



HAWK

AUGUST 1970



*Photo by CPT Rollin Colby
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FRONT COVER:

Smoke grenade dropped from a gunship designates the wind direction as slicks from the 92nd Assault Helicopter Company approach a landing zone in the Central Highlands. Photo by SP4 Art Hannum.

BACK COVER:

After a long day in the field, a 1st Avn Bde slick heads for home amid a vivid Vietnam sunset. Photo by WO1 David Linderman.

HAWK



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A ship touches down and troops run for cover.

Ye Holy Land

*Story and Photos by
WO1 David Linderman*



The red Crusader's cross is marked on each ship.



“Like all novices, we began with the helicopter in childhood, but soon found that it had no future and dropped it. The helicopter does with great labor what the balloon does without labor, and is no more fitted than the balloon for rapid horizontal flight. If the engine stops it must fall with deadly violence, for it can neither float like the balloon, nor glide like the aeroplane. Hence, the helicopter is much easier to design than the aeroplane, but is worthless when done.”

Wilbur Wright
15 Jan 1909
Dayton, Ohio

The quote comes from the preface of the history of the 187th Assault Helicopter Company, the Crusaders. Everyday Crusader's men prove this statement wrong. Located at Tay Ninh, in the shadows of the holy Black Virgin mountain, as part of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, they are charged with supplying airlift support in northern III Corps. Being a Crusader involves a lot of time and patience to perfect the excellence that the 187th requires of its men.

Great fraternal ties exist among the men. Newcomers undergo initiation into the knighthood of the 187th in a closely guarded secret ritual performed by the company's "Deacon." Only after being initiated is the newcomer allowed to wear the white shield bearing the red Crusader's cross.

The Crusaders have two airlift platoons and one weapons platoon, each with its own nickname. The first platoon is called the Maggots, the second the Mungs and the weapons platoon is the Rat Pack.

These names may sound raw and a bit crude, but after flying with these men one will understand that the names fit the jobs.

Flying many hours requires a great deal of maintenance to keep the aircraft aloft. That is the job of the Lancelots, the maintenance support unit for the Crusaders. Like all units the 187th has maintenance problems, but with great effort, the men of Lancelots keep the ships "up."

Participating on a mission with the Crusaders is an experience in itself. A flight with the second platoon showed me what smooth coordination and pilot technique go into flying these aircraft.

Crank time comes at 0645 and the platoon was

out preflighting an hour prior to departure time. After forming the flight and calling off of Tay Ninh, the aircraft headed north towards Ka Tum to make our first pickup. There the Crusaders refueled before picking up the first load of troops from the 25th Infantry Division.

We then headed for a landing zone (LZ) five miles inside Cambodia. Lead by WO Raymond Pojonawski, the flight winged its way toward their destination. Radio call and instructions were passed between the aircraft. Four Cobras from the units Rat Pack linked up with the flight.

As the flight neared the landing zone, WO Pojonawski called the flight into a diamond formation. The Cobras moved out ahead of the formation and began to prep the LZ with minigun fire and rockets. Then, when the Cobras broke off we prepared for the descent.

Doorgunners opened up as the ships came to short final, making sure that any awaiting Charlies kept from getting a shot at us.

As the flight touched down the doorgunners ceased fire and troops disembarked. In a split second we were airborne again.

Returning to the pickup zone, the Crusaders made

Doorgunner views terrain with Black Virgin mountain in the background.



Each mission requires a thorough pre-flight check.



four insertions into similar LZ's. After stopping to refuel we immediately began a resupply mission. This time it was five sorties of ammo, concertina wire and food.

Finally the flight returned to Ka Tum and shut down to wait for their next mission. At this point crews gathered around a couple of the aircraft and talked about the morning missions. Some of the older pilots gave the new ones pointers on formation flying. WO John A. Campos a veteran aircraft commander of the Crusaders explained, "When you go into some of the LZ's that we do, you need a lot of pilot technique." He was right, some of the LZ's would make it difficult to park a Volkswagon.

