon (right) finish another hamlet show—a pretty tough act to follow

Hoi center. Some do, while others just give us their word they'll rally.

"The hard core VC are another story though. Those long time Viet Cong are very hard to convert." While the APTs survey the audience, the drama team begins its finale, a riotous one act play. The curtain opens showing a young man dressed in common peasant clothes. Thao then enters with a black mustache, high arching dark eyebrows and long sideburns. He is the villain—a VC entering the man's home. This scene, a common often-frightful real-life happening, is changed into a comedy, using humor and slapstick, with Thao performing like a Vietnamese Jerry Lewis. The two men banter back and forth ani-

matedly, evoking almost continuous laughter. Two more characters enter and finally a man comes on dressed as a woman. The crowd roars and as the curtain closes, the people are holding their sides laughing strenuously.

Meanwhile, the team begins packing its equipment and preparing to move into the villagers' houses for the night. That evening two men from the Vietnamese Information Service set up a loudspeaker system and the entertainers make speeches aimed directly at the VC.

All this makes for a long hard working day, one of 20 per month during which the team is working. They rehearse new shows for five other days and the remaining days

of the month are spent relaxing. "I won't be leaving them until the war is over," said Thao. "Then I plan to go back to Saigon and work in night-clubs."

My had similar feelings but despite her beauty and talent, she doesn't feel that she's cut out for the big-city life of an entertainer. "I'm going to stay with the team too, until the war is over. Then I want to go to Saigon and get married, but live in the village. I think that's where I belong," she concluded.

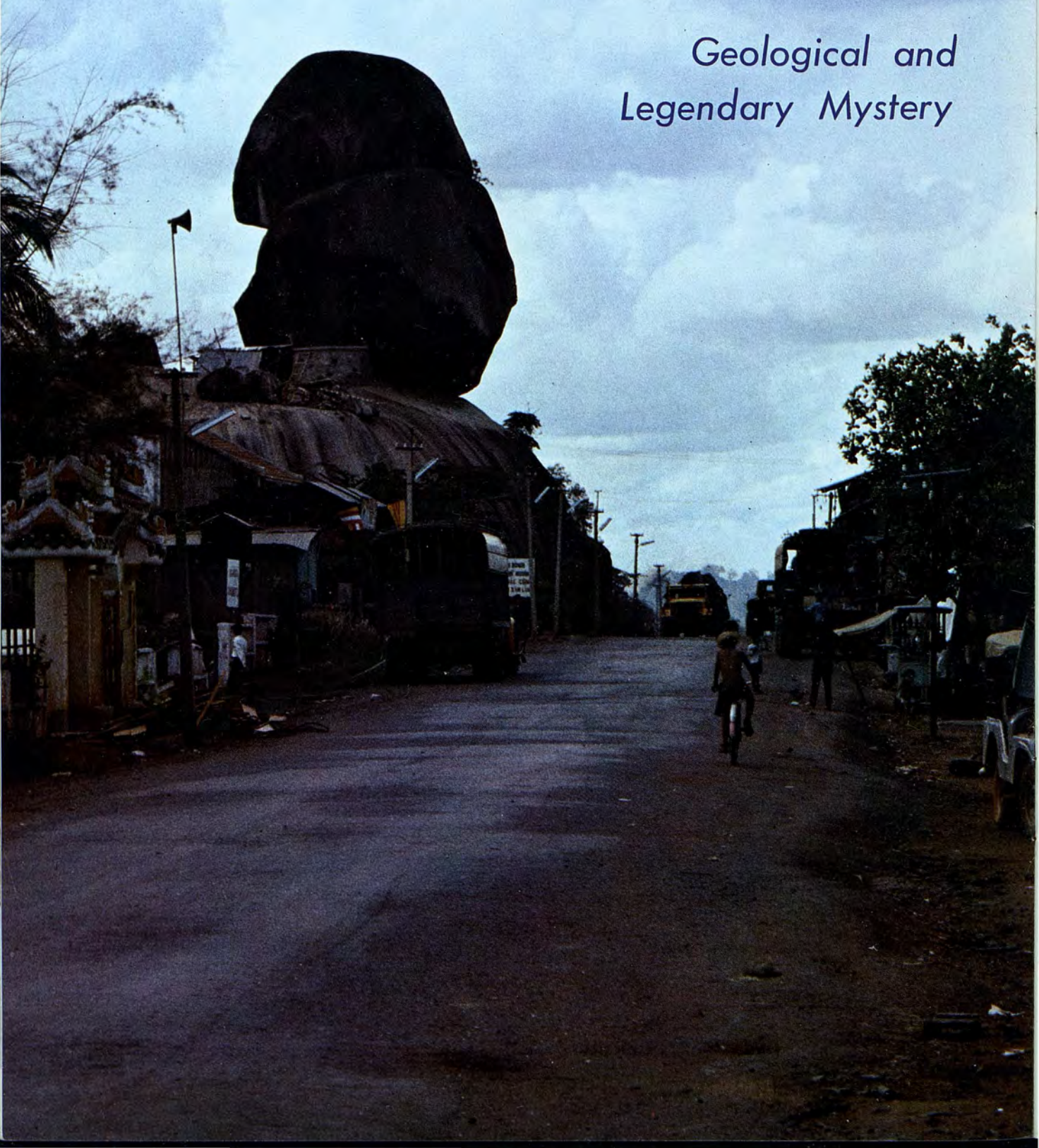
But for now My, Thao and the rest of the team belong to their audiences, an intimate, personal link to Phuoc Tuy's rural, isolated villagers. It's really a pretty tough act to follow.

*Main street of Dinh Quan—giant stone
chessmen on the road to Dalat*

WALSH

Dinh Quan's Ice Age Legacy

*Geological and
Legendary Mystery*



by Specialist 4 Steve Wood

Sixty miles northeast of Saigon massive boulders sit aside Route 20 marking the first third of a traveler's journey from the capital to Dalat in the Central Highlands.

The boulders also mark Dinh Quan capital of Dinh Quan District, Long Khanh Province, a prosperous trading community. Scarcely 13-years old, Dinh Quan or "Rock City" has grown from a small military outpost with two roadside restaurants and a few Montagnard tribesmen living in the nearby woods into a booming town inhabited by a variety of peoples.

Traveling north on the highway, the rocks cannot be seen until passing "Artillery Hill," an imposing earthen mountain rising 250 feet above sea level. The hill is home for local the 177th Regional Force (RF) Company and artillerymen from the 18th ARVN

(Army of Republic of Vietnam) Division.

But past the mountain the rocks are visible. Immense granite boulders as large as 150 feet in diameter and 100 feet high lie alone, forts within themselves, and smaller ones piled atop one another appearing glued together in unbalanced configurations. These are the symbols of Dinh Quan.

Most of the boulders are scattered randomly through the town, cast as if a giant had strewn about stony marbles in a fit of rage.

Dinh Quan District suddenly came alive in May when the 18th ARVN intercepted North Vietnamese units which had crossed the highway south of the city en route to Xuan Loc. The district's advisors estimated that a full North Vietnamese division was involved. Later an enemy company stormed Artillery Hill and held part of it for a time before they were driven back with heavy losses.

"We're not worried even if we are so close to the war zone," said Sergeant First Class Gracie E. Sanders, district operations advisor for Advisory Team 49. "(The enemy) could probably take the town despite the RF company here if he wanted to commit enough troops but I doubt if he could ever take

the rocks. He hasn't enough time for a siege."

The great blocks of granite were left at Dinh Quan during the last of the earth's ice ages. Their greyish appearance with small silver crystals and regularly patterned sprinkles of carbon deposits imbedded in them present a strange but beautiful picture.

"It's Rocky Mountain granite," according to Staff Sergeant Michaels, the advisory team's medic. He mailed a small chunk of it to the geology department of Pennsylvania State University and asked what kind of rock it was and where it is found. "They told me it was probably from the Rocky Mountains back home—Rocky Mountain granite," he grinned.

American geologists explain that the rocks were left by massive glaciers from the last ice age, as they slide past Dinh Quan and finally melted thousands of years ago, but the Vietnamese of Dinh Quan have a different explanation for them.

Although the city itself is relatively new, the aged wife of a nearby village chief remembered one legend of the rocks.

According to her, the Vietnamese people had lived long ago in far northern lands and began to move south to their



One legend claims the rocks (left and above) were piled by ancient Vietnamese soldiers as a monument to their victory over the Chams. Today they are dotted with RF outposts.

WOOD

WOOD

present home. But the people of the Kingdom of Champa inhabited what is now central South Vietnam.

The Chams fought hard to turn back the invaders but were defeated after a long series of battles. One of these was fought at Dinh Quan, and the Vietnamese won.

According to the story, the rocks today were chessmen that the victorious Vietnamese soldiers tossed about the battlefield to celebrate and commemorate the victory. Through the years the chessmen, crude stone figures, just simply grew and grew into the boulders of today.

Another less intriguing version of the story has the rocks already existing at the time of the battle and used as defensive positions by both sides. According to this version, the king of the Vietnamese celebrated his victory over the Chams by directing his soldiers to pile three huge boulders next to the trail they had followed. The pile of rocks was a symbol of victory so his people would remember the battle.

Today these rocks, three large boulders, stand one on top of the other at the edge of Route 20 in the center of town. They have been chosen as the symbol of Dinh Quan by the Vietnamese 621 Regional Force Company headquartered in the city. The company's monthly magazine in fact has a photo of the rocks as its standard front cover.

First Lieutenant James E. Cunliffe, a geologist for the 517th Engineering Detachment at II Field Force Headquarters, Long Binh Post, has both a theoretical and practical interest in the rocks.

He's studied them and Nui Ba Den, a granite mountain in Tay Ninh Province that towers 3,000 feet above the flat countryside. He feels both are related.

