

THE HURRICANE

JANUARY 1969

NUMBER FIFTEEN

A PUBLICATION OF II FIELD FORCE VIETNAM

Vietnam's Air Force
see page 33



Color Bearing Units

39th Infantry



“Triple A Bar Nothing”

“Triple A Bar Nothing” is the slogan of the “Fighting Falcons” of the 39th Infantry. This 9th Infantry Division unit looks back on a proud heritage that began on June 1, 1917, and stretches to Dong Tam, Vietnam, today.

Three battalions of the 39th Infantry Regiment provide a significant percentage of the “Old Reliabes” combat firepower. Assigned to the Division’s 1st Brigade are the 2d and 4th Battalions. The 3d Battalion is a member of the 3d Brigade.

Following activation at Camp Syracuse, N.Y., the 39th Infantry participated with the American Expeditionary Force in World War I. When the smoke cleared, the 39th colors showed battle honors for the campaigns of Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne, Lorrain, St. Mihiel and Champagne—a Distinguished Unit Citation and the French Croix de Guerre with Gold Star. Returning home in 1919, the Regiment was inactivated in 1921.

As the specter of World War II clouded the skies of 1940, the 9th Infantry Division was activated at Fort Bragg, N.C., and with it, the 39th Regiment.

Landing at Inverary, Scotland on Oct. 17, 1942, the 39th was the first combat unit to set foot on foreign soil. Soon, the Regiment was landing again . . . on the beaches of Algiers. In the fighting to Bizerte, the “Fighting Falcons” played a leading role in bringing the German Panzer Army to its knees in North Africa.

On Sicily, Colonel “Paddy” Flint took command of the Regiment and gave it the “Triple A Bar Nothing” slogan . . . Anything, Anytime, Anywhere, Bar Nothing. After battles for Troina, the 39th was ready for the European mainland.

Landing in the Normandy Invasion, the unit began a series of battles for the Cherbourg and Cotentin Peninsulas on June 12, followed by the capture of Anderville. Next followed the famous “Battle of the Hedgerows” and the St. Lo breakthrough. By Aug. 19, 1944, the 39th was poised for the drive to the Seine River and Paris. Turning to Belgium, the Regiment swept through the Huertgen Forest. It closed on the fortified town of Roetgen, Germany, which fell on Sep. 14th, the first German city captured in World War II. By V-E Day, the Regiment had crossed the Rhine River and invaded the German heartland.

With the “Old Reliabes,” the 39th was inactivated Jan. 15, 1947, following occupation duty at Ingolstadt.

At Fort Carson, Colo., on Feb. 1, 1966, the 39th Infantry along with the 9th Division was reactivated, organized and trained for deployment to Vietnam. That deployment came on Dec. 19, 1966. The distinctive five-color crest of the 39th Infantry was to see its third war. But as its Latin motto attests, this new challenge will and has been met “With a Military Courage Worthy of Admiration.”

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The front cover this month, photographed by SP5 Jerry Cleveland, shows a Vietnam Air Force Skyraider diving to bomb an enemy position. The Vietnamese pilots and their American advisors have teamed up to make VNAF a potent striking force. The story, beginning on page 33, was written by CPT Robert Jutte.

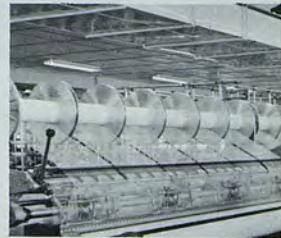
The back cover, shot by SP4 Leonard Boscarine, shows a modern pony soldier eating after a long day on his ACAV. Boscarine tells of the ACAV soldier's day-to-day life, starting on page 12.

LT Robert Pfohman has written a comprehensive review of the industrial situation in Vietnam and found that there is room for hope, despite the war. Story starts on page 6.

The Hurricane staff wishes you a happy and prosperous New Year. May your joys be many and your sorrows few.

The Editor

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II FIELD FORCE VIETNAM
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53D SIGNAL BATTALION *Photo Support*

The Hurricane is an authorized monthly publication of II Field Force Vietnam. It is published by the 16th Public Information Detachment and the Information Office, II FFORCDEV, APO San Francisco 96266. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Feature stories, photographs and art work of general interest to II Field Force personnel are invited.

TRAIN

Thu Duc to Xuan Loc "Express"

by SP5 Arnold Braeske

photos by SP5 Jerry Cleveland

Nearly all the stretches of track that used to be the railroads of III Corps lie rusting in the sun.

The bulk of those 285 miles of narrow gauge track sit idle in the cities, grassed over on deserted spurs in wildernesses like Long Khanh and Binh Tuy provinces, splintered on sabotaged bridges. The decline of the French rubber plantations that largely financed and used the railroads and the rise of the Viet Cong seemed to signal the end of railroads in Vietnam.

But railroading isn't completely finished. At least one train is still making a "long run," still earning a living, still exciting children by the side of its roadbed with the aura of "trains and trainrides."

Because it is such a rarity it seems to come out of nowhere and it always comes as a surprise to those who see it. Drivers brought to an unexplained halt in the middle of Bien Hoa look twice as the train comes out of narrow alleyways, crossing streets on rails no one ever seemed to notice before.

The train they see makes the longest run (42 miles) in III Corps and goes farther north and east than any train has since Vietnam had peaceful days.

It's the Thu Duc to Xuan Loc "Express," a 12-car, diesel-pulled affair run by the National Vietnamese Railway, contracted by USAID (United States Agency for International Development) to haul gravel to Xuan Loc for the 159th Engineer Group.

Before September 1968, the 159th sent 30 gravel trucks a day up Highway 1 from the RMK University Quarry at Thu Duc. To save time and money, two American officers—LTC Edwin

Patterson, 31st Engineer Battalion commander, and MAJ Walter Heme, S-4 of the 20th Engineer Brigade—decided to arrange with USAID and the railroad to have the gravel hauled along a parallel route by rail.

Since September, instead of the gravel trucks, the train, manned by five Vietnamese crewmen, lumbers out of Thu Duc every other morning. On it are eight hopper cars carrying 400,000 pounds of gravel, two crew cars and a General Electric diesel locomotive.

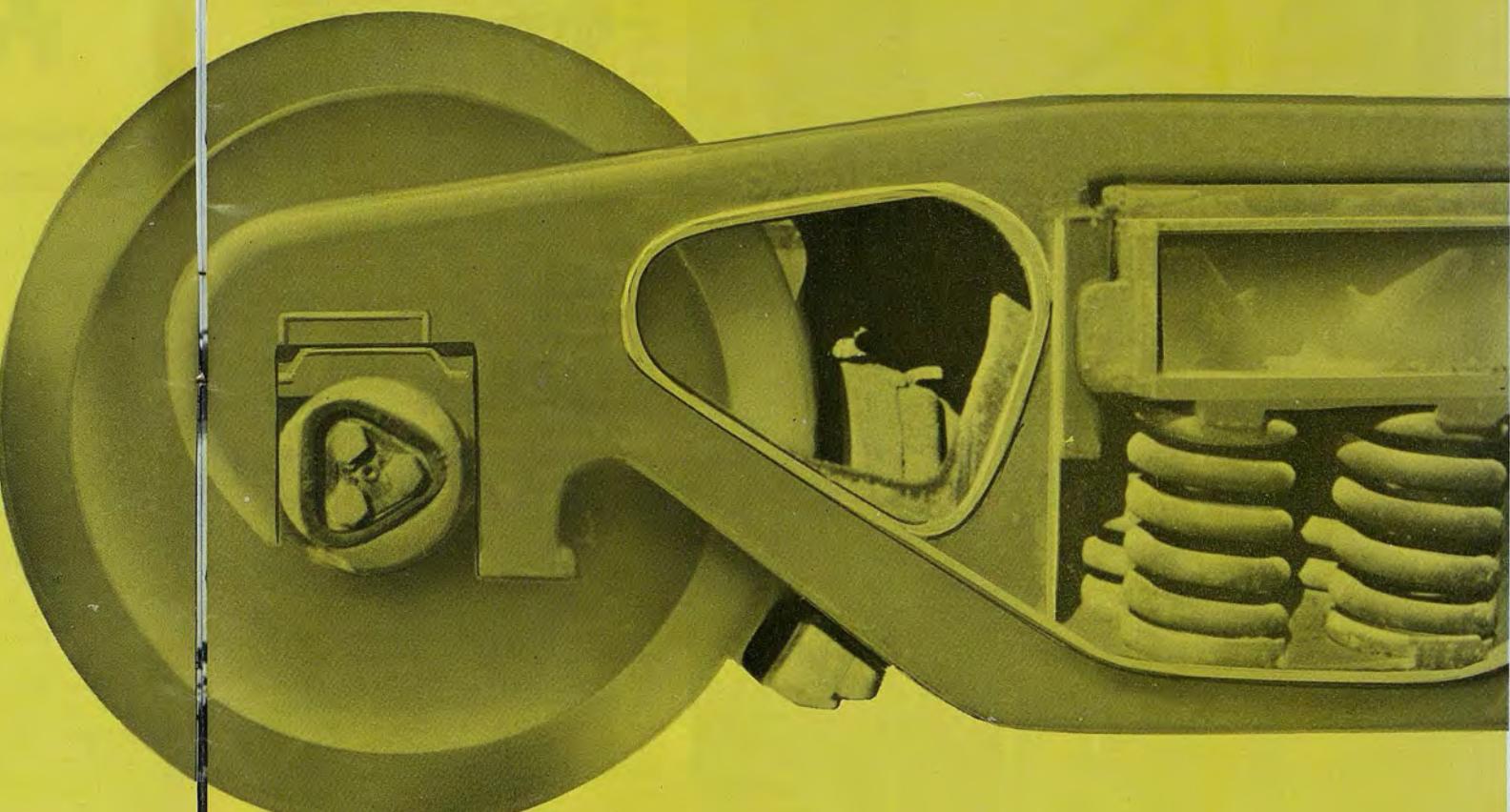
The train itself carries few security troops. It moves through ARVN-secured territory and past scattered Popular Force outposts all along its route and depends on these for protection.

The first part of the trip, 10 miles northward from Thu Duc to Bien Hoa, is scenic and secure. The train stops briefly at the old Thu Duc railway station to latch on two flatbed cars that

the diesel pushes in front of the train to detonate mines.

The train begins gliding northward toward Bien Hoa across ricefields, through palm forests, past country huts whose livingrooms front right on the track. At a railroad crossing a woman guard, whose job starts when she hears the train horn in the distance, raises and lowers the crossing gate. When the train is going slowly (it has a top speed of 25 m.p.h.) little kids run alongside trying to sell green ice pops. In the stationhouses it passes there is usually a station master working on papers at a desk. For everyone along the route it's "a train" and the children stare and old people come to doorways to watch.

The power to haul 200 tons of gravel comes from a 1965 model G.E. diesel locomotive built in Erie, Penna



TRAIN



The diesel tugs its cargo through the town of Di An, past the large red, white and blue marquee that reads, "Di An USO," rolls along the main street and then heads out into the brush again. A few minutes later it rumbles across the Saigon-Tay Ninh Highway, normally strung with long American truck convoys.

The thatched and red-tiled roofs of Bien Hoa appear across the muddy Dong Nai River. Fishermen in boats flying the red and yellow Vietnamese flag look up as the 25-ton cars pass on the skeletal bridge overhead.

The railroad yard in Bien Hoa is made up of a few dozen dormant tracks and a stationhouse that belongs in a small French city. The train stops at the Bien Hoa station to pick up a security force if there is word of danger or mines ahead. Two Wickham Trolleys—green, bulky armored railroad cars used by the British in India—are hooked on and a handful of ARVN soldiers pile onto cars along the length of the train.

Outside of Bien Hoa, heading east, the train plunges into wild country, foliage eight feet deep growing right up to the tracks. Except for an occasional oxcart track winding into the brush, the area is solid trees, shrubs, vines, grass and massive mounds of 'vegetable barbed wire.'

The train tunnels through the wilds, past crumbling, abandoned stationhouses with faded signs that read "Trang Bom," "Go Dau Giay," "Cau Ba." In scattered clearings within sight of the track Popular Force soldiers wave at the train from tiny outposts.

The train has never had any great security problems. It has been mined twice, but has never had a sniping incident. In both of the mining incidents no one was hurt and no major damage was done.

Both times the VC placed the mines near the old, eight-mile long Suzannah Rubber Plantation, nearly at the end of the train's run to Xuan Loc.

Suzannah is a visual relief from the tangled forests that loom near most of the track. There is the atmosphere

The train crosses the Dong Nai River on the approach to Bien Hoa. Two empty cars are pushed ahead of the engine to explode any enemy mines

of the French colonial period in the endless rows of old rubber trees. Although much of the plantation is still being worked, the track is dotted with abandoned stations, the frames of old rubber warehouses and abandoned houses. Red roads cut across the track and tunnel under the trees to holes of light at the edge of the treeline.

The 42 miles end at Xuan Loc. The sight of the Xuan Loc Cathedral soaring out of the town and the green dome of Nui Chua Chan mountain in the background come as a relief. Even the sight of barbed wire is a welcome sign of security.

A few minutes after arriving, the 400,000 pounds of gravel are dumped on the siding just outside of town. The gravel will be picked up by the 169th Engineer Battalion, the same unit that loaded it on to the train at Thu Duc. The gravel hauled by the National Vietnamese Railway through the cities, rubber and forests will be used for construction on Highway QL-20 and for concrete foundations on ARVN dependent housing in Xuan Loc.

The train to Xuan Loc is only a train, and a gravel train at that. But its very existence is a hopeful attempt to revive a national industry. And along its tracks is a history of Vietnam's last 50 years.



National Vietnamese Railway workers patch the roadbed on a rail that once ran uninterrupted from Saigon northward to Hanoi and China (above). Twenty-five tons of gravel pour out of a hopper car at the end of the line—Xuan Loc (below)



Industry

in Vietnam

Progress,

Despite the War

by LT Robert Pfohman

If the war ended today and peace and security came to Vietnam, the country would have a prosperous economy similar to postwar Japan's within five years, according to Niels C. Beck, USAID deputy assistant director for Industry.

Once called the "ricebowl of Asia," Vietnam now has to import rice to feed its people. Vietnam has some of the finest hardwood lumber stands in all of Asia—lumber was exported before the war. Now thousands of tons of lumber must be imported for construction. Vietnamese natural rubber, "the world's finest," was one of the principal exports years ago. The flood has diminished to a trickle.

The war has caused many of the problems. Thousands of acres of fertile delta land have been abandoned by farmers fleeing the enemy. Dense forests are now empty; the familiar sounds of the woodcutters' axes are gone. Now the enemy lives in the forests and terrorizes even the hardiest woodcutter. The great rubber plantations are either

Nuoc mam, a savory sauce made from fish fermented in these casks, is used as a dip for various Vietnamese dishes. Its production is big business for villagers near the South China Sea



Progress

closed down or working just enough to stay in operation to protect heavy investments.

The outlook for Vietnamese industry may seem grim; the optimistic view of the advisors is based on comparison with other countries. "I spent five years advising industry officials in Korea, and there was little or no real industry anywhere in the country following the war," Beck said. "We got the ball rolling and now their economy is booming." (Korean exports are fast approaching the half billion dollar mark. But as recently as 1962, exports amounted to a mere 32 million, while imports totaled more than 400 million.) "If Korea can do that well in such a short time, Vietnam should be able to do even better because of the abundance of natural resources," he said.

But initial success is sometimes difficult. Industrially deficient countries must balance their imports with their exports if they are to survive. According to Beck, "a young nation cannot stand on its own two feet unless it has a balance of payments. Until then, there will be a constant threat against the political stability of the nation. We have been experiencing this balance of payments problem recently in the United States with the gold flow. It can be a serious problem," he said.

But even when imports and exports balance, there are further problems. The Nationalist Chinese on Taiwan reached their first balance of trade in

1965. There was a balance of imports and exports—more than one billion dollars was involved. Everything looked bright and people were optimistic until the following year when the balance fell and imports rose. This came as a shock to the people, and they were scared. "When they examined the causes of this situation," Beck said, "they found that the drop was caused by the additional planned imports of capital goods. Capital goods are those used to make machines which make products for export. You have to spend money to make money, and you have to borrow money and take an initial loss in order to make a gain," observed Beck. The exports surged ahead the following year.

Clearly, no complete solution to Vietnam's economic problems can come before the war ends. But USAID advisors are fighting the lack of industry, of capitalization, before the end. "We can do a lot of things while the fighting is still going on to lay the foundation for a solid, industrial-based economy when the war ends," Beck said.

Several of the programs are based on agreements between the GVN (Government of Vietnam) and USAID to protect and encourage business. For example, in an effort to encourage foreign businesses to build branch factories in Vietnam, a useful device called the "joint-venture" has been formed. The joint-venture includes an insurance guarantee that if the GVN expropriates a factory, or the war destroys the plant, then the U.S. Government pays for all real losses. USAID guarantees the GVN promise that factory owners can send all profits home for every year that the factory is kept in operation.

USAID has added a special feature to the plan. It has agreed to pay for

half of the cost incurred by an American firm doing a preliminary factory site study for possible expansion into Vietnam. If the firm decides to expand by building a branch factory in Vietnam, USAID guarantees to pay for any future war damages. Beck said that foreign firms are still hesitant to invest in Vietnam because of the fighting.

Despite the war, American firms have built branch factories in Vietnam. The Foremost Dairy, one of the largest in the world, is perhaps the best example. Starting operations in 1966 with factories in key locations in Vietnam, Foremost is now the only milk and milk products producer in Vietnam. The business, started under the joint-venture program, now boasts a modern, well-equipped factory in Thu Duc near Saigon.

Currently, its biggest money maker is the sweetened condensed milk that is sold on the Vietnamese economy. Beck said, "the Vietnamese use great quantities of sugar in their coffee and tea. This condensed milk is very sweet and since it is canned, it doesn't require refrigeration until opened."

Industries that produce raw materials for other industries, however, have the best toe hold in Vietnam because the French, who milked colonial Vietnam, needed raw materials for factories in the motherland. (The few factories in Vietnam before 1954 were almost without exception in what is now North Vietnam.) The best example of these "intermediate industries" is rubber, which still dominates much of South Vietnam's economy.

The French greatly developed the rubber industry. The jungle was meticulously cleared and rubber trees were imported from Malaya and planted in neat, orderly rows. Rubber soon became one of the most important exports, accounting for approximately 70 percent of the country's exports in the period between World Wars. Vietnamese rubber was hailed as the best in the world and was in great demand.

World War II and the Japanese cut off the flow. Allied forces desperately needed rubber; synthetic rubber was invented. Vietnamese rubber trade has recovered somewhat, but things will never be the same. The bottom has fallen out of the world rubber market.

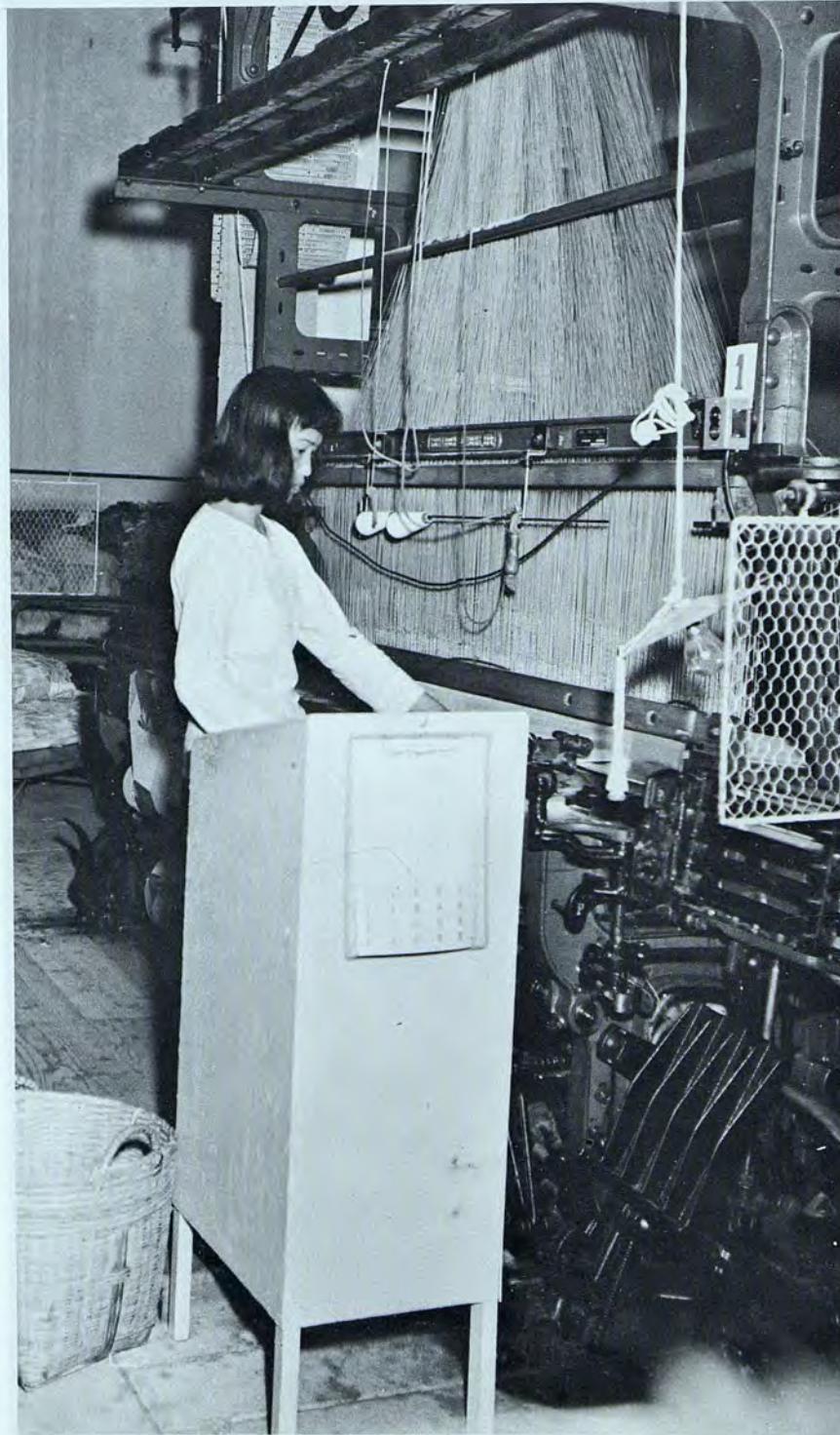
For the rubber industry especially, this war must end before prosperity can come. But there are problems to be met even when rifle fire ceases—virtually all of the capitalization of the industry

Strangely out of place in the rice-rich delta is this bustling cement plant. Most of the cement products in Vietnam come from the plant (left). Ancient and revered methods of manufacturing still prevail in some places (right)





Industry



is French and, further, there are *no* rubber processing plants in Vietnam. (General Tire Company has considered building a processing plant in Vietnam, but nothing has been decided.) Foreign investors could get the industry out of trouble soon after the war ends. Beck feels that they will.