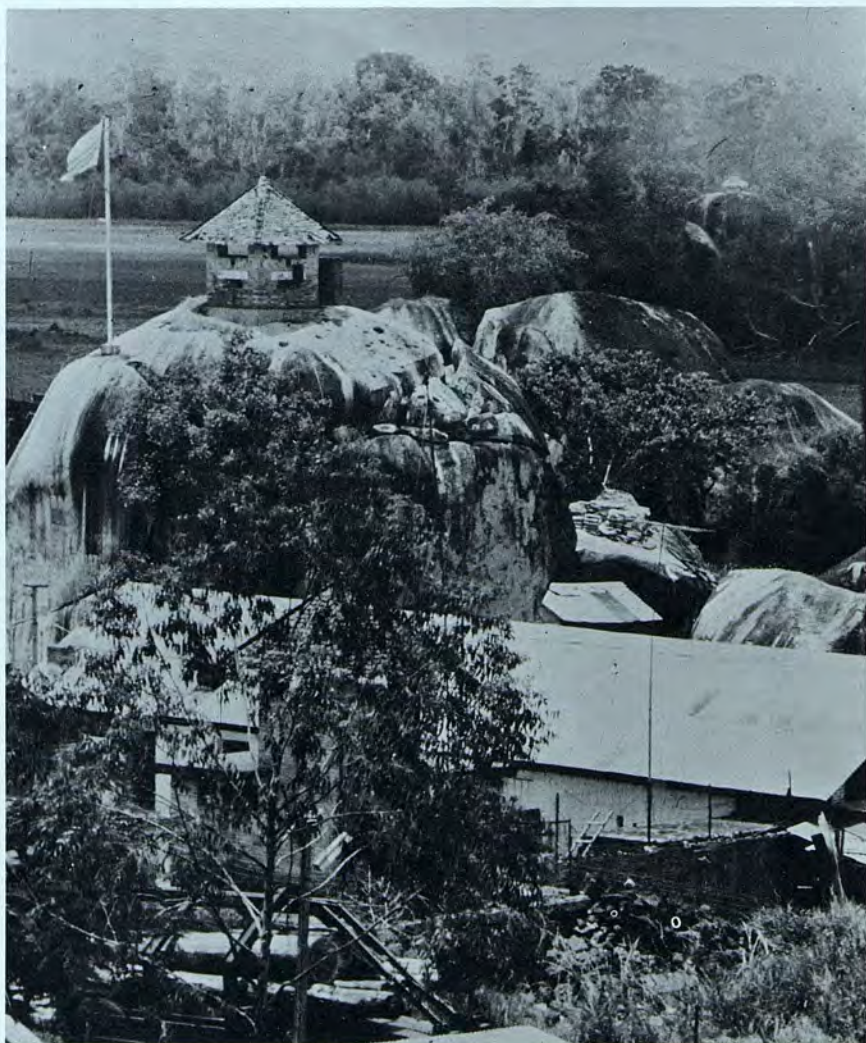
"Nui Ba Den is a solid granite core covered with large but weathered granite boulders at the surface," he said. "I think there may be just as large a granite core underneath the land at Dinh Quan, kind of a mountain underneath the land. But the pressure inside the earth that once pushed Nui Ba Den far above the surrounding lands just didn't form at Dinh Quan."

Right now a group of engineers have started to use the rocks in their own way. Company D, 169th Engineer Battalion of the 159th Engineer Group, headquartered at Long Binh Post is blasting the granite to provide rock to rebuild Route 20.



WOOD

Teak and ebony (above) grow in abundance near Dinh Quan. An RF outpost (below) atop one of the granite boulders



WOOD



WOOD

The town developed as a rest stop along the Saigon-Dalat route with many restaurants such as the one above dotting the highway under the watchful eye of local forces. (below)



WOOD

The engineers blasted only two of the boulders and made enough crushed rock to rebuild more than eight miles of double-lane highway!

Improving the route will help the district both militarily and economically according to U.S. advisors. The better roads will help Vietnamese troops react more quickly to ambushes along it—ambushes that have occurred more and more frequently since May. And a better road is sure to bring more trade, higher profits and an even better standard of living to Dinh Quan's already well-off people.

The people of Dinh Quan have also benefitted from a recent Chinese settlement which was begun earlier this year and has mushroomed the district's population. Migrating to Dinh Quan from other Vietnamese cities, they have set up their own hamlet less than a mile north of the city, and have begun to clear farmland on either side of Route 20 from the hardwood tree forests that abound there.

They have already planted fruit trees and are producing vegetables for shipment to Saigon. Logging is catching hold here also, lured by the possibility of fast profits.

Some of the hardwoods, five or six feet in diameter and a hundred feet long, bring fantastic profits. Ebony and Teak, for example, both bring about 30,000 piasters per cubic meter. Even after paying the 2,000 piaster government tax and sometimes a "VC lumber tax" the loggers do alright.

Lumber jacks and their dependents account for about 30 per cent of Dinh Quan's people. About 20 per cent or more work in the small stores and shops now thriving in the city. The remaining half of Rock City's mixture of Vietnamese, Chinese and Montagnards live from small vegetable truck farms.

The lumber industry has even brought a new, though very small ethnic minority to Dinh Quan—the "coconut people." Lumber truck drivers, they wear brown Buddhist garb topped with a plain turban of the same color.

"They're the followers of a small religious sect in the Delta headed by some kind of high priest. The Vietnamese people call them coconut people," said Major Ronald L. Beckett, head of the advisory team at Dinh Quan.

They add to the variety of Dinh Quan. A variety of peoples of economic pursuits, creating a stable life amid the imposing mystery of Dinh Quan's ice age legacy.

Thu Duc, a large village about five miles north of Saigon, is the site of what might be called Vietnam's Boys Town—with a German touch. Like the American Boys Town, it is a haven for boys who have somehow lost contact with their families or had a brush with the law.

The German touch comes from the advisors of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation working through the Institute for International Solidarity, the little publicized West German foreign aid agency.

Germany's aid to South Vietnam is strictly non-military. Germany currently sponsors 15 social and community development centers, the hospital ship *Helgoland* for civilian war casualties, a medical group called the Knights of Malta and the Thu Duc boys center.

The French colonial government built the boys center in 1948 as a prison camp for delinquent minors. A vocational training program of sorts was put in operation, yet for most of the boys, it was time lost in their youth.

When the French withdrew in 1954, the Vietnamese personnel who took over were just not up to the task. They lacked experience in rehabilitation work and money to carry out much needed improvements. A state of anarchy slowly settled over the operation and the intervening years brought little except notoriety to the institution.

Help finally came from the Vietnamese Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Relief which took an active interest in keeping the situation from getting worse. A large two-story school building, erected in 1966, was the starting point of a project to restructure both the facility and the rehabilitation program to meet present and future needs.

This show of concern and readiness to improve the institution by action rather than just talk, encouraged the Institute for International Solidarity to back the project in an advisory and to some extent financial capacity. "We are very pleased that the German people have come to our assistance," said Mr. Thai Van Toai, the center's director, "and with the goodwill which has come to exist between us."

Presently the institution has the rather vague name of Center for the Re-education of Delinquent Minors in Thu Duc, and officials are searching for a new name to cover the center's full range of activities. It is no longer a prison camp, but a primary school,



The Thu
Duc Home

Boys Town
with a
German Touch



Located at Thu Duc are wood, metal, auto, weaving and building construction shops, plus a barber school. Above two boys weld (left) and put the finishing touches (right) to a wrought iron gate at the metal shop

a vocational school and a model settlement for harmonious living.

The boys arrive at the center between the ages of ten and 18 from the Chi Hoa Prison or directly from the courts.

Some of them are not sent as a result of law breaking but as wards of welfare courts. In this category are the little street boys who roam about in small bands existing from begging or whatever they are able to find in refuse heaps. If they are not picked up in time for being vagrants, they would eventually end up as thieves or pickpockets.

Sixteen-year old Nguyen Van Hoang was unlucky. He was not picked up before he broke the law. A runaway from home at 13, he lived as a pickpocket at the marketplace in Rach Gia, a town about 150 miles southwest of Saigon. Hoang was lucky, though, in that he was sent to Thu Duc straight from court. He was sentenced to stay there until he was 18 and able to support himself. Today he is 16 and doing well at the school.

Rather than spread its help too thin, the center has a policy of limiting admission only to boys for whom it may do the most good. Mr. Ulrich Reeps, the director of the German advisor group, explained the selection process. "When a boy comes to us we first put him in a closed reception home for six weeks. There he has a chance to see how we treat the other boys, to talk to them and to get used to being supervised. During his stay there he will be observed and given achievement tests by our trained personnel. If he is accepted, a guidance program is mapped-out for him, taking into consideration his age, ability and personal needs."

A boy may not be accepted for several reasons. In some cases proba-

tion under parental supervision may be recommended at the end of the observation period. If a youth is too low in educational development or too set in his antisocial behavior he is sent to another institution. An illiterate 18-year old or any boy who goes "AWOL" and makes trouble would only impair the progress of other youngsters.

Once a youth like Nguyen Van Hoang is accepted as a member of the Thu Duc center he will follow a two-fold guidance program. Mr. Reeps, a psychologist who attended the universities of Erfurth, Berlin and Bonn, described the two-part program as being polysocial and polytechnical.

The polysocial aspect is reflected in the daily routine of life at Thu Duc. It is designed to let the boys experience the security of living within the interlocking circles of the traditional Vietnamese social order. Within the limits of the 15-acre center he is a member of a family group, and the family is part of a larger group. Several groups form a village and three villages make up the miniature nation of about 500 junior citizens.

Family-size houses are arranged in U-shaped clusters of four around a central courtyard and veranda for outdoor living. They are constructed simply, using modern materials such as reinforced concrete walls and concrete-asbestos panel roofs. The pagoda-like roof design is the only concession to tradition here.

Each house is designed to accommodate 16 boys in a style that could only be called luxurious. Individual beds and bathrooms are definitely not common in Vietnam.

To further knit the family relationship the boys have their meals together. The food, prepared in a

central kitchen, is delivered to each home and usually served on the veranda. A representative chosen by the boys is even allowed to go along when the grocery purchases are made to help pick out items they like.

Since a family is not complete without an adult member, a trained child welfare worker acts as the head of each house. They are there to provide parental warmth, counseling, maintain discipline and referee the inevitable family squabbles. These foster parents may be single men or a young married couple. Small neat quarters on the grounds assure their round the clock availability.

Once he is properly settled in a family unit, Nguyen Van Hoang is ready to begin polytechnical education. However, if he were found to be below the fifth grade level, he would have to catch up in the center's primary school.

The polytechnical curriculum is designed to prepare the youths to be versatile craftsmen who will have no need to resort to devious ways to make a living. Since the advisor group comes from Germany it is natural that they train the boys in the German system of apprenticeship and trade school. The fame of German machinists, mechanics and other craftsmen is proof that the system works well in Germany.

However, training in only one trade as it is done in the old country, was considered too rigid for Vietnam's present state of industrial development. A broadly based technical program, similar to the industrial arts or shop course in American high schools was considered best for the varied demands of Vietnam's city and village industries.

In the United States boys take industrial arts courses mainly for person-

al enjoyment, and less with the intention of making one of them their occupation. Vietnamese boys have a more serious purpose for getting a broad background in technical courses.

The German advisors found that it was an economic necessity for the youths to be skilled in several trades

ter, he may train to become an auto mechanic, electrician or printer. Otherwise he would take another one of the trades offered in the second year.

The trades and vocations also contribute their share to help make the facility somewhat self-supporting and

hair available to practice their skills.

Even though the boys are kept busy, their lives are not all work. They have a big soccer field, a volleyball court, ping pong tables and gymnastic equipment available for spur of the moment games. Organized sports are under the direction of a physical education teacher. The German sports advisor is introducing some of the boys to the fast-paced game of German hand ball—possibly a first in Vietnam.

Making fancy paper flowers, colorful wall plaques and decorations are other ways in which the youths spend their free time. The artistic quality of these little items is very impressive. "I believe," said Mr. Reeps, "the percentage of artistically inclined boys is higher in Vietnam than I have ever experienced." He also cited their beautiful handwriting and their clean drafting work.

Great praise must be given to the Thu Duc center's instructors and social welfare workers. Among them are a number of very skilled artists and craftsmen. Mr. Nguyen Van Bay, a metal working teacher, was a master machinist at the French navy yard in Saigon. The drafting instructor, Mr. Bui Van Duong, was a much sought after technical illustrator. He once worked in that capacity for the American forces. A few of his crisp pen and ink renderings of buildings and scenes from Vietnamese life are displayed in his classroom.

All the personnel who come in contact with the boys are Vietnamese. The Institute for International Solidarity's contract with the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Relief calls for the Germans to act only in an advisory role. It is interesting to note that the Vietnamese-German language problem is neatly solved by using French.

One of the welfare workers living with the boys is 25-year old Than Van Phom, a very dedicated young man. He was a boy scout leader and aligns his work at the Thu Duc center with the ideals of boy scouting. "Here and as a boy scout leader," he stated, "I prepare the boys to become good citizens of our nation."

The young metal worker, Nguyen Van Hoang, is a happy, slightly mischievous member of Mr. Than's family group. When Hoang was asked what he imagined his future to be, he replied in a straight-forward manner, "I don't think so far ahead." But he is fortunate to have someone like Mr. Than and the other professional people at the Thu Duc facility who are trying to make it the best one possible.

HERMAN



Mr. Ulrich Reeps, German advisor, and Mr. Thai Van Toai, center director, discuss a current building project

in order to hold steady employment after they are allowed to return home.

Therefore, a three year technical curriculum was set up to insure that a boy who completed the full cycle would be able to enjoy the security offered by job versatility.

In their first year the boys take courses in the broad areas of metal working, wood working and building construction. Each course lasts four months and acquaints them with the job opportunities available.

Each technical area is supported by related classes in theory, mathematics and draftsmanship. Most of these classes as well as the technical areas are still taught in the old French-built shops and classrooms. Some of the equipment is of an antique nature, but is being steadily replaced by newer machines. At the present time two buildings are under construction.

During the second year the trainee concentrates in either woodcraft or metal work or he may go into tailoring. Nguyen Van Hoang decided to stay in the metal field during his second year. If Hoang were to go back to Rach Gia at the end of this year, he would be employable as a semi-skilled worker but without the job flexibility of a second trade.

Staying a third year helps the boy further. If he is bright enough to handle the increased theoretical mat-

less dependent upon government funds. Being planned by the wood-working department is a project to bring in some cash to the center and some pocket money to the boys. Woodworkers are busily producing chairs, stools, tables and other items for sale to local people.

One item would certainly be a best-seller in the knick-knack counter of any American department store. It is a miniature mirrored wall cabinet made of fine handrubbed teak which dispenses cigarettes from its hinged bottom.

A number of weaving machines, housed in an old shed are occasionally used by specially trained boys to make bolts of cloth, for use by the trainee tailors. Blue and white cloth predominate. "The colors are not part of a uniform," remarked the German advisor with a smile, "it's just that sometimes we can get only blue, other times only white thread."

Metal workers and mechanics find plenty to do keeping the institution's vehicles in running order, and naturally most of them are Volkswagens. Then there are the barbers. These are boys specially trained, like the weaving machine operators, to save money that would otherwise be spent on hiring an outside barber. They may not get much experience shaving whiskers, but have many heads of



5/2d Artillery

Cavalry by Day—Field Artillery by Night

by Captain Jim Haney

What do you do with air defense artillery when you don't have to worry about air defense? You make them Cavalry by day, Infantry-Field Artillery by night. And that's just what the Fifth Battalion, Second Artillery (Air Defense) is doing.

Commonly referred to as the

"Nickel/Deuce," this 1,000-man battalion is spread like buckshot over 18,000 square miles of Vietnam from Song Be to the Mekong Delta.

In a war dominated by small unit operations, convoys and night ambushes, the battalion finds itself in the situation of having the majority of

its batteries attached to many of the divisions and groups of II Field Force.

Although the battalion maintains its air defense capabilities, the war has sent it off on a secondary mission of supporting ground forces. And the devastating fire power of its air defense weapons has proven excellent

for the job.

Presently, the battalion's four M42A1 (duster) batteries, one M55 Quad .50-caliber machine gun battery and one battery of searchlights are located in 50 different positions throughout the III and IV Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ).

"We are everywhere doing everything and trying to do more," explains Lieutenant Colonel Theodore H. Schmidt, commanding officer of the battalion.

The duster, an M42 light tank chassis mounted with twin .40mm cannons and a 7.62mm M60 machine gun, is the primary weapon of the battalion. Its basic load is 480 rounds of 40mm and 3,000 rounds of 7.62 ammunition, and it has the capability of firing 240 rounds of 40mm per minute.

Although the dusters are used primarily in a direct fire role, counter-mortar and indirect fire has recently become an important role for them. Provisional M42A1 firing tables were developed by the outfit's artillery operations section to refine existing gunnery data and to improve the first round accuracy of 40mm indirect fire.

The computation of "did hit" data was established using a Q4 counter-mortar radar to check accuracy. Once the azimuth and range to a target is determined, it is checked in the firing tables to find correct elevation. The elevation is then placed on the duster by use of a gunner's quadrant.

Captain Henry Gonzales, commander of "B" Battery, which is attached to the 25th Division at Cu Chi, has platoons deployed from Tay Ninh to Cu Chi.

"My dusters at Dau Tieng shoot quite a bit of indirect fire into the Michelin Plantation and back in May, they started getting body counts from these long range missions," he said.

Besides indirect fire missions, convoy coverage and static perimeter defense, the dusters have instigated a new tactic—ready reaction. By stationing two dusters at strategic locations near areas where enemy activity has or might occur, they can react to any enemy attack immediately by rushing to the scene to reinforce.

"When the rockets and mortars start falling, everyone runs for cover. Everyone but the duster men and the men on the quads. You usually see them heading for their weapons," said Cpt. Gonzales. "On numerous occasions they have silenced the attackers."

Sergeant Raymond Wank, acting section leader for a Quad .50 pulling

"Twin-40" commonly called "Duster" is the battalion workhorse



SULLIVAN



SULLIVAN

Bn CO, LTC Ted Schmidt makes a map check—"Doing everything, trying to do more."

static perimeter defense just north of Nui Ba Den, at Fire Support Base St. Barbara, has nothing but praise for his men.

"During May the enemy launched an attack on the base. Mortars and rockets were hitting within 40 meters of the quad positions and shrapnel was bouncing off my men's flak jackets and helmets, but they stood their ground and continued firing."

Many successful convoys are attributable to the quad .50s of Delta Battery (Machine Gun) 71st Artillery. The battery, attached to the 5th Bn, 2d Arty with firing elements further attached OPCON to the groups and divisions in II Field Force, is the only

battery of quad .50's in the III and IV CTZs. Four, two and a half ton trucks, with the Quad barrels of .50 caliber machineguns fixed to their beds, run the famous Cu Chi to Tay Ninh convoy route twice daily.

With 10,000 rounds of .50-caliber and 3,000 rounds of 7.62, the quads saddle-up each morning for the 120 mile round trip to Tay Ninh. Once the trucks are fueled and the crews have made their morning trip to pick up ice and cokes for the trip, they strike out to meet the convoy from Saigon at the Phu Cuong Bridge and escort it to Tay Ninh. The trip, one way, takes from three to five hours. The time depends on the traffic.



SULLIVAN

"Quad 50 s" lead a convoy to Tay Ninh—convoy security is a major job of the "nickle-deuce"

There are several different routes the convoy can take. The route chosen depends on current enemy activity in the area.

"The northern route, because of bad roads, is like riding a bucking bronc," said SP4 Quinton Tankersley. "How would you like to ride a bronc 365 days straight?"

Staff Sergeant Ronald Steven, commander of the convoy quads, indicated that they convoy has been ambushed only seven or eight times since February. "We don't worry much about ambushes. The quads can take care of them. Mines are the things to fear. A truck can drive over the same place three or four times with-

out anything happening, then the next time BOOM."

And, as the Sergeant indicated, the quads can take care of ambushes. In March an estimated three companies of Viet Cong ambushed the convoy northwest of Trang Bang from rubber trees located on both sides of the road. Two Quad .50 escort vehicles from Delta Battery reacted immediately engaging the ambush force.

During the engagement, which continued for two hours, 2,200 rounds of 7.62 mm, 36 rounds of M79 and 8,500 rounds of .50-caliber were expended by the Quad .50 squads. The convoy commander credited them with preventing the convoy from be-

ing overrun and estimates indicated that 50 Viet Cong were killed by the guns.

As one military policeman said, "The quads have done an outstanding job. They have pulled the convoy through many times."

Although the terrain in Vietnam is not particularly suited to the dusters and quads, they have adjusted extremely well. The only limitations on them are severe monsoon rains, the thick triple canopy jungle and the hidden mires and sloughs.

These natural enemies can trap a duster without warning even during the dry season. Nevertheless, Alpha Battery, based at Phu Loi spends much of its time with the infantry.