Vietnam also is one of the biggest customers of U.S. raw cotton in the world and the Vietnamese weave the cotton into good cloth. But there is no garment industry to make the cloth into clothes. This is comparable to having huge steel stockpiles with no mills to make finished products, and is typical of the unbalanced nature of the economy.

The French also started the textile industry in Vietnam. Once again they shipped the intermediate product home. Since there is no longer a French garment industry to manufacture clothes, the people depend on small tailor shops for production. Even the most dilapidated shacks often contain a sewing machine—the demand is great. According to Beck, "no foreign firm has yet shown any interest in this area, which has a tremendous potential." In an effort to improve the situation, USAID advisors plan to work with Hong Kong tailors to encourage them to set up shops in Vietnam. The situation is just the opposite in Hong Kong; there are more tailors than cloth. Costs are low since most of the work is done by hand and the competition is furious. It would be ideal if Hong Kong merchants would come to Vietnam, but most of them are not willing to leave the comfort and security they have in Hong Kong.

The picture is brighter in areas in which Vietnam has an available supply as well as demand. For example, great quantities of cement and lumber will be needed to repair the nation-wide damages sustained in the war. (Present demands far exceed the available supply of these critical items. American imports are taking up the slack until the day when the Vietnamese can take over.) Vietnam has some of the largest limestone deposits in the world—virtually untouched because security requirements can't be met yet.

The Hatien quarry near Can Tho in the Delta provides vital limestone for the only cement manufacturing plant in Vietnam. The plant, located next to the quarry, processes the limestone with other minerals to produce clinkers that are barged north to the grinding and bagging plant on the outskirts of Saigon. The plant started operation in 1965, and

Modern weaving methods have increased production a hundredfold. The products of this new blanket factory are much cheaper and of considerably better quality than are hand-woven items

has been successful in supplying an estimated one-third of all cement needs in Vietnam. Industry officials are optimistic about the future of the cement industry because a much larger limestone deposit is known to exist north of Hue, extending past the Demilitarized Zone. It is believed to be one of the largest limestone deposits in the world. When the military situation clears up, Vietnam's second cement manufacturing plant will be constructed near that deposit.

Vietnam exported lumber before the war. Now, however, the GVN is forced to import lumber for all its needs.

The war cannot be blamed entirely for this decline. The GVN has a high tax that is imposed on woodcutters for every tree that is cut. A USAID official calculated that it costs the GVN more to maintain bookkeeping accounts and checks on the tax than is actually received as revenue. Woodcutters go to great lengths to keep from paying. If they do pay, they may lose the small profits they make. If they do not pay, the door is open for the enemy to impose his own taxes. According to Beck, "there is already a considerable traffic of Cambodian logs coming into the country and ending up in Vietnamese sawmills." USAID officials currently are working with GVN representatives to reduce the tax and also permit a free flow of Cambodian logs into Vietnam. This would free Vietnamese timber for use as the best high grade plywood and veneer in Asia. Furthermore, there are two good-sized paper pulp mills in Vietnam, but both are forced to import all the pulp they use.

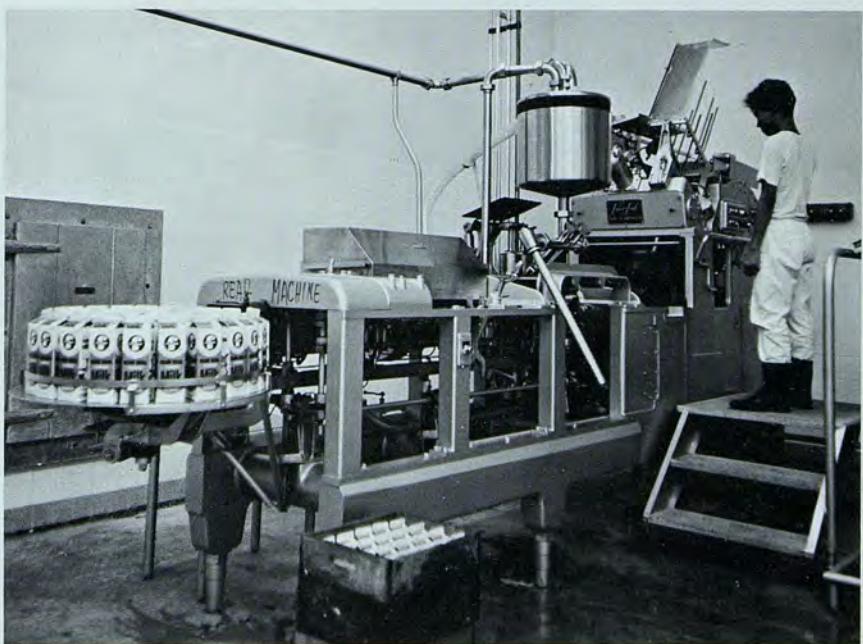
(In an effort to cut costs, advisors suggested that the pulp mills mix straw with the imported pulp. That project had to be temporarily abandoned when the enemy burned a huge straw pile (three stories high) in Bien Hoa during the Tet Truce Violations.)

Although recent attempts to help the lumber industry have not been particularly successful, there again is room for optimism. Once the war ends or the tactical situation permits, lumber will become one of Vietnam's biggest assets. Once the initial demands for lumber during the reconstruction of a beat-up country have been met, lumber and wood products will once again be exported as in the past.

Advisors believe that many economically good things can take place during the war. As the pacification program secures more of the countryside, new areas of operation open up. According to Beck, "We're making substantial progress despite the war, and things will continue to improve along with the security situation. But we're going to be busy when the war finally ends," he declared.



The Viet Phat steel drum manufacturing plant in Cholon is an example of the industry beginning to catch on in Vietnam (above). Foremost Dairy, a joint venture firm, provides dairy products to the Vietnamese market





The ACAV is reflected in a gentle pool of muddy water. The four men who live on the track and fight from it take a rare chance to relax

photos and story by SP4 Leonard Boscarine

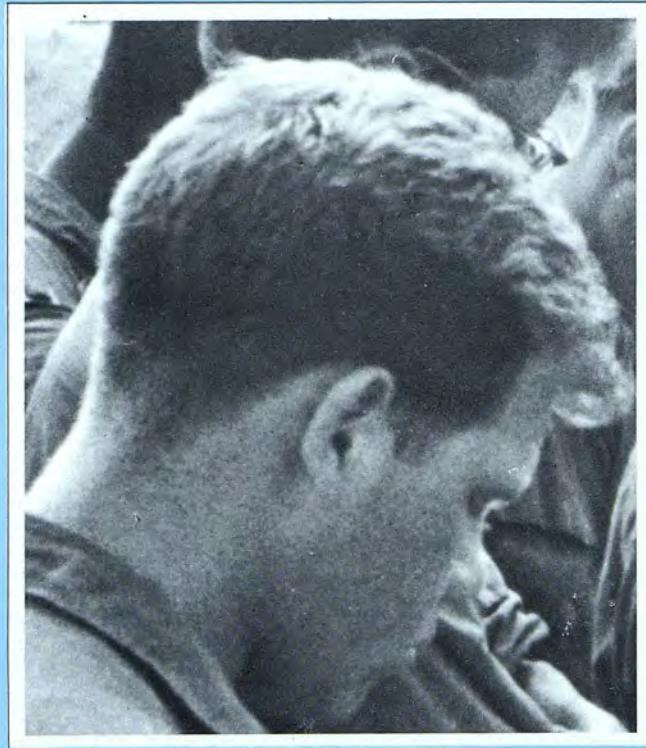
*It's a Tough Life,
Living in an*

Lazily PFC Ronald Lashwell opened his eyes and looked through the open top hatch of his Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicle (ACAV) at the stars shining in the predawn darkness. For Lashwell a work day starts early—this day, like so many others, began at 0530.

Lashwell sat up and pulled on his combat boots. Around him the other crew members were in a similar groggy condition. Only PFC Charles Eaton was fully awake. The night before he had drawn the high card so he had gotten the last two hours of guard duty.

(An ACAV normally carries a crew of four, and while they are in a combat area one person must stand guard at all times. The most desirable guard tour is either the first or the last shift. By tradition the track commander pulls the

ACAV



PFC Charles Eaton

first shift. The other three members either take turns or cut cards to determine who pulls the last two hours. Pulling the first or the last shift assures a crew member of getting at least six hours of uninterrupted sleep.)

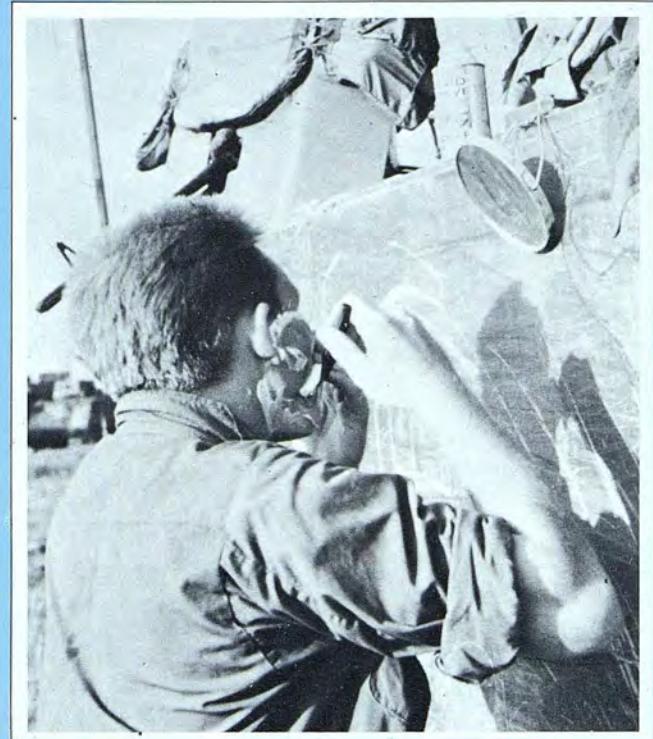
Sluggish with drowsiness, SP4 Larry Martin stepped through the rear hatch and walked toward the chow line. Drawn by the aroma of frying bacon and hot coffee, PFC Alnorys Ortiz also stepped into the red dust and followed Martin.

The cavalrymen, members of "C" Troop, First Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, receive two hot meals daily, breakfast and supper. Lunch is a concoction of C rations and fresh fruits.

Toward the east a faint red glow began to lighten the sky. This part of Vietnam is known as the "Catcher's Mitt" because of the large number of enemy soldiers captured or killed in its rough, wooded terrain or, according to an alternate theory, because of its resemblance on a map to a catcher's mitt.

Lashwell is the ACAV's driver. Ortiz and Eaton are the gunners who man the two side machineguns. Martin is the track commander, or TC.

Their vehicle is Track 31, 14 tons of mobile firepower. By 0630 the Third Platoon, of which 31 is the lead or "scout" vehicle, was briefed and ready to go. Today's



PFC Ronald Lashwell

mission was simple—"go to a nearby hamlet, pick up and escort a minesweep team, then deploy along the roadside until late in the afternoon when a convoy headed for Phu Loi will pass."

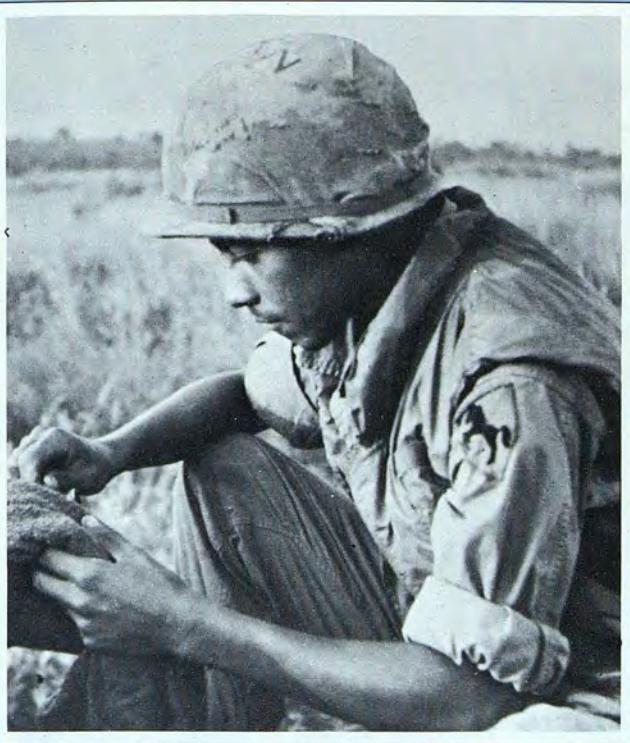
Five minutes later the day's mission began. The armored column didn't use a nearby road—it was suspected of having mines beneath its red surface. The ACAV's are not defeated by the terrain; they can knock down most trees or climb steep hills with ease. The terrain fights back, though, in the form of thousands of angry red ants anxious to bite the intruders.

Suddenly Ortiz tensed and fingered the safety switch on his machinegun. He had spotted a shadowy movement in the tall grass. A wild turkey lumbered into the morning's cool air. Smiling at his nervous reaction, Ortiz relaxed.

The other crew members consider Ortiz their official hippie, largely because he's from New York. Airborne qualified, Ortiz transferred into the Cav because he was "tired of walking and decided to do some riding for a change."

The other gunner, Eaton, is a farm boy from the outskirts of Nashville, Tenn. To Ortiz, Eaton is simply "hick," a gun buddy who never stops complaining about

THE ACAV



PFC Alrorys Ortiz

leaving Tennessee. His favorite radio program is the early morning country music hour on the Armed Forces Radio Network. Before entering the Army Eaton was a singer and a guitar player in a country-western band.

Minutes later the ACAVs joined the minesweep team. With deft movements the engineers unpacked their electronic gear and began to search for the mines. The ACAVs meanwhile had spread out alongside the road. Their guns were loaded and ready to react if the engineers got fired upon.

The cavalrymen relaxed and waited. Talking seemed to make the time pass more quickly.

Two weeks earlier one of the crewmen had received a "Dear John" letter.

"My old fiancee is now engaged to my cousin who's back home," he said. "I'm looking forward to a family reunion when I get back."

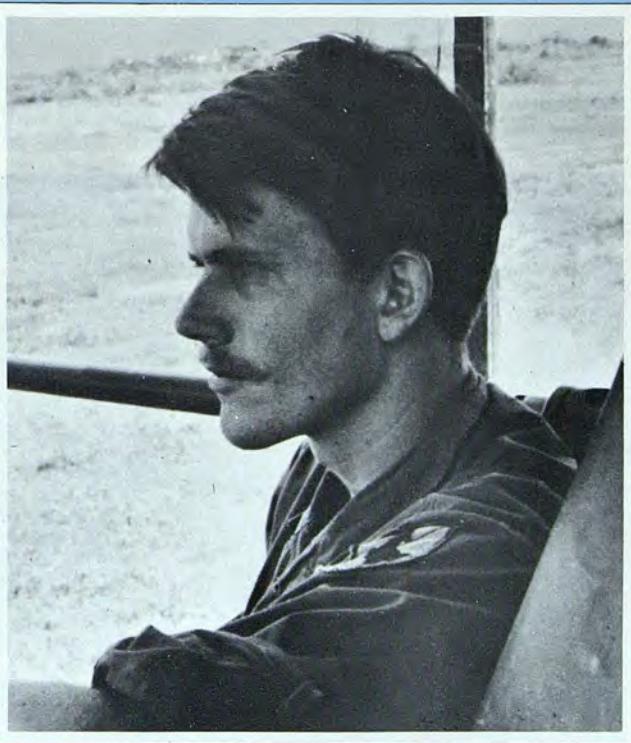
"I think I may buy a pair of sunglasses," Lashwell interrupted.

Following 20 minutes of bargaining, he bought a pair of handmade sunglasses from a Vietnamese woman.

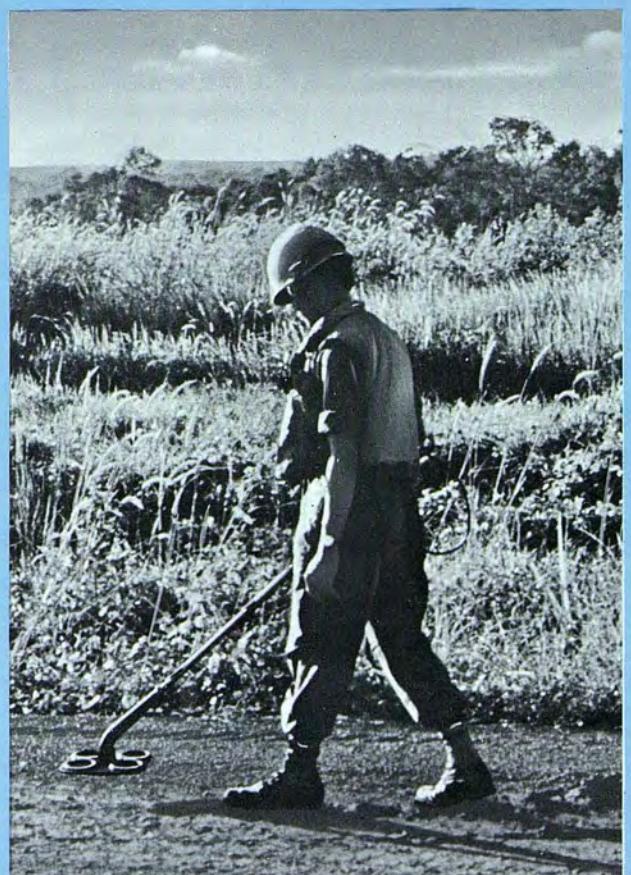
"Actually I don't need these shades," Lashwell said. "It's just a change of pace, bargaining."

While the engineers checked the road, civilian motor-

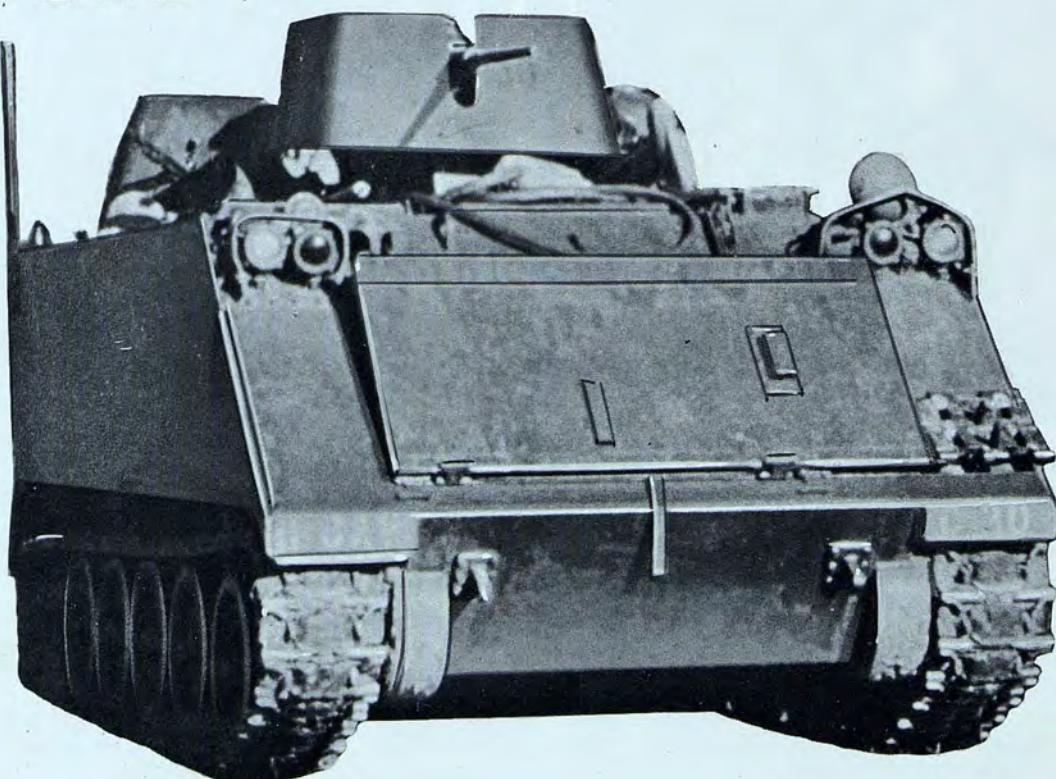
A soldier carrying a mine detector trudges up the road, alert for any small change in the pitch that may mean either a mine or only a decoy piece of metal



SP4 Larry Martin



ACAV



cycle traffic continued to use the same road, moving on one small path in the center. Occasionally the mine-sweepers halted the flow of traffic and exploded a mine in place.

The engineers are alerted to the possible presence of a mine by a high reading on their metal detectors. A loud hum sounds in their earphones. The engineers then probe the area very, very gently with a bayonet to try to find the wire lead if it is a command detonated mine or the clapboard or pressure plate if it is a pressure type mine.

If the reading is very high or the bayonet indicates a mine the engineers then set a charge over the mine to "blow it in place."

It is easy to see if a mine was in the road—following the explosion a big black cloud hangs over the crater. If the "mine" was nothing but a piece of metal planted

to harass the engineers nothing shows except red dust from road dirt.

As the hours passed the sun seemed to get hotter. Everyone got drowsy. The sweating crew wrote letters or looked on in boredom while Lashwell bartered for another pair of sunglasses. Finally the convoy passed, each truck smothering the ACAV with thick road dust.

For the third platoon the work day ended when the last truck roared by. Once again the ACAV's radio crackled orders as the vehicles grouped together and then began the journey back to the night defensive position. There mail, hot food and showers were waiting.

The men of Track 31 have earned the right to check another "X" on their calendars. The day was long, hot and unpleasant. It was typical of many days, of many X's.

The Cao Dai



A combination of several religions, Cao Daism has appealed deeply to the Vietnamese people. Its short history has been turbulent but the faith is expanding

story and photos by CPT Les Raschko

A third of South Vietnam's people are Cao Daists—but the religion is less than a half century old.