"We are attached directly to an infantry battalion for the purpose of conducting sweep operations," indicates Captain Wayne Rothwell, battery commander.

A typical daylight operation for "A" Battery starts with a combined infantry/duster sweep through enemy-infested areas and usually ends in a static night ambush.

Another weapon, with a muzzle velocity of over 186,000 miles per second, scattered through the two corps, is the searchlights of "I" Battery. These jeep-mounted searchlights produce well over 100 million candlepower.

At the flick of a switch, the operator of one of these lights can turn from visible light to infrared, or from infrared to visible. By using the light's infrared capability, the operator can detect the enemy and observe him without his knowing it, then as quick as a "flick" turn night into day exposing the enemy to the pinpoint fire of the unit's weapons.

Dubbed as "Peeping Toms" India Battery's searchlights may not actually be lethal weapons, but when one searchlight team shot its beam on the enemy at FSB Diamond III near the Cambodian border, it contributed to the body count inflicted upon the enemy attackers.

"Even some of the searchlight jeeps fly the 'Red Pennant Killer' flags, denoting that their section vehicle has gotten a confirmed kill," according to one soldier.

But the battalion's interests involve much more than just fighting the war. Their Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) is one of the best in the III CTZ.

Based at Duster Compound, northeast of Long Binh, the battalion's doctor, Captain Bobby Flowers and his six man team receive patients 24 hours a day.

The dispensary, with its four rows

*"Quad.50 s" in action
at FSB St. Barbara
near Nui Ba Den*

SULLIVAN

of benches and large emergency room, handles approximately 152 patients daily.

"Because we are a fixed installa-

tion, patients come from all around the area for treatment. Once a child with a severe burn on his hand walked 40 miles to our MEDCAP," said the doctor.

"Most of our cases are personal hygiene—infections, skin diseases and

malnutrition," said Staff Sergeant Robert Ryan, NCOIC of the dispensary.

The battalion commander summarized his unit. "Elimination of the enemy just does not happen by accident. It takes good training, well maintained equipment and combat teamwork."



Heliborne Bucket Brigade

New Firefighting Device Successfully Tested

by Specialist 4 Ken Heinrichs

A new fire-fighting device now being used in Vietnam is proving that the traditional fire bucket is not so old-fashioned after all. Certain changes have been made, however, so that now the modern "bucket" bears little resemblance to its oaken predecessor.

Instead of being relayed to the fire by hand, the huge new fiber glass container is hoisted by a powerful CH-47 (Chinook) helicopter until it is centered directly above the fire. And when the funnel-shaped bucket is cabled to the Chinook's cargo hook, the combination of helicopter and bucket assumes a new name—the "helibucket."

The close proximity of a natural water source to the fire is essential to the helibucket's effectiveness. Using a river as a "filling point," for example, the Chinook lowers the helibucket into the water then carries it to the trouble spot where the water is then poured onto the blaze.

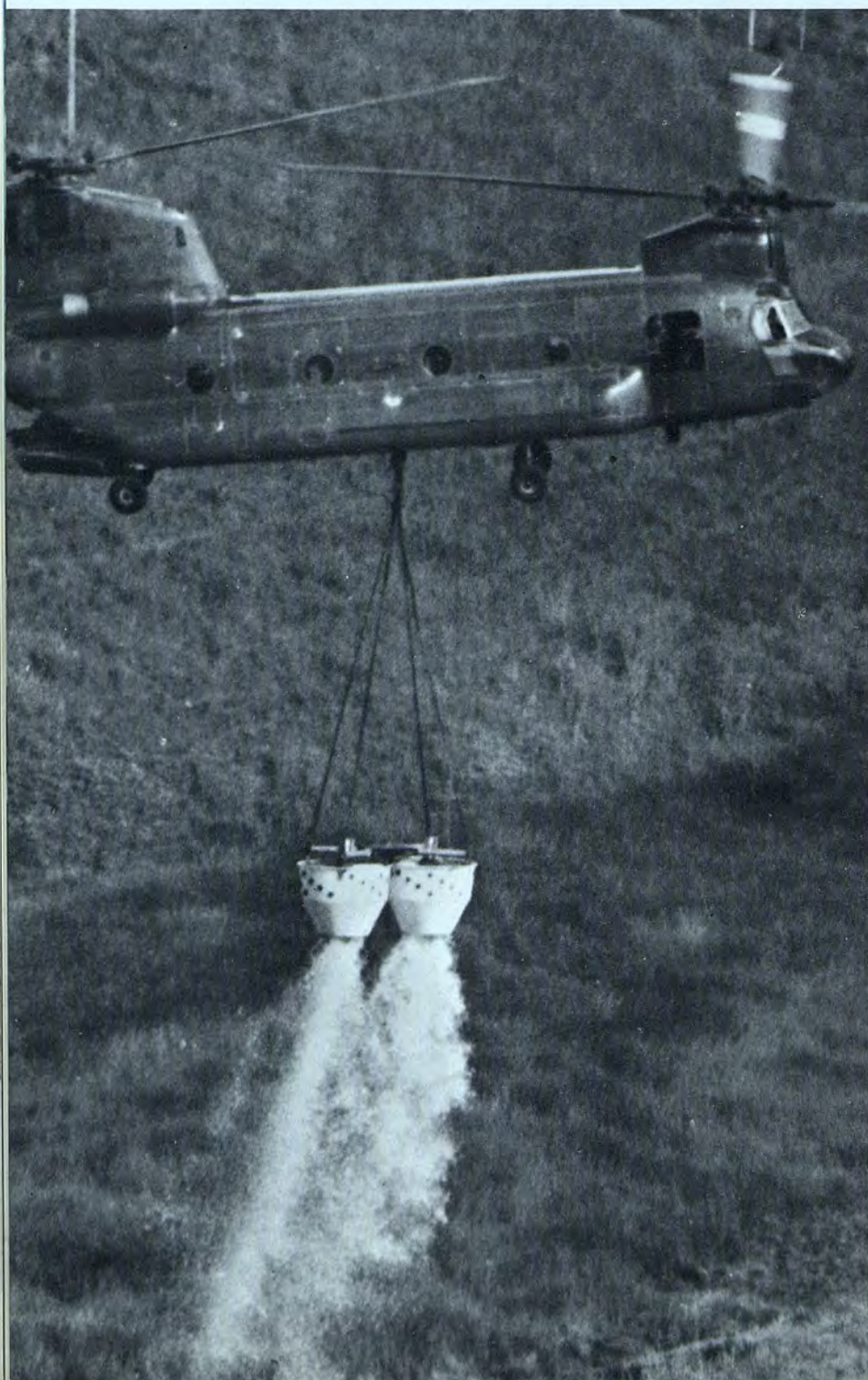
Although the helibucket has a capacity of 450 gallons, many fires are so large that a "chopper" crew has to make several round trips between the filling point and the fire before the flames are extinguished. But an experienced crew, familiar with the helibucket's operation, is capable of dropping 5,400 gallons of water per hour onto a fire.

To insure a steady application of water, a pilot-controlled electric "actuator" determines the amount of water poured from the bucket. In this way, no water is wasted on an area where the fire has already been extinguished.

In addition to controlling the water output by using the electric actuator, the pilot can also obtain a choice of "wetting patterns" by varying the speed and flying level of his helicopter.

Experimentation has proved that a wind-blown spray of water, discharged

An experienced crew can drop 5,400 gallons per hour





Attached underneath the CH-47A (Chinook), each bucket carries 450-gallons of water

by a high-flying helibucket, is most effective against a sprawling grass fire. In contrast, a low level helibucket pours forth a dense layer of water and is most effective against a concentrated, intense blaze. If the pilot brings the bucket too close to the fire, however, the "backwash" of the helicopter's propellers only spreads the flames. So for this reason, an elevation of at least 100 feet and a speed of not less than five knots (six miles per hour) must be maintained.

Since the powerful Chinooks are not always available, the helibucket is designed as a variable capacity tank and can be used on other helicopters of varying sizes and capabilities. The feature that makes this possible is a series of "drainage ports," located at different gallonage levels on the side of the helibucket. The ports contain red plastic plugs which can be removed or installed so that the water automatically drains to the selected level as the bucket is pulled from the water. With the helibucket's capacity reduced from 450 gallons to as little as 50 gallons, even light helicopters are able to hoist the water load.

The man responsible for bringing the "flying bucket brigade" to Vietnam is Barry R. Flamm, Chief of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Forestry Branch. In May of 1967, when an alarming increase in fires engulfed 40 per cent of Vietnam's trees, Flamm contacted the U.S. Forest Service and by June, six new helibuckets were shipped to Vietnam.

Arriving in country in a period of increased activity, when heavy fighting touched off numerous fires, the buckets were a welcomed sight. The terrain in the Central Highland Plateau is similar to that of the Southeastern United States—tall grass surrounds the pine trees and fires spread rapidly throughout the timbered area. Since the offensive occurred during the "dry monsoon" season, heavy winds, acting like a natural bellows, intensified the devastating fires. Only the most mature trees survived the inferno. The less resistant seedlings

were no match against the rapidly spreading, destructive flames.

Although many of the highland fires were sparked by rockets and heavy artillery, not all of them were manifestations of war. Montagnard tribesmen, for instance, found it necessary to burn off the surface layer of dry grass to expose the underlying fresh grass for grazing animals. Frequently, these fires could not be controlled by the usual method of beating the flames out with pine boughs once the desired area had been cleared. Fanned by strong winds, simple grass-burning fires became major forest fires as they roared into the surrounding pine trees.

The helibuckets were new to Vietnam, but their past performance in the United States had proved them veteran fire-fighters. In one month during 1967, helibuckets had poured more than 400,000 gallons of water on forest fires in the Pacific Northwest. Confident that the buckets could do a similar job in Vietnam, Barry Flamm set out to convince Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture of the helibucket's fire-fighting ability.

In July of 1968, a demonstration was staged at Long Binh Army Base, 17 miles northeast of Saigon. Forest experts from the Ministry of Agri-

culture and U.S. military officials stood on top of a hill as a massive wave of flames climbed toward them. For a brief moment, signs of apprehension showed on some faces, but like Missourians saying "show me," the dignitaries held their ground. There was no reason to panic; before the fire had advanced half way up the hill, dual-rotor Chinooks, carrying helibuckets filled to the brim, made their appearance. Manned by crew members from the 12th Combat Aviation Group, the helibuckets had no trouble dousing the blaze. The demonstration was a convincing success and the "flying bucket brigade" was accepted with eager enthusiasm by those present.

Since their debut at Long Binh, the helibuckets have carried a heavy work load. When not being used with ground fire-fighting crews in the Central Highland pine forests, the buckets are emptying torrents of water on structural fires in Saigon. With the Saigon River not more than 90 seconds away, by helicopter, from any area of the city, a natural water supply is always available.

Whether operating in remote forests or in the heart of crowded Saigon, the helibucket is proving itself the fire-fighter of the future.



DAVIS

The FAC's of Song Be

*Bringing Close Air Support
to Phuoc Long Province*

The absolute air dominance that the United States enjoys in Vietnam has caused a revolution in warfare.

Soldiers now take cover, when possible, and call in artillery or airstrikes. Perhaps historians will have fewer cases of heroics and self sacrifice to record. But to the man on the ground this type of support means that he can get the job done without dying.

But to put a wall of fire 50 meters long onto an enemy, from the air, the fighter pilot whose job this is, must be talked into position. He's going too fast to aim for himself at the last moment. To root out a bunker complex with artillery, the men who aim the guns from a few miles away must know where to shoot and what they are shooting at.

Sometimes men on the ground can do both jobs. But in the jungles of Vietnam it's often impossible to adjust fire because the terrain is so thick. Then the key to the operation is the Forward Air Controller (FAC) a man who both helps destroy the enemy and save allied soldiers' lives in Vietnam.

Flying his O-19 "Bird-dog" aircraft, which looks like a civilian piper cub, the FAC takes absolute control of the situation in the air. He actually talks the big jets over their targets.

The FAC is the man the "grunt" can look up at and know he's connected to the wonderful world of support. The FAC is the man that walks in artillery on the target when the ground-bound forward observer (FO) can't see a dozen feet through the thick jungle. The FAC is the man who puts in hundreds of hours of boring visual reconnaissance (VR) to find target when there is no contact. He's responsible for slowing up the enemy's supply line by finding profitable places to dump ordnance.

The Army's forward observers (FO) handle artillery fire only. They act either on the ground or as aerial observers for artillery fire, but do not direct air strikes. Air Force flyers, many of them former fighter pilots, have that job.

The five Air Force FACs that operate in Song Be, and are responsible for all of Phuoc Long Province, are typical of FAC detachments throughout Vietnam. Because their unit is small, and because they take great pride in doing a top-notch job, the FACs have an "esprit" hard to match.

Song Be, Phuoc Long Province's capital, is frequently mortared. The province, called the "Siberia of South Vietnam," had been until recently mostly controlled by the enemy. Only



Visual reconnaissance for long boring hours—a daily FAC mission.

DAVIS

isolated outposts manned by the Government of Vietnam and irregular allied forces challenged the NVA. But recently, due to tactical operations the situation has changed somewhat. The area does not now "belong" to anybody—it's contested.

In Phuoc Long supply trails from the border of Cambodia gather into massive roads hidden under the protective jungle canopy. The "Adams Trail," named for its discoverer a former Song Be FAC, is the super-highway of infiltration trails. Graded in places and paved with bamboo strips in others, the trail is a constant target for allied fire. Here also the enemy grows his "Victory Gardens" in large clearings, confident that the heavy jungle will prevent effective allied attack.

Air Force Captain Robert W. Bentley, called the "Red Baron" by his friends in Song Be and the neighboring Special Forces advised camps he occasionally visited, was a former Song Be FAC. Flying missions with him was like watching the war from the director's chair. When Bentley left Vietnam recently to go to Hurlburt Field, Florida, he had more than 1,600 combat hours as a FAC. Now his successor seems to be Air Force First Lieutenant Alan Daines.

Daines has flown enough in Phuoc Long to know the grid coordinates of most landmarks. He's watched the terrain change day by day as the enemy has built roads, bridges and

bunkers. He can point out dozens of .50-caliber machine gun positions and bunkers.

The young officer said that the FACs are often shot at but seldom hit. The pilots can hear the rounds being fired even though they can't see anything. "They sound like an engine backfiring," Daines said.

During VR, FAC "educated eyes" can pick out changes under the canopy of 80-foot high bamboo tops or camouflage. The results of VR, which takes up most of the FAC's time, are run through intelligence channels to produce a target list. And in Phuoc Long, most of the action against the enemy comes from that list.

"There are plenty of targets in Phuoc Long no doubt about that," says Air Force Captain Walt Palechka, another Song Be FAC.

Missions are conducted on two types of targets. There are pre-planned and "immediate air" targets. The latter are those found at the time of the VR which require an air strike immediately.

"Obviously, if you see some enemy troops or vehicles you have to call a mission in right away. If you wait, they're gone," explained Air Force FAC Eric Peters.

Lieutenant Daines flew a pre-planned mission recently near the Cambodian border. It was just one of three he flew that day, and a few more hours to add to his 115 hour per month flying average.



Welcome sign at Song Be Airfield



DAVIS

Mechanic performs a pre-flight check

SILEO

The crew chief completed a pre-flight check on the O-19, including its three radios. UHF is used from FAC to fighter, FM and VHF for air to ground communications. He loaded eight, 2.75-inch smoke rockets which are slung under the "Bird-dog's" wings, and Daines was in the air.

He stopped into a Special Forces advised camp on the way to the target and was asked to find a landing zone for an upcoming operation.

At 1400 hours the rendezvous between the FAC and two Vietnam Air Force jets took place over the target, a suspected VC basecamp.

Radio contact established, the fighter gave his mission and type ordnance, and the FAC answered with his target description.

After acknowledging this information the jets went for the target, guided by the white smoke rocket the "Bird-dog" had shot as a marker.

In 15 minutes the mission was completed. Daines maneuvered the jets right on target with his smoke rockets. During the mission the FAC had held, south of the target, flying a lazy eight pattern.

The bomb damage assessment (BDA) was given. Three bunkers destroyed and four secondary explosions,

"I always like to be able to give a 100 per cent BDA to the jets. If they do a good job they should know about it," explained Daines.

The jets departed and a report to S-2 was radioed. Target coordinates, time on and off target, percentage of ordnance on target and a BDA were given before Daines went to have another look at the target. "Just to make sure," he said.

Air Force Captain Richard E. Gerry



The O-19 "Bird-dog's" provides the FAC his air-watch capability.

CLEVELAND

of Ray, Utah, is the liaison officer between the Air Force and Army at Song Be. The FAC detachment commander explained the difference between a FAC artillery and a FAC air strike mission.

"At Song Be we hardly ever work with artillery. But when we do we aren't responsible for artillery clearance," Gerry said.

"We can usually see the exact spot of the target from the air," he continued, "so we give the artillery gunners six-digit coordinates. Instead of telling them to correct right away, as we do with the jets, it's usually easier to walk in artillery on the target."

But no matter how the FAC does his job—the job itself is important. Air Force Lieutenant Paul Babcock's words emphasized this importance. "No ordnance is delivered from aircraft anywhere in South Vietnam un-

less it is under the control of either radar or a FAC."

Because of its demanding nature the Air Force requires a minimum of 750 flying hours before a pilot can become a FAC. And only after many hours of experience does a FAC become a good one. His eyes must be trained, his judgment and depth perception developed and his flying ability with the "Bird-dog's" expanded.

Captain Gerry summed up the job of the FACs this way:

"We're kind of the LRPs (long range patrolmen) of the Air Force. Mostly we're out in the isolated areas and our job is to find the enemy and help the jets get to him.

Then he turned and walked toward the FAC sign at Song Be:

Caution Song Be
May Be Hazardous
To Your Health

American Forces fighting in Vietnam are now placing increased reliance on war dogs to assist in essential scouting and sentry security duties. Man's best friend has become an ex-

tension of the soldier's natural senses.

To provide trained dogs for these important duties, extensive programs have been devised to educate the sentry, scout, tracker, and now even

tunnel and booby trap detecting dogs.

In turn this greatly increased use of dogs has stimulated research and techniques in the field of veterinary medicine, the department charged with maintaining the health of these valuable animals.

There are many good reasons for providing the dogs with good care, but consider only one of them in detail—the financial one. A healthy German shepherd or Labrador retriever costs upwards of \$150 unless he happens to be donated. It takes six months to train him while he's eating his head off to obtain the 5,000 calories a day he requires. This dog represents an estimated investment of \$5,000 by the time he gets to Vietnam.

If he saves even one human life, he has more than fulfilled his purpose for being here. He is worth the money.

The science of animal care is as precise as that applied to humans. After all dogs are similar to humans in many ways. Take diseases for example. Dogs develop skin problems, they can have heatstroke, they cut their paws while walking, when they grow old they develop kidney trouble and occasionally have heart attacks. They can also have cataracts over their eyes. In fact they share nearly all man's problems except perhaps lung cancer.

Here in Vietnam, care for Army war dogs is provided by veterinarians assigned to units of the 44th Medical Brigade. Their concern for these dogs begins as soon as a new dog paws from the plane at Bien Hoa Air Base,

Veterinary Medicine

The Canine Medics

by Captain John Miller



*Veterinarian Cpt.
Paul Dubois inspects a
wounded scout dog.*



the main port of entry. There he is met by a member one of the 12 Army veterinary units in Vietnam, the 245th Veterinary Detachment, commanded by Major William K. Kerr.

Said Maj. Kerr, "When he gets here the dog is in a metal cage. We have to get him out of the cage fast and cool him down. Then we begin breaking him in." Breaking in means acclimatization over here. Otherwise the dog could easily develop heatstroke when working out in the hot climate.

The new dog receives an entry physical, any needed shots, and after a few days is transferred to his regular unit together with the handler who trained with him in Okinawa for six weeks before the trip over. The dog's records go with him—again just like soldiers. Each dog has a health record, personnel records, and of course "dog" tags.

All dogs receive constant attention from the 44th Brigade's veterinarians. That's required because a working dog is subject to many problems in the field. Among them are external and internal parasites—ticks, various types of worms and leeches. While these problems might seem to be minor, they can present quite serious problems, as in one 27-dog unit which had 23 of its dogs disabled by hookworms.