Founded in 1922 in Saigon, Cao Daism is a mixture of the teachings of Confucius, Lao Tse, Buddha, and Jesus Christ. Perhaps because of the mixture of

faiths, the new religion came out of a limited circle to quickly spread among the people in 1926, after it was officially accepted as a legitimate religion by the government on October 7 of that year. It now has five million members. Some 80 percent of the 320,000 people in Tay Ninh province, where the Holy See is located, are believers.



Worshippers in the main Cao Dai temple in Tay Ninh city

(The religion has not expanded without growing pains. It organized itself as a quasi-autonomous political body and after the Geneva Accords in 1954 raised a large army. This was an unacceptable challenge to the Diem Government. Though the Cao Daists were

by no means pro-communist, they were not pro-Diem either. The Cao Dai army was destroyed and virtually disbanded in the mid-50's. The sect supports the present elected government.)

There are 47 Cao Dai temples. The most picturesque

is the Great Temple at Long Hoa within Tay Ninh city. The temple was begun in 1933 and completed in 1941, built by voluntary contributions from several dedicated young followers.

Inside the entrance of the temple is the "Mural of

the Three Saints" that shows the "Third Alliance" between God and mankind. The three saints—Sun Yat-sen (leader of the 1911 Chinese revolution),

A Mixture of Religions

Victor Hugo (renowned 19th Century French poet) and Trang Trinh (Vietnam's first poet, who wrote in the 16th Century)—have been entrusted with the task of bringing about the "Third Alliance." (Moses was the earthly negotiator for the First Alliance and Jesus Christ arranged the Second.)

In the mural Sun Yat-sen is shown holding an inkstone, symbol of the Chinese and Christian civili-



The Cao Dai temple in Tay Ninh city was begun in 1933 and completed in 1941. It is the focal point of worship for the five million Vietnamese who are believers.



From left to right in the "Mural of the Three Saints" are Sun Yat-sen, Victor Hugo and Tranh Trinh. The artwork shows the birth of the Cao Dai religion.

With a Deep Appeal

zations giving birth to the Cao Daist doctrine. Victor Hugo and the revolutionary both are also shown as disciples of Tranh Trinh and are writing the words "God and Humanity—Love and Justice." The first is written in French, the second in Chinese.

The principles of the Cao Daist doctrine reflect their mixed parentage—a wide range of belief is acceptable. The religion also adapts itself to all degrees of spiritual evolution. From a moral point of view, it reminds man of his duties toward himself, his family, and then toward humanity, the universal family. From a philosophical point of view, it teaches that honors, riches and luxury are worthless. The full quietude of the soul apart from the material world is man's goal. From the point of view of worship, it recommends the adoration of God and the veneration of superior spirits. It admits the worship of ancestors, and prohibits meat offerings. It believes in harmony with other religions and systems of spiritualistic and psychic philosophy. Cao Daists believe in the existence of the soul, its survival beyond the physical body and its evolution by successive reincarnation.

Four daily services are held in the temples and in the private homes of the Cao Daists. High mass is celebrated at midnight on the 14th and 30th of each month. The services consist of offering of incense and prayers, three hymns to the glory of God and three hymns in honor of the Holy Three.

All Cao Daists must observe five basic doctrines:

- Not to kill.
- Not to become materialistic through the needs of possession and domination.
- Not to practice high living.
- Not to be tempted by luxury.
- Not to sin by word.

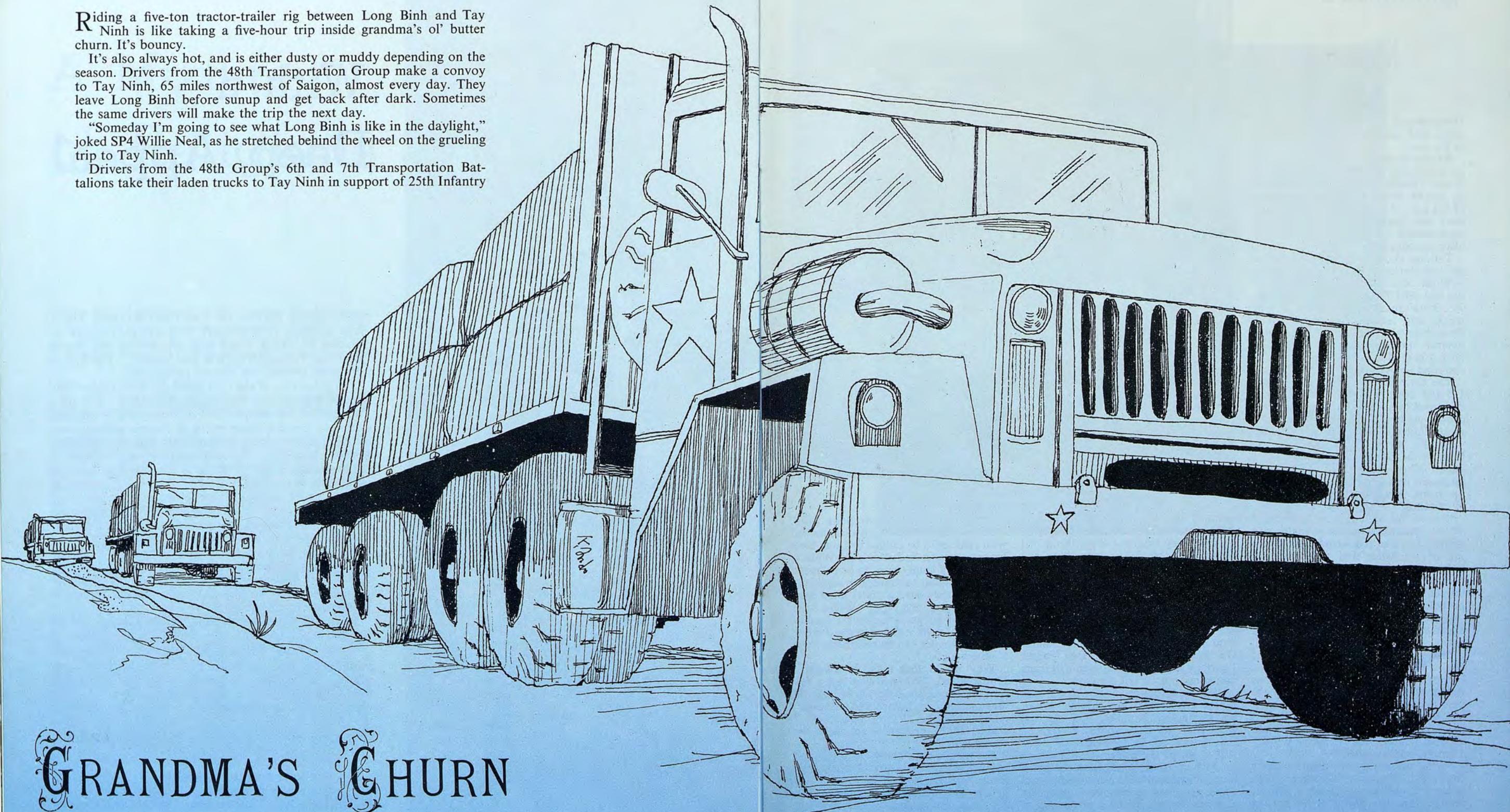
Besides these, each Cao Daist must be obedient, modest, honest and respectful.

Riding a five-ton tractor-trailer rig between Long Binh and Tay Ninh is like taking a five-hour trip inside grandma's ol' butter churn. It's bouncy.

It's also always hot, and is either dusty or muddy depending on the season. Drivers from the 48th Transportation Group make a convoy to Tay Ninh, 65 miles northwest of Saigon, almost every day. They leave Long Binh before sunup and get back after dark. Sometimes the same drivers will make the trip the next day.

"Someday I'm going to see what Long Binh is like in the daylight," joked SP4 Willie Neal, as he stretched behind the wheel on the grueling trip to Tay Ninh.

Drivers from the 48th Group's 6th and 7th Transportation Battalions take their laden trucks to Tay Ninh in support of 25th Infantry



GRANDMA'S CHURN

GRANDMA'S

CHURN

Division and 1st Air Cavalry Division units and advisory teams operating in the area.

Riding shotgun with Willie is quite an experience. Yelling over the roar of Truck Number 16's powerful engine, he talked about the different aspects of his job—the long hours, bad roads, heat and finally the hour or two of maintenance on Number 16 at night after the convoy.

Talking about maintenance—one of the less glorious facets of truck driving—Willie continued, "all the drivers at the 62d (62d Transportation Company, 7th Battalion) take good care of their trucks and trailers. We take care of them; they take care of us. Pulling maintenance means you are less likely to have a breakdown and be stuck out on the road somewhere."

The convoy came to an abrupt halt. Up and down the line, drivers craned their necks outside the cabs to see what caused the holdup. After a few minutes most climbed out to stretch their legs.

Finally, an MP gun jeep that had been at the front of the convoy came back. The driver shouted, "APC (armored personnel carrier) hit a mine up front. We'll be rolling in about 30 minutes."

"Looks like we'll be here for a while," Willie declared, reaching under the driver's seat and producing an insulated jug of ice water and two boxes of C-Rations. "Dinner is served," he declared. It was a welcome break from the engine's deafening roar and the potholes in the road.

Then, all too soon, engines fired up ahead of us and the convoy was rolling again.

"How do you like the ride?" laughed Willie as we hit a particularly vicious bump that threw me into the canvas that covered the cab and knocked the steel helmet from my head. Recovering my helmet from the floor, I looked up, flack jacket soaked with sweat, and shouted, "Just fine thanks, Willie." Then we both laughed.

"What do you usually haul on these convoys to Tay Ninh?" I asked. "Well, today you can see we've got a load of cement. Another day it could be just about anything they need up here."

"We carry all kinds of supplies to



SP4 Willie Neal

units in III and IV Corps. Anything from ammunition to fresh food is hauled by somebody from the 48th Group. All except one thing. The guys from the 64th (64th Quartermaster Battalion) haul most of the POL (gasoline and oil) in their tankers.

What's it like being a truck driver? "Well," Willie declared, "you can see it's not the softest job in the world. And we keep kind of irregular hours. Our mess hall even stays open 'round the clock to feed people coming in from and going out on late convoys."

"But even though it's not easy, most of the guys really like driving. When you're hauling supplies, you can see what your job is all about. You know that troops out in the field need what you've got on the trailer you're pulling. And it's up to each individual driver to accomplish his mission. It's tough sometimes, but it is an important job."

When we made the turnaround at Tay Ninh, the drivers unhitched their trucks and picked up different trailers

to make the trip back to Long Binh.

Some trucks picked up trailers loaded with vehicles to be carried to Long Binh for maintenance and others, like Willie's, were pulling empty ones to be reloaded and used again to transport supplies.

"We usually have a pretty good load on the return trip, too," Willie said. "Lots of times we bring back a load of retrograde (used) artillery brass. Pulling an empty trailer can make the trip back a little rougher."

Why would that make it rougher? He explained, "When you've got a few tons of cargo, it helps hold the rig down going over bumps and potholes." Already feeling slightly scrambled, I wished for a helicopter to make the return trip.