Wounds present still other problems. One reason is that the dangerous duties of point man in many units have been assumed by dogs who work out in front of their handlers on a long leash. Dogs "on point" are frequently injured by enemy fire or booby traps. Then the medics come on the scene.

Wounded dogs are generally "dusted off." The only restrictions are that troops always go first and there must be no risk to the crew or ship involved in picking up the dog.

Wounded dogs are taken to one of the 44th Brigade animal hospitals such as the 936th Veterinary Detachment operated at Tan Son Nhut or the 176th at Cam Ranh Bay. These hospitals have the same capabilities for dogs that regular hospitals have for humans. Emergency treatment areas, X-ray machines, laboratories, pharmacies and operating rooms are common. It is not at all unusual for a veterinarian to be called from bed in the middle of the night to perform emergency surgery on a wounded animal.

Among the more common opera-

tions performed in Vietnam on wounded dogs are those to pin broken bones, reset fractured jaws and recap chipped or broken teeth. On one occasion last year a cornea transplant was performed on a Marine sentry dog with cataracts. The dog has since returned to duty.

General medical and surgical disorders provide still another major category of problems. A characteristic of the German Shepherd is his tendency to develop fatty tumors under the skin. When detected, these tumors must be removed surgically, a procedure which removes the dog from duty for several days. More important are diseases such as leukemia, hepa-

to twelve weeks. Then he begins having severe nosebleeds and eventually dies. One clue which has arisen from the mass of research so far is that the disease appears to be tick borne. Dipping the dogs has resulted in a significant decrease in the occurrence of the disease.

Like maintenance, medical service to animals is discussed in terms of echelons. First echelon medical service for a war dog is that care provided by his trainer—grooming, checking the dog's ears and teeth, general hygiene and exercise. Second echelon care is that provided by the unit veterinary technician. This man can perform minor treatments directed by a

DELAURIER



Dogs are susceptible to the same diseases as humans and have medical and shot records

titis, and the various kidney problems that plague older dogs. These are treated with drugs, antibiotics, or even blood transfusions as the case dictates.

Perhaps the most significant medical problem affecting war dogs in Vietnam is IHS, or *idiopathic hemorrhagic syndrome*, a bleeding disorder that has killed some 90 dogs during the last year, out of a total population of approximately 1,200. This mysterious disease begins with a loss of appetite. The dog next slows down in his working pace, and tends to lie down whenever he stops moving. His temperature rises, but when he is given *tetracyclin*, it breaks and the dog is apparently all right for the next six

veterinarian, clean teeth and ears, apply ointments and dressings and perform similar tasks.

In this scheme of things, third echelon or "rebuild" medical service is the task of brigade veterinary officers assigned throughout Vietnam. These are the men who travel out to the units for daily sick call or to the field for examinations. Their treatment requires many of the same techniques, drugs, and even instruments as those used on humans—like *penicillin* and *tetracyclin*—and can range from dressing a cut to major surgery. They do their part to fulfill the Medical Department mission: to conserve the fighting and barking strength.

Cpt. Rodney Taylor (left) and William Watson check the bandaged right eye of "Lux," wounded by a booby trap.

The Elite ARVN Airborne Division

“Angels in Red Hats”

by Sergeant First Class Don Kidd

The elite Army of the Republic of Vietnam's (ARVN) Airborne Division, whose members proudly sport their distinctive camouflage fatigues and red berets, was activated in May, 1955, shortly after the emergence of the Republic.

First called the Airborne group, it grew into a division. Designated thus in 1967, the combat experience of its battalions dates back to 1951. Headquartered at Tan Son Nhut and commanded by Major General Du Quoc Dong, the division played major roles in the Indochina War and in the battle of Dien Bien Phu. Today it constitutes the general reserve force of the Vietnamese Joint General Staff.

General Dong joined the airborne in 1952. He rose from second lieutenant to commanding general within the division.

Each division volunteer undergoes a special, extremely rugged, nine-week basic training course. In addition to standard subjects, great emphasis is placed on instilling in the trainee a will to overcome obstacles that the average soldier would give up on.

continued

Unique in Vietnamese airborne training is a slide for practicing parachute landing falls





CLEVELAND

Some fledgling airborne troopers receive the "opening shock" before completion of the 12-foot drop



CLEVELAND



CLEVELAND



CLEVELAND

The familiar "34-foot tower" is used to teach aircraft exits and give an opening shock sensation

Long grueling runs, extra hours of physical training and karate classes prepare the trainee for the rigorous and demanding three week parachute training course at the division's jump school at Tan Son Nhut.

The first week, called ground week, is spent learning the proper and safe method of jumping from a mock-up of an aircraft, learning how to fall and distribute the shock of hitting the ground on four parts of the body.

Familiarization with the parachute harness and reserve parachute, practice in emergency situations, mental alertness drills and physical training complete the ground week.

Tower week (the second week), gets the trainees off the ground by having him climb the 34-foot jump tower. From the doorway atop the tower, those 34 feet look more like 340. And the wide-eyed trainee shows his apprehension when called to stand in the door. The instructor hooks him up to a harness attached to a pulley securely fastened to a steel cable. When the trainee is commanded to "Go," he puts into practice what he has learned on the ground—a vigorous up and out of the doorway. Maintaining a tight body position, he drops 12 feet or so and the sensation of exiting an aircraft is simulated with the sudden tug on the harness and the violent oscillating as he rides the pulley and cable toward the mound of earth a hundred yards away.

From the moment he exits the door of the tower, the trainee is a very busy man. He assumes the tight and proper body position to prevent being buffeted by the wind and wash of the propellers of a real aircraft and insures the proper deployment of the parachute and suspension lines. At the same time he counts, "one thousand, two thousand, three thousand," and, if his timing is right, at "four thousand," he has dropped the 12 feet and receives the opening shock of his parachute. At that moment he must immediately change his tight upper body position and look skyward to check an imaginary parachute canopy by reaching his arms and hands high on the nylon risers. He spreads them apart and makes sure his canopy is properly deployed. Then he assumes a "prepare to land" body position for contact with the mound of earth at the end of the pulley ride.

Unhooked now, the trainee double times back to the instructor who is sitting on a high stool at the bottom of the tower. If the trainee made a satisfactory jump and did all the things he is suppose to do, the instructor will tell him to mount the tower and make another jump. He must make five



Proud new airborne troops receive diplomas at a graduation ceremony at Tan Son Nhut

satisfactory jumps from the tower before he can go on to the final week of actual parachute jumping.

Most trainees make the five satisfactory exits from the tower after 15 to 20 tries. Those who don't continue to jump until they do.

The "moment of truth" comes with jump week when the trainee is standing in the door of a C-119 "Flying Boxcar," looking down on 1,500 feet of space between him and the ground.

Hands are sweaty and cold, hearts are beating twice as fast as normal and the trainee is tense, trying to overcome the natural fear of what he is about to do. The jumpmaster of the aircraft looks calm and relaxed. All equipment has been checked and double checked.

As the aircraft approaches the drop zone and the exit point, a green bulb lights next to the door of the plane and the jumpmaster taps the first man on the back of the thigh.

"Go!"

The first man is gone and out of sight immediately. The next man stands in the door and is tapped out by the jumpmaster. The process is repeated until the aircraft is empty and the last trainee has made his first parachute jump.

During the rest of the week he will make five more jumps. After that comes graduation where he will receive the coveted wings of a qualified parachutist.

The school can handle 300 students per class and since its organization in 1955, has graduated 164 classes and

more than 30,000 qualified paratroopers.

Unique to the division are its 37 women members who proudly serve and wear the red beret. All undergo the same jump school training as the men but serve on the division staff, as medics and in the Political Warfare Division.

The division maintains a continuous capability to conduct parachute assault, air-landed or airmobile operations throughout the Republic in support of combat operations in each corps tactical zone.

Made up of three brigades, the division normally employs three battalions of infantry with each. Three artillery battalions of 105 mm howitzers make up the division artillery.

In addition, the infantry battalions in the division serve as the palace guard at the presidential palace in Saigon on a rotating basis, one month at a time.

Some of the most highly decorated battalions in all of Vietnam are part of the division. The First Battalion, oldest and most highly decorated, was first to be presented the highest unit award in Vietnam—The National Order, denoted by the red *fourragere* worn by its members.

Elements of the division have distinguished themselves in battles from the DMZ to Dak To, from Saigon to My Tho and in the A Shau Valley.

The nation-wide reputation of the "Angels in Red Hats" as they are called, continues to grow. Volunteers by the hundreds attest to this.

Every day the people come down from the village to work on their irrigation dam. It will help flood the rice fields and serve as a bridge to the main road, and, philosophically, to the hope of peace in Vietnam. For the villagers are all Hoi Chanh—former enemy soldiers who have deserted the ranks of the enemy. The set of conditions that made their dam possible will someday, hopefully, be present not only in Binh Tuy Province, but throughout Vietnam.

From the South China Sea thinly-settled Binh Tuy, the eastern-most province in III Corps, stretches north 60 miles to the mountains. Ham Tan the province capital, is 75 miles east of Saigon and the headquarters for the 76-man Advisory Team 48. Lieutenant Colonel James A. Hemphill is the Province Senior Advisor (PSA) to Lieutenant Colonel Tran Vang Khoai and his staff.

"The first priority in any province is security," Colonel Hemphill emphasized, "and Binh Tuy, is rated one of the most secure in the country. There are no American or ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) units stationed there, so defense of the province is the job of the Regional and Popular Forces (RF/PF)."

It wasn't always this way. Back in 1965, the Viet Cong controlled much of the province, but sweeps by the 173d Airborne and elements of the other US forces cleared away most of the trouble. The American units left in early 1966 and the last ARVN troops left last fall.

Much of the success of the RF/PF forces is attributed to the aggressive leadership of Colonel Khoai. "Instead of sitting around, he's taking the initiative against the VC with ambitious patrols and ambushes," Colonel Hemphill said.

Binh Tuy Province

Chieu Hoi Villages and Economic Growth

by Lieutenant Chuck Babcock

The newly-organized People Self-Defense Groups (PSDG) supplement the RF/PF troops. The idea started after Tet 1968, when hamlet leaders decided they would have to do something more to protect their hamlets. The response in Binh Tuy has been better than expected. The government quota was 5,000 villagers and more than 7,000 have joined the program. Though armed with a motley collection of shotguns and hand-me-downs, the PSDGs do provide internal security for the village at night, while the RF/PFs furnish the external protection.