But the road got better at Cu Chi and we finally saw the lights of Long Binh in the darkened sky. "You know," said Willie, "this is the best part of the day. You can feel a cool breeze blowing, home base is in sight and you know the day's work is almost done."



794TH REGIONAL FORCE COMPANY

story and photos by SP5 Arnold Braeske

Every morning at the Tactical Operations Center in Bien Hoa a list of the previous day's military action in III Corps is made up.

Buried in the middle of the report is often a small paragraph like this one:

"R. F. Company 794 in Binh Duong made contact with VC force of unknown size at 2330. Enemy broke contact almost immediately. Result—four enemy killed. Four weapons captured. No friendly losses...."

This kind of daily report is typical of that particular Vietnamese unit and doesn't surprise anyone in Bien Hoa. The 794th Regional Force Company in Phu Cuong, 14 miles up the Saigon River from Saigon, may well be the best R. F. company in the 10,000-square-mile III Corps Tactical Zone.

A PROUD TRADITION

The company's history speaks for itself. "794" has won the rare U.S. Valorous Unit Citation, has made contact and killed Viet Cong on more than 50 percent of its operations, and has lost only 13 of its own men compared to 132 enemy killed. In addition, the commanding officer of the unit earned a battlefield commission and three U.S. Bronze Stars for Valor.

"You've never seen anyone go after VC like these men," stated CPT Ronald Osimo, a tough, academic-looking young advisor who returned to Vietnam to be with 794 again.

CPT Osimo, now in his fourth tour in Vietnam, was with the company when it officially became the 794th R. F. Company in November 1967. Prior to that, 794 was a smaller unit known as the Binh Duong Sector Intelligence Platoon (actually two platoons). During the year ending November, 1966, those two platoons had a total of 601 enemy killed and more than 500

enemy weapons captured. They lost one man in combat during the year.

The leader of this intelligence platoon was a sergeant named Tran Van An. Now 37 and a first lieutenant, An is the commander of 794 Company. Along with him in 794 is the nucleus of what was the Intelligence Sector Platoon—sergeants and friends whose fighting experience in Vietnam's wars dates back to the mid-1940's, like An's own background.

The character of 794 is largely a product of the personality of An himself. He is a thin, quiet man, respected by his soldiers. He has a hard-boiledness, though, that comes out in company formations and in combat. He's been known to spray bursts of rifle fire over the heads of his men when they were reluctant to spread out on an operation.

The American officers working with 794 also think highly of An.

"Lieutenant An doesn't say much to



LT An

you when you come under fire," said LT Jeffrey Kleinman, one of the other Americans who, like CPT Osimo, accompanies 794 on its operations. "He just makes sure that you're close to him in the command element."

CPT Osimo cites another characteristic of An.

"An will not pull out of a fight without having all of his men with him—dead or alive. I've seen him fight for four hours to recover the body of one of his men."

Besides never having abandoned a man on the battlefield, LT An's company has never had an AWOL and never lost a weapon in combat.

794's area of operation is generally the southern portion of Binh Duong province, in VC-infested areas like Ba Lua, and the soggy shores, swamps and ricefields along the Saigon River. Although the company has a better than average amount of contact with the enemy (22 contacts on 43 major operations) it has the same difficulty as all allied forces—finding sizable Viet Cong groups.

Southern Binh Duong is a tangled labyrinth of waterlogged fields, paddies and forests. The area is sprinkled with tunnels, spiderholes and natural hideouts for the Viet Cong. Walking through Binh Duong's ricefields is a laborious, thigh-deep plunging and plodding.

Side by side with the threat of a VC ambush in this soggy ground is the



The 794th moves out on an operation. The company has never had an AWOL or lost a weapon in combat

continual irritation of mosquitos, stinging ants and thumb-sized leeches probing underwater for bare skin.

"The VC like to catch you out here if they can," explained one of 794's soldiers. "You're tired after walking a couple of kilometers through the rice and they're dug in."

There is nothing superhuman about the Regional Force soldiers that make up the company. All of them come from Binh Duong province and all have a knack at guerrilla fighting, but beyond that there is no uniformity.

"There is never a large turnover of men in 794," explained MAJ Dwight Robinson, RF/PF advisor for Binh Duong province. "As a result, the new men are absorbed into the company and gradually trained by the older men."

The company is a mixture of soldiers as young as 17 to veteran sergeants 38 years old, from a pint-sized grenadier four feet, ten inches tall to a rifleman six-foot-three. Most of the men are married and live with their families in Phu Cuong city.

LT An's company has had a number of successes in its first year.

The 139 soldiers in the company in 11 months put together an odd collection of enemy weaponry. The assortment included: 10,000 rounds of ammunition; 1,535 pounds of TNT; seven M-79 grenade launchers; 40 AK-47 rifles; 116 combat-damaged enemy weapons; 27 mines; one shotgun; 32 bolt-action rifles; three large-caliber machineguns; four bangalore torpedoes; seven pistols; and one flamethrower.

On February 8, 1968, the company was responsible for killing 47 Viet Cong at Chanh Hiep in a late Tet Truce Violations battle.

794 was the last unit to batter the Viet Cong Quyet Thang Battalion before 140 soldiers from that unit gave up in a much-publicized surrender on the streets of Saigon early in May 1968.

GEN Creighton Abrams sent the company a congratulatory teletype note on October 11th following a battle in which 794 eliminated a Viet Cong force in the Ba Lua region without taking any casualties.

Binh Duong province's 794th Regional Force Company is not a "one of a kind" outfit, but its history is so colorful that it stands out. The company's relationship to its American advisors reflects its abilities.

"I 'advise' them," says CPT Osiomo, "but they really don't need any advice."

Because the enemy does not hide out in easily traveled country, the 794th must look for him in difficult terrain





Progress is the byword in the peaceful parts of the province where the population has gathered for protection

Hurricane Province

Phuoc Tuy

An "Unprosperous
and Unpeaceful" Land
with Potential

story and photos by LT Robert Pfohman

According to the ancient legend, "Phuoc Tuy" means "prosperous and peaceful." Phuoc Tuy province, however, is no longer very prosperous and many areas are downright unpeaceful. The enemy from the north has renamed Phuoc Tuy "unpeaceful and unprosperous."

The Government of Vietnam (GVN) controls the province and district capitals, and most of the people in Phuoc Tuy live near these populated centers for protection. The pattern through most of III Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ), this necessary population concentration has destroyed industries and left much of the countryside in the hands of the enemy. None the less, the land of peace and prosperity has tremendous human and material resources that await only the end of the war.

Phuoc Tuy is flat land, with the exception of a few mountains in the south, southwest and northeast. Vegetation covers more than 90 percent of the province. The land is bordered on the north by Long Khanh; on the south by the China Sea; on the east by Binh Tuy; and on the west by Bien Hoa province. The province capital, Phuoc Le (often called Baria), is 66 miles by road southeast of Saigon. Phuoc Tuy's 1092 square miles make the province slightly smaller than the state of Rhode Island, but only 105,000 people live in the province, compared to nearly a million residents in the state.

Until the 18th Century, Phuoc Tuy belonged to Cambodia but relatively few Cambodians lived there. The Annams (Vietnamese) drove out the Cambodians

Phuoc Tuy

in 1710, Baria took its original name from a Vietnamese woman named Ba Ria, who settled in the area in 1789. She was responsible for the development of several villages in Long Dien district before her death. She left her entire fortune to the villagers and they showed their gratitude to her by erecting a memorial temple in her honor on a mountain outside of Tam Phuoc village.

In July of 1862, the French occupied Baria after six months of fighting. The colonial government carefully developed the economic potential of the area and established several industries. The French relinquished control in 1954 and Baria became a separate province in 1956. In 1962, Baria became Phuoc Tuy province, with six districts. Later, Vung Tau was designated an autonomous city, leaving the province with five districts—Long Le, Long Dien, Dat Do, Duc Thanh and Xuyen Moc—with 22 villages and 115 hamlets.

The fighting during the last 25 years of Vietnam's history has of course greatly disrupted the economy of the province, which is largely based on agriculture. Rice and rubber, the two most important crops, provide the largest income and occupy nearly two-thirds of the total cultivated land area in the province. Yet only a small amount of the land—12 percent—is under cultivation. The thousands of remaining acres are not in production because security can't be provided. The province could grow almost enough rice to be self-sufficient if more land could be put into use. As it is, however, more than half of the rice consumed in the province has to be imported. Furthermore, according to Don Knowlton, agricul-

Although refugees now are not a great problem in Phuoc Tuy, it was only the quick work of civic action teams after the Tet attacks that provided homes for people like this woman





Potential is great in the province despite the enemy's presence. Building goes on as usual in populated areas, but in rural areas the enemy is often in control

tural advisor for CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support), the acreage of rice under cultivation is decreasing each year. IR-8, the "miracle rice" developed in the Philippines, was introduced but nearly half the crop this year was lost to drought.

The situation is much the same in the rubber industry. Vietnamese rubber—perhaps the best natural rubber in the world—could provide jobs and income for thousands more than it does, but only 70 percent of the trees planted are worked. The plantations, largely French owned, are operating just enough to protect large investments.

The picture is somewhat brighter in the fishing industry, the most important non-agricultural occupation in the province. More than 20,000 people depend on it for their livelihood and nearly 10,000 tons of fresh seafood were exported to other provinces during 1967. This figure is expected to increase during 1968, because new fishing grounds previously inaccessible (again because of lack of security) were protected and opened.

Despite the problems, Phuoc Tuy has all the necessary resources to become an economically and politically stable, pacified province. According to CORDS

officials, the pacification program is going well. The 1st Australian Task Force, with headquarters in the province at Nui Dat, provides good security for the populated areas so that the advisory staff, headed by Bill Mulcahy, acting province senior advisor, can devote full effort to pacification; CORDS officials say that Province Chief Nguyen Van Truoc is an able administrator and a courageous man. He personally led one of the first rescue forces into an enemy-held portion of the province capital during the Tet Truce Violations. (The Tet attacks came as a surprise to the provincial residents. The enemy infiltrated the town and attacked U.S. buildings and a police station. The enemy took over the air-strip and the hospital until the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) 52d Ranger Battalion came in to recapture the area. Helicopter gunships destroyed houses that the enemy was hiding in but the Australian civil affairs unit quickly rebuilt the destroyed homes and set up temporary shelters for the refugees. A serious refugee problem did not develop.)

Phuoc Tuy province claims a number of firsts for Vietnam. The first concrete fishing boat was launched at the fishing village of Phuoc Tinh, which juts out

into the South China Sea just north of Vung Tau. The idea was dreamed up by LT Alan Crandan, a development staffer for CORDS. The boat was built by Vietnamese labor. The 42-foot craft will last three times longer than a wooden boat. It will let more villagers enter the fishing business. Bill McCoy, CORDS development officer, pointed out that if the boat sinks "we'll have the first concrete submarine in the world."

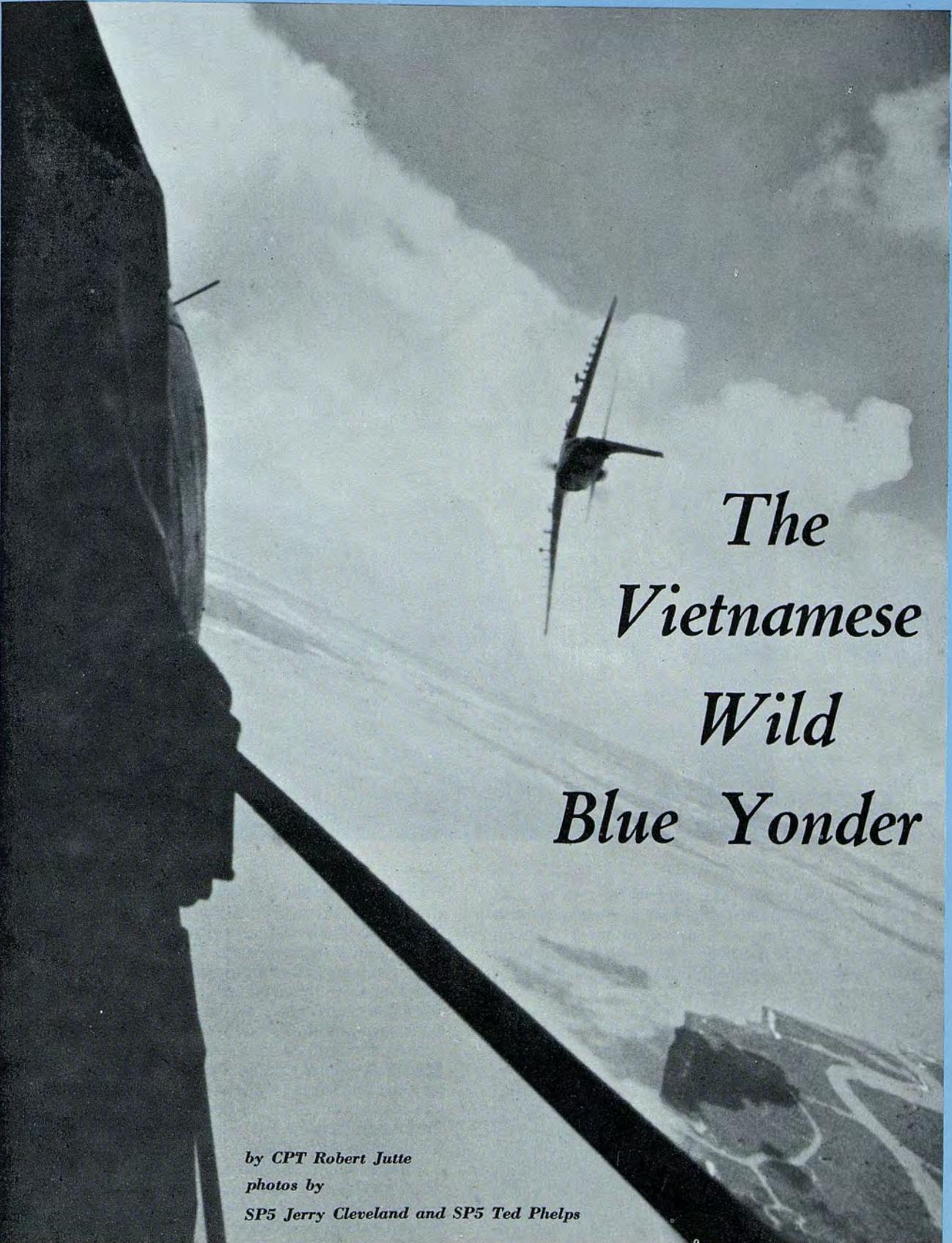
LT Crandan is conducting another experiment using concrete but he has confined this one to dry land. He's designing the first pre-fabricated, low-cost housing ever made at province level. If he's successful, the houses will provide inexpensive homes for refugee groups.

Other civic action projects are provided by the Australians and by the U.S. Navy. An Australian Surgical team recently moved into the provincial hospital in Phuoc Le, replacing the Korean Provincial Health Assistance Program team. That hospital, though old, has up-to-date equipment and has beds for more than 100 patients. The recent addition of the Australian team brings a greater surgical capability to the hospital.

And an Australian civil affairs officer acts as educational advisor to the Vietnamese school staffs. Approximately 90 percent of the children of elementary school age attend, but only 16 percent of the youths in the age group for high school are able to attend one of the nine high schools in the province. (That situation is typical throughout most of South Vietnam.) The province education program got a boost recently with the completion of the new technical-vocational school in Baria. Approximately 160 students are enrolled for courses in mechanics, carpentry, sewing and basic electricity.

LJG Rich Williams commands a 13-man SeaBee team that works in the province. In an unusual self-help program, the SeaBees are helping local Vietnamese refugees and Hoi Chanh (ralliers to the Government's amnesty effort, the Chieu Hoi program) to learn as they build. According to Williams, "it takes from six to 14 weeks to adequately train these people; we train about 20 at a time. Many are refugees from Long Thon who were without work. They were farmers where they came from and were looking for a trade. While they learn here they are paid 20 piasters (17 cents) an hour."

Though many parts of Phuoc Tuy are insecure, the pacification program is making progress. The tremendous potential in the province suggests that when the war is over Phuoc Tuy will indeed be "prosperous and peaceful." It will have fewer problems than most of its sister provinces.



*The
Vietnamese
Wild
Blue Yonder*

by CPT Robert Jutte

photos by

SP5 Jerry Cleveland and SP5 Ted Phelps



One Skyraider is framed in the cockpit window of another. The old aircraft can carry almost its own weight in bombs

ent. The 522d Squadron advisor, United States Air Force Major Janeral L. Holley, explained "the biggest difference, of course, is the speed of the F5—in round figures, about 1,000 miles per hour."

In addition to the same ordnance carried by the Skyraider, the F5 can carry the 2,000-pound bomb or a Sidewinder missile on each wing tip for rapid interception of enemy aircraft.

The Freedom Fighter only has two 20mm cannons but the ammunition load is increased to 280 rounds for each gun. The maximum ordnance load limit is set at 6,200 pounds but empty this plane is considered one of the most maneuverable and best suited for 'dog-fight' situations.

The jet is powered by twin engines with 4,300 pounds of thrust each. The straight-winged plane is nearly 50 feet long, carries fuel for an hour and one-half flying and can climb from ground level to 30,000 feet in less than four minutes. The craft has crew and engine armor plating and can strike more than 500 miles from its base.

All aircraft in the 23d Wing, which also has O-1's and U-17's for Forward Air Controllers (FAC's), are maintained by the 23d Maintenance Group (VNAF). The 522d squadron commander, Vietnam Air Force Major Nguyen Quoc Hung, considers the F5 a relatively trouble-free aircraft and one that is easy to maintain. MAJ Hung has more than 2,000 hours of flying experience himself.

"Our planes usually work in teams of three. During the Tet Truce Violations 296 enemy troops were killed in a single action near Phan Thiet, about 80 miles east of Bien Hoa. The three VNAF pilots involved received the Republic of Vietnam's second highest award, the Gallantry Cross with gold star," MAJ Hung said. MAJ Hung said that his squadron has flown nearly 9,000 combat hours since receiving the Freedom Fighters in April 1967, without a single combat loss.

One minute it feels like there's a ton of lead in your britches and the next minute you wish there were," according to a passenger on a Vietnam Air Force A1 fighter-bomber after it released its load in a 300 mile-per-hour dive followed by a six-g pullout and a wild roll.

The ancient propeller-driven A1s are supplemented by the up-to-date F5 jet fighter-bomber to make the Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) a potent striking force. The Vietnamese pilots and their American advisors have teamed up to provide excellent support for allied troops on the ground.

VNAF's 23d Tactical Wing, located at Bien Hoa Air Base, includes two A1 squadrons (the 514th and the 518th Fighter Squadrons) and one F5 squadron (the 522d Fighter Squadron) with one American flying advisor for each squadron. These units daily give support to American and Vietnamese troops throughout III Corps Tactical Zone.

United States Air Force Major Douglas S. Johnson, advisor for the wing's 514th Squadron, commented, "these Skyraiders (A1s) are almost as old as some of the pilots that fly them—but on the other hand, some pilots have flown more than 2,000 combat hours. In either case these planes are no less effective than when they were new and they really do the job—both the planes and the pilots."

After flying his second combat mission for the day, MAJ Johnson said, "our squadron is able to lend considerable support since we have 36 pilots and each one flies about 20 to 25 combat missions per month. These men frequently fly additional hours each month for training purposes."

Although fully qualified, the advisors neither command nor instruct and, as MAJ Johnson explained, "ordinarily the language is no real problem in our job of informing and recommending but occasionally there is an American technical term with no equivalent

term in Vietnamese. One thing we certainly don't do is talk 'cave man talk' to them."

The Skyraiders, first flown near the end of WWII, have a broad capability. "These planes can lift 13,000 pounds of ordnance—nearly their own weight," MAJ Johnson said, "if you can find a way to strap it on."

In addition to the four 20mm cannons with 200 rounds each, an assortment of explosives can be carried, including 2.75-inch rockets, cluster bomb units, napalm and general purpose bombs weighing 250, 500, 750 or 1,000 pounds. A large fuel capacity gives three hours flying time.

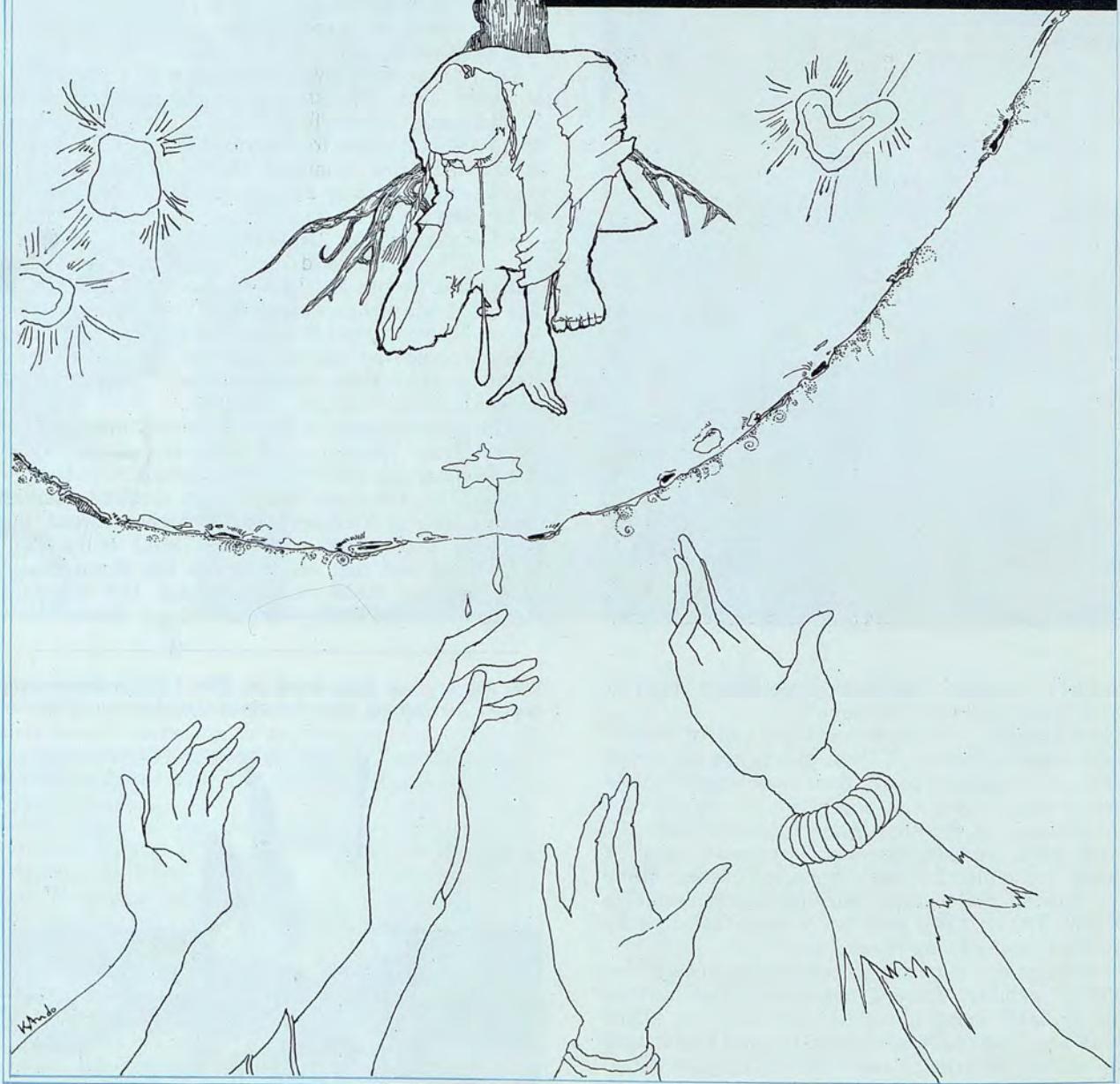
"The most amazing thing about these work-horses is their durability. Some of these airframes have as many as 6,000 flying hours on them and one plane, now in use, is actually constructed from the salvaged parts of two damaged planes," MAJ Johnson said.