Lieutenant Colonel Khoai is constantly traveling throughout the province. "He has a knack for getting soldiers to relax and talk freely," said Hemphill. He reaches civilians too, with a program of issuing land titles. As the PSA sees it, "The peasant will honor the government that honors his title."

Although Binh Tuy is a thorough-

fare for large enemy units passing toward II Corps, Saigon or War Zone D, there is comparatively little Viet Cong activity in the province. Why?

Major Billy Beck, RF/PF advisor, answers that, "there is nothing of military value here." Like the allied troops, the communists have their main forces where the people are and Binh Tuy's 61,000 people ranks it 40th of the 44 provinces in population.

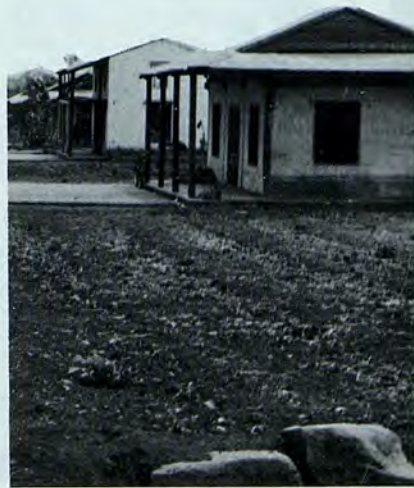
Hemphill notes another factor—the inability of the Viet Cong to maintain a constant supply of food or water. Water is scarce in the jungle and checkpoints on the main roads keep down illegal food traffic. And less than five per cent of the most recent rice harvest fell into enemy hands, compared with half of the previous harvest.

Of course, Major Lee Smart, Hoai Duc senior advisor, may disagree that things are quiet. He averages about a contact a day with the enemy in his "Rice Bowl" district in the province's northwest corner. Hoai Duc was controlled entirely by the VC in 1965. "Operation New Life" moved most of the population from north of the La Nga River back under government control, but that area is still considered, at best, contested.

A rapid jeep ride through Vo Dat and the surrounding hamlets covers the contrasts of the district, from the neat cement houses of the refugees and Hoi Chanh to the dirty, thatched hootches of the only two "D" (considered VC) hamlets in the province. Major Smart talked enthusiastically about the potential in Hoai Duc for rice and vegetable production, fish, timber and rubber.

"You should see it when it's really green; it's beautiful!" he said. Then

Hope for the future—a new model Chieu Hoi village.



SULLIVAN



he paused and smiled, "I said the same thing to the district chief when I first came here. He answered, 'Yes, but it gets very dark at night.'" Even an occasional B-40 rocket in the darkness fails to dampen Maj. Smart's resolve. "At least we get the chance to be advisors here," he said. "We don't have to concentrate just on staying alive."

Thus, in even the most active VC district, progress is being made. Hoai Duc still has to import rice, but at least this year it came from neighboring Thanh Linh District. As Colonel Hemphill explained, Thanh Linh growers used to sell rice to Saigon middlemen for 12 piasters a kilogram (2.2 pounds). The Saigon merchant then sold it in Hoai Duc for 25 to 70 piasters a kilogram. This year Thanh Linh growers sold for 20 piasters and Hoai Duc buyers were able to buy for no more than 25 piasters. By cutting out the middleman both groups made money.

The problem of securing the roads in the province has also been at least partly solved. VC tax points used to catch unwary travelers. Now, besides strict traffic control on Route 1, a convoy runs every few weeks from Ham Tan to Vo Dat to Thanh Linh, carrying food and other supplies. The first few trips, the VC blew the road, but when it became apparent that the convoys would continue, the harassment tailed off.

With the basic element of security fairly well established, other programs have had a chance to flourish. IR-8 rice, in a pilot project last year, increased productivity from 1.8 tons to 4 tons per hectare (2.47 acres). This rice program is now being turned over completely to the Vietnamese. And the timber, charcoal and boat-building industries are developing also.

But perhaps most impressive accomplishments are the building programs for the refugees and Hoi Chanh. The Chieu Hoi villages outside Vo Dat and Ham Tan feature some of the best built houses in III Corps because Ben Santos, the Philippine national who is the Chieu Hoi advisor, "tries to see that the government promises are kept."

"The Hoi Chanh come in because they are hungry and tired of fighting and because many of them were forced to join the VC in the first place," Santos said. After a 45-day reindoc-trination period, the returnee can build a home for his family. Many then join the fight against the communists

Scenes from Binh Tuy—a sparsely populated panorama of rural South Vietnam

SULLIVAN

as members of Armed Propaganda Teams (APT), which try to persuade other VC to rally, or as Kit Carson scouts assigned to American units.

A strong refugee housing program has cut the numbers in that category from 18,000 to 8,800 in the past nine months. Danny Ruffino, refugee advisor said, "To be completely removed from the rolls, a refugee family has to be given cement and roofing for a house, a six-month rice allotment and a cash allowance (all coming from the GVN)."

He foresees a possible problem for the 1969 program though, due to the GVN plan to replace the actual bags of cement and tin roofing with a flat cash payment. The problem is that there will not be enough cement available in the province for the people to buy. To date Ruffino lists about 1,100 dwellings completed and 500 more under construction.

Part of the success of the refugee and Chieu Hoi building programs is attributed to their self-identity as a group. One of the refugee villages is all Cham, another, in Tanh Linh District, is all Montagnard. The fishermen of La Gi are strongly Catholic. Many are original settlers from North Vietnam. All these groups exhibit a community spirit that ties them together.

Robert Traister, the province deputy senior advisor, and a veteran of six years in Vietnam, said that this cohesiveness is just as important as physical security. "In fact," he said, "if we could sell the leaders of a VC-controlled village on one of our programs, it would succeed, because they too have this cohesive spirit."

Another proud new addition to the building program in Binh Tuy is the province's only hospital, a 100-bed facility staffed by a Korean medical team. Public works projects in the building stage include dams at Ham Tan, La Gi and Tanh Linh that will allow double cropping of rice, and a harbor study that will lead to the widening of the La Gi harbor and the protection of its sea wall.

Things Americans take for granted are real signs of progress in Binh Tuy. There are schools, teachers, and even electricity, running water and radios. "This starts them on this wheel of progress," he said. "When mama first gets electricity she might want a fan. And then it's a refrigerator or a TV. Papa has to get out and work harder to make the money she wants to spend."

If things continue as they are in Binh Tuy, mama may get both her refrigerator and TV set sooner than she realizes.

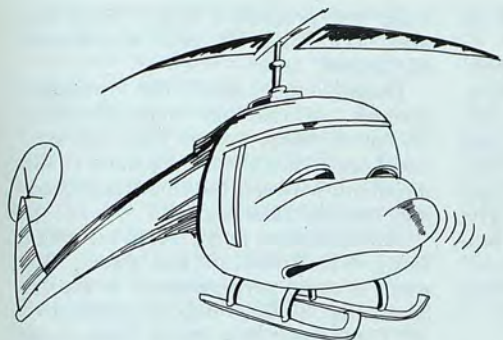
At a new Korean-staffed dispensary, a nurse checks a PSDF soldier's bandaged leg



SULLIVAN



Boat building in the coastal fishing villages is a growing business



The People Sniffers

Electronic Wizard of the Chemical Corps



CLEVELAND

by Lieutenant Tom Sileo

Three men vaulted over the three-quarter ton truck tailgate, slid down the two wooden seats and sat down, the captain on one side, the two specialists on the other. Between them was the equipment they would need for their mission that afternoon.

A box containing two dozen yellow and red smoke grenades, a Thompson submachine gun holding two 30-round magazines taped together, and two mysterious gadgets that looked like old-fashioned radios, lay on the truck bed.

Actually these two machines were what the mission was all about. Through some mechanical wizardry they have the ability to "breath in" air and tell if it has come from human beings. They've been employed here since 1966 for detecting the presence of enemy troops, especially in dense, heavy-jungle areas. The Army calls them Mechanical Personnel Detectors. They're more commonly known as "people sniffers." Originally intended for ground use, the "sniffers" are now being used quite effectively from the air.

Captain Michael Stolle, commander of the 29th Chemical Detachment, spoke of his mission. "We go out and try to spot the enemy. You see, with the 'sniffers' we can give G-2 one more indication of enemy activity. With a number of such indications G-2 formulates intelligence. We're just a part of an integrated overall intelligence plan."

The men chatted casually on their way to Red Catcher helicopter pad,



Sp/5 Don Turner checks the "people sniffer" as the crew departs for another mission

at the II Field Force basecamp. Their voices and their conversation seemed to say, "There's no sense worrying about anything, but let's not get careless. We've got a job and we can't mess around with it."

The 29th, like most chemical units with "sniffers," receives its missions from G-2. They cover a specific area and report their findings.

Two gunships, armed with mini-guns and rockets, and a Huey helicopter waited for them at the pad. All three vehicles would fly the mission. The Huey was already revved up, its long blades snapping at the air.

The men lowered the truck's tailgate and loaded the equipment. The

"people sniffers," sitting upright on thick sponge rubber were placed gently in the chopper.

As they sailed over Camp Frenzel Jones, home of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, Specialist 5 Donald Turner, of Trenton, N.J., who monitors the "sniffers," turned the machines on for a pre-mission test. Everything checked out fine.

Then the Huey with gunships close behind headed north for the dense jungles of War Zone D along the wide Dong Nai River in Long Khanh Province.

It was a sunny 20-minute ride before the Dong Nai River was spotted. Then, with the trees at their feet and

the ground in clear view, the crew tensed. Vietnam's terrain was no longer scenery. It was now something to be studied with caution.

The two door gunners leveled the M-60s and the sniffer crew began intense visual reconnaissance. Specialist 4 John Mize, of Bulaski, Tenn., was sitting in a "jump seat" opposite Cpt. Stolle who sat ready with a red smoke grenade in his right hand. Specialist Turner's eyes were glued to the meters on the "sniffers."

"You really have to look closely," said Turner. "Most enemy bunkers or caves are so well camouflaged, you'd never see them unless you were really on the lookout. But there are a lot of little things that tip you off."

Everything was very quiet. No signs

of enemy life, except for a herd of deer seen running under the Huey.