Although it has the same mission in Vietnam as the A1, the F5 Freedom Fighter jet is considerably differ-

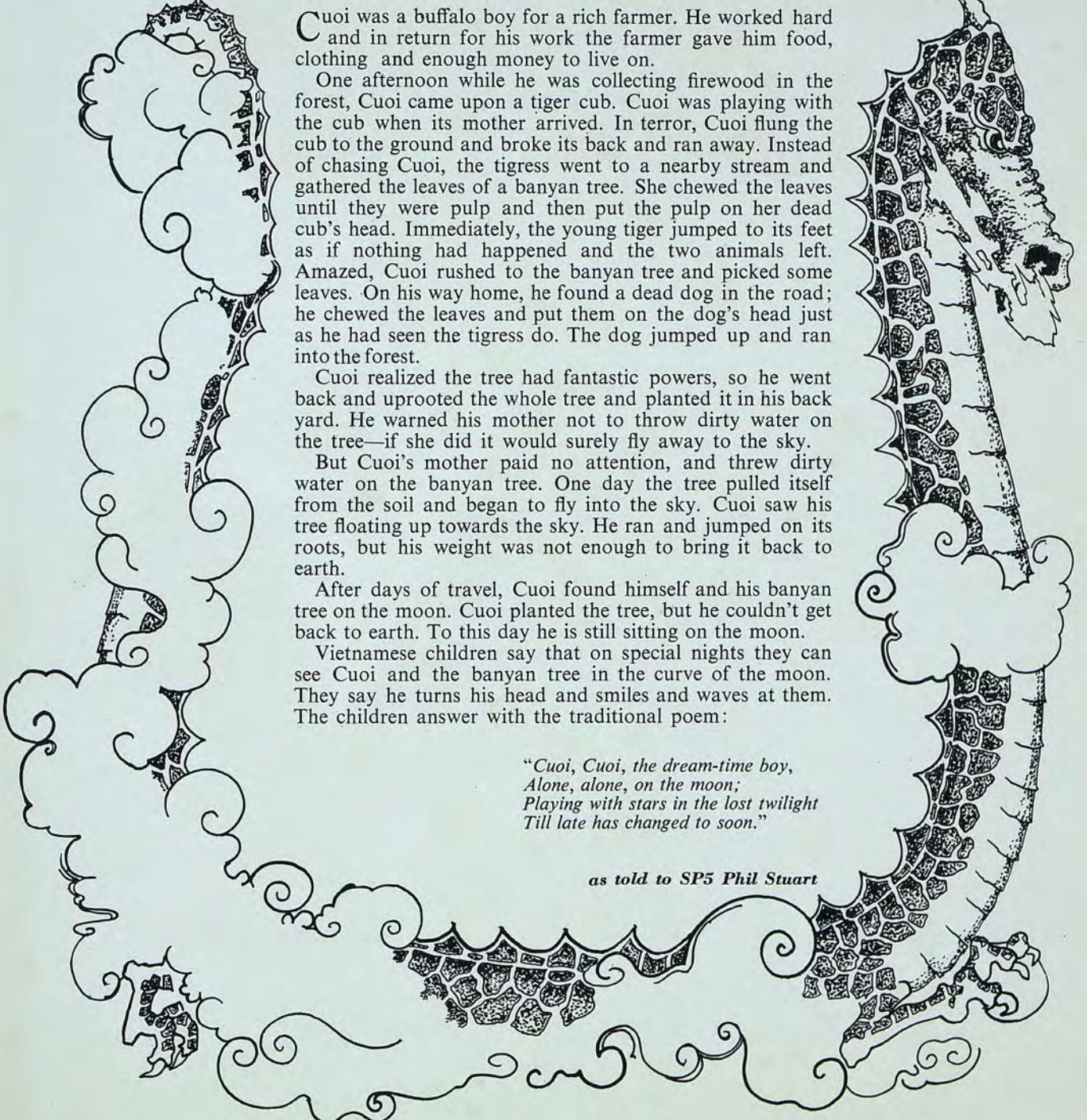
The F5, as seen from head on. The 1,000 mile-per-hour aircraft is relatively easy to maintain, packs a lot of punch



CUOI AND



THE BANYAN TREE



Cuoi was a buffalo boy for a rich farmer. He worked hard and in return for his work the farmer gave him food, clothing and enough money to live on.

One afternoon while he was collecting firewood in the forest, Cuoi came upon a tiger cub. Cuoi was playing with the cub when its mother arrived. In terror, Cuoi flung the cub to the ground and broke its back and ran away. Instead of chasing Cuoi, the tigress went to a nearby stream and gathered the leaves of a banyan tree. She chewed the leaves until they were pulp and then put the pulp on her dead cub's head. Immediately, the young tiger jumped to its feet as if nothing had happened and the two animals left. Amazed, Cuoi rushed to the banyan tree and picked some leaves. On his way home, he found a dead dog in the road; he chewed the leaves and put them on the dog's head just as he had seen the tigress do. The dog jumped up and ran into the forest.

Cuoi realized the tree had fantastic powers, so he went back and uprooted the whole tree and planted it in his back yard. He warned his mother not to throw dirty water on the tree—if she did it would surely fly away to the sky.

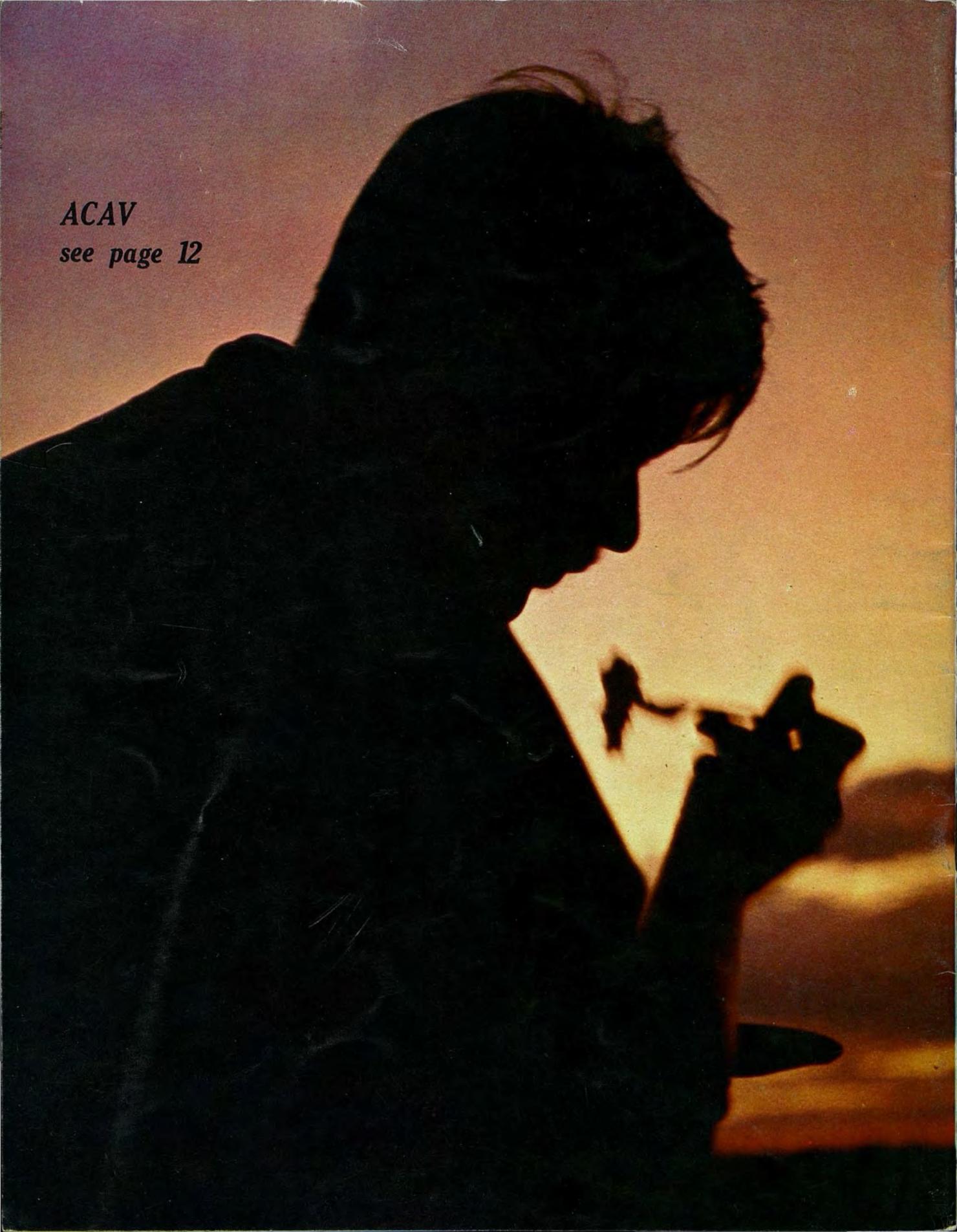
But Cuoi's mother paid no attention, and threw dirty water on the banyan tree. One day the tree pulled itself from the soil and began to fly into the sky. Cuoi saw his tree floating up towards the sky. He ran and jumped on its roots, but his weight was not enough to bring it back to earth.

After days of travel, Cuoi found himself and his banyan tree on the moon. Cuoi planted the tree, but he couldn't get back to earth. To this day he is still sitting on the moon.

Vietnamese children say that on special nights they can see Cuoi and the banyan tree in the curve of the moon. They say he turns his head and smiles and waves at them. The children answer with the traditional poem:

*"Cuoi, Cuoi, the dream-time boy,
Alone, alone, on the moon;
Playing with stars in the lost twilight
Till late has changed to soon."*

as told to SP5 Phil Stuart



ACAV

see page 12