The chopper flew over an open field of elephant grass where large craters, the results of previous B-52 strikes could be seen. Then, on the far side of the clearing, a path came into view, a narrow strip where the tall elephant grass had been matted down. The pilot circled over and followed it into the woods. Until then the "sniffers" had been relatively lifeless. Their needles had hardly risen.

Suddenly they rose.

"Mark!"

Captain Stolle pulled the smoke grenade's pin, and sent it winging toward the spot which had produced the "hot reading," that marked the target.

All three ships continued on however,

since the procedure is to sweep the area, obtaining all grid coordinates of "active" areas.

During the next five minutes, several low readings were obtained. "A lot of times we get false alarms," said Specialist Turner "We have to differentiate between the important readings and the false alarms."

As the ship came over the wide Dong Nai River, all was quiet. But when it came perpendicular to the far bank, the "sniffer" needles jumped.

"There must be a lot of them down there," shouted Cpt. Stolle, as he heaved out another grenade.

The crew expected enemy fire at this juncture, but there was none. "It's unusual, Charlie knows what we're doing," says Stolle. "Sometimes

he even puts mines in the trees. After all, the 'sniffers' frustrate Charlie. After he's worked hard to camouflage himself, in an instant he is detected."

The Huey continued on. During the next 45 minutes, it weaved up and down the vast terrain of War Zone D. The crew was about to call it quits for the day when suddenly the needles jumped again. An enemy position was spotted. The pilot swung back and drove in again over the same area. Everyone was looking out trying to get a good view when suddenly the ship began taking fire.

"C'mon get out of here," yelled Turner.

But when the pilot began to climb the chopper started shaking. The shaking increased as the Huey, with

great effort, managed to climb about 30 feet above the trees. Then everything gave out.

The ship quit climbing and began falling to the ground. Down they went, but as if the scene were from a Hollywood movie, the chopper got to within ten feet of the jagged branches when it leveled off.

The pilot began a slow jerky climb; the crew stared at one another. This time the chopper successfully continued rising and got up to 1,000 feet.

It was a close call in more ways than one, as the men realized when they looked around the chopper. A round had pierced the chopper, continued upward through the top of Turner's right earphone and lodged in the ceiling directly above his head.

There was another small hole in the ceiling over Specialist Mize's head and one in the wall just to the left of one of the door gunner's ears.

During this "inspection" the gunships were peppering the area with rockets and miniguns. Then, still shaking and making strange sounds, the "sniffer ship" limped into the 93rd Evacuation Hospital pad on Long Bing Post.

The crew and its helicopter had been shaken up, but it was a successful mission. The "people sniffers" had once again tackled a section of real estate in which the enemy was hidden, and pinpointed his whereabouts.



Spotter waits with ready smoke grenade for a "sniffer" reading

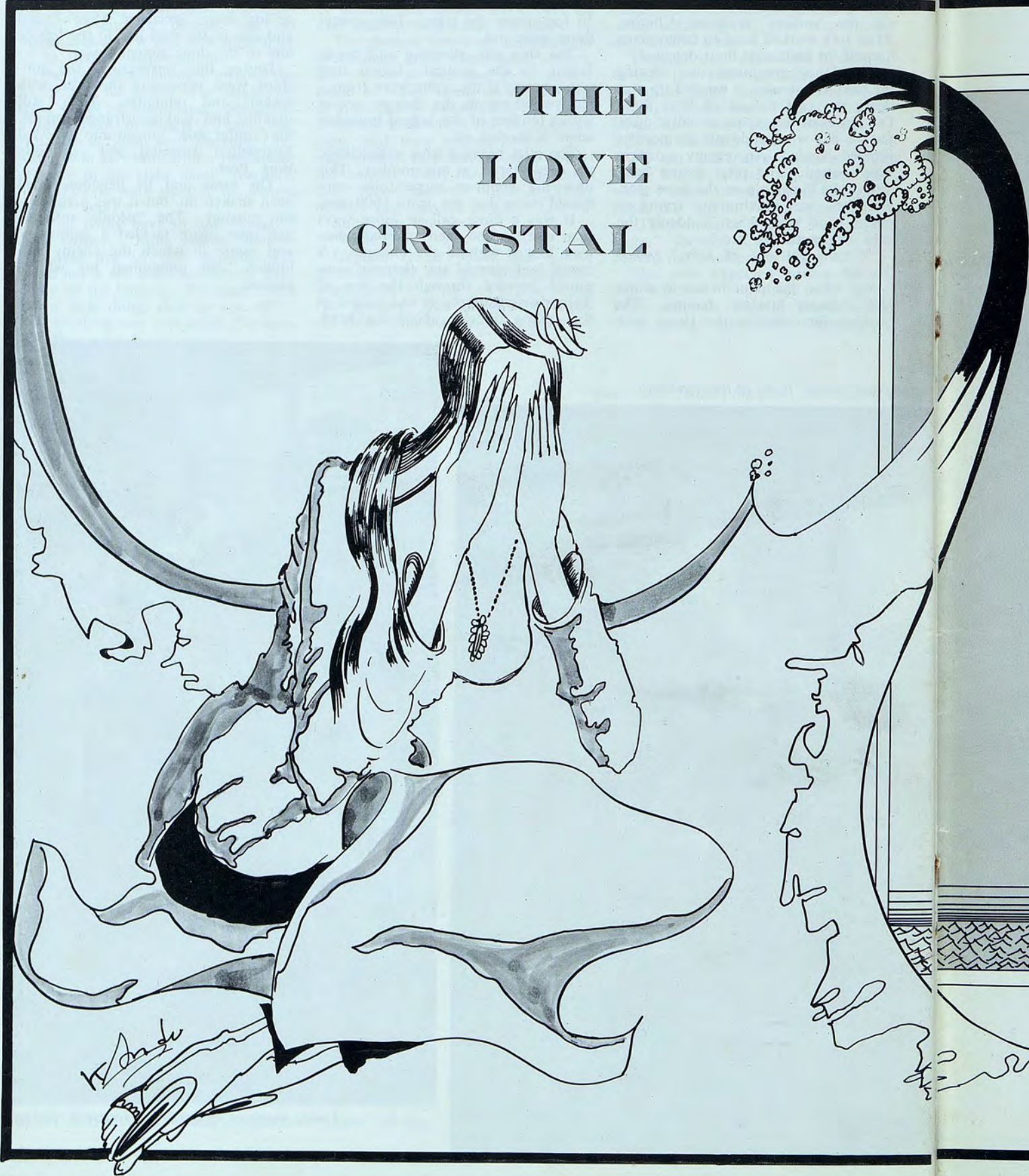


"Over there!" shouts the crew. The machines pick up another "scent" flying at tree-top level.



Turner monitors the sniffer's electronic read-out

THE LOVE CRYSTAL



A Vietnamese Legend

Many years ago there was a girl named Nam whose father was prince of a small province in Vietnam.

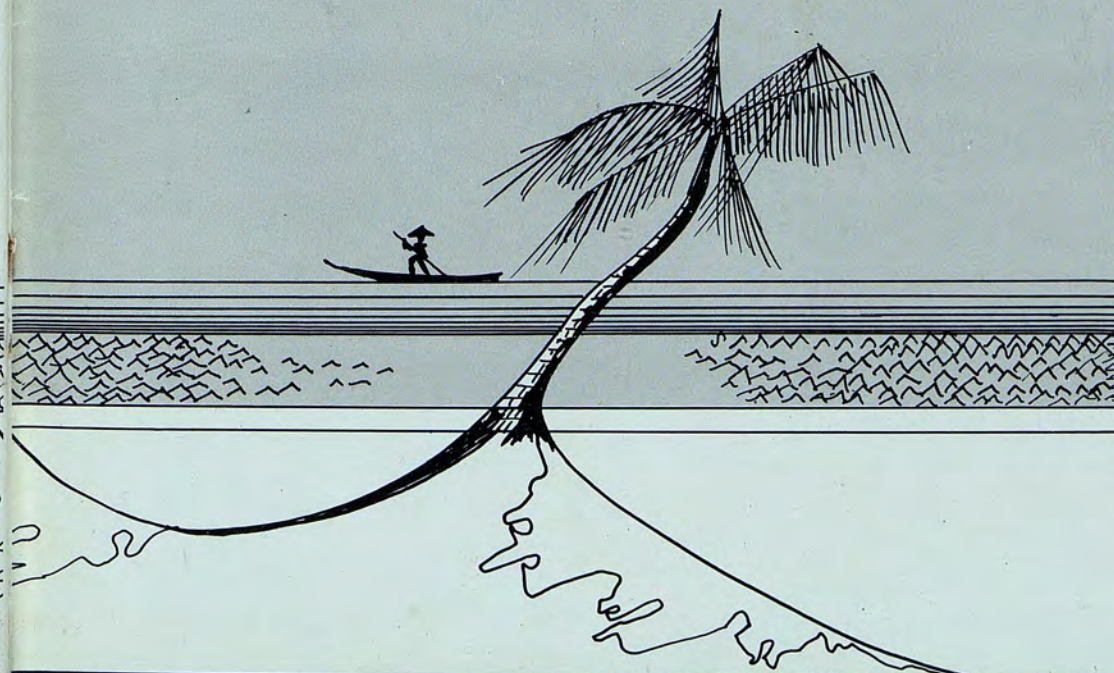
Nam loved to sit in her room in the castle and look out at the river. One morning she heard beautiful singing coming from a fisherman. He was young and strong and, although she could not see the fisherman's face, Nam knew she loved him.

Then he came no more for some reason and Nam refused to speak or eat. Finally her father searched for the fisherman and found him in a nearby village. His name was Tan and when brought before the beautiful Nam, he too fell in love. But Nam saw his not so handsome face and her love dwindled.

Tan returned to his village with a broken heart. He cried for weeks, then became very ill and died. On Tan's casket a gem—called by a wise man a love crystal—appeared. Nam came to the funeral, saw the gem and took it realizing she had caused the young fisherman's death. Later as she wept over a cup of tea in her room, she accidentally dropped the love crystal into the cup, and suddenly Tan's image appeared in it.

In Vietnam the love of a young couple lasts even after death. Nam knew she had not returned Tan's love, and that the true love she had for Tan had been clouded by foolish earthly vanity. Her tears fell into the cup and the crystal began to dissolve.

When the love crystal had vanished, Nam sat still and lifeless. She and Tan were together in another world.





*Making Charcoal
in Binh Tuy*