After joking for a few more minutes while the crewchiefs checked out the aircraft, the pilots were briefed for their next mission.

Soon engines were whining and rotor blades began to turn. Time to get back in the saddle again.

This time it was another PZ and another insertion. The weather began to threaten. At the PZ troops got on board and we took off to the LZ. Rain began to

come down as a storm moved into the area. When the first element of troops was inserted, the flight headed back to the PZ. By this time the storm had closed in around us. Rain was coming down hard and the Crusaders were lucky to make it back to the PZ without going I.F.R.

Once on the ground, more troops boarded the choppers. By now rain was coming down in sheets and word came to shut down and wait for the weather to clear. Two hours later the word finally came for release, which meant home. But the rain still had not improved.

After another hour of waiting, the Crusaders cranked again. This time it was low level to get back to Tay Ninh. Upon arriving and turning onto final, the tower called, "clear to enter the Holy Land."

Safely down at Tay Ninh after putting the aircraft to bed, the men headed back to the company area. It had been a long day.

If ever men lived in the spirit of the knighted crusader, the 187th most certainly are among them.



The Big Hook

Story by SP4 Charles B. Winer

It is hot, maybe a 140 degrees, in the sun. In the distance, the faint buzzing of an aircraft is detected. Apprehensively, the men on the ground watch as a mysterious looking craft slowly appears from behind a mountain. The craft is big, awesome, and resembles some prehistoric creature. As it closes in on the men, the sound

becomes louder, almost deafening, and the force of the wind produced by its rotor blades is so great, that those on the ground must cling to the nearest object for fear of being blown away.

The aircraft hovers over the men and their howitzer, which is still hot from a recent clash with the enemy. A spiraling whirlpool of

dust and dirt, kicked up by the wind from the rotor blades, makes visibility near zero for the men on the ground. A big hook is slowly lowered from the center of the craft. When it reaches the howitzer the men rapidly grab the hook, attach it to a harness on the weapon and scramble out of the area. Without delay, the mysterious

looking craft ascends to a higher altitude and disappears behind the mountain with its new addition firmly locked in the grasp of its big hook.

What has just been described is a typical mission for the men of the 355th Heavy Helicopter Company. The prehistoric looking creature is the CH-54A Skycrane "the workhorse in the sky" in Vietnam.

Located at Phu Heip, along the picturesque coast in northern II Corps, the 355th is commanded by MAJ Troy Reeves Jr. a personable man who receives the utmost respect from his men. The "Workhorses," as the unit is often referred to, was organized at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, and arrived in Pleiku, Vietnam, in January 1968. Nine months later, two of the unit's three platoons left Pleiku and headed for their present home, Phu Heip. The three flight platoons consist of nine flight engineers and nine crew chiefs. Each platoon is responsible for three Skycranes.

The first platoon at Pleiku is lead by CPT Willie L. Manning, while the second and third platoons at Phu Heip are led by CPT's Roger Danio and Rollin L. Colby respectively.

Although nine aircraft may seem like a small number for an ordinary aviation company, the complex design and intricate maintenance procedures required by the Crane

make the limited number understandable. Also, with a cost of over two million dollars per craft, one is not likely to see an over-abundance.

The Crane, originally designed by Sikorsky for commercial use was bought and modified by the Army for employment in Vietnam. The Crane has the capability of lifting 20,000 pounds, though it rarely transports more than 17,500.

Its fuel capacity is limited, which means it can stay on station for only a short time. To compensate for this, the Crane will refuel at the nearest possible point to the object it is lifting, and will take only enough fuel to enable it to pick up the object and return to the refueling point.

Before any object can be hoisted it must be secured and rigged. For example, if a gunship has been shot down, a recovery crew especially trained to rig aircraft will come from the gunship's company or from a direct support unit. Another unit may also be sent to the scene to secure the area until the Crane has moved in.

One of the heaviest aircraft in Vietnam, the 22,000 pound Skycrane carries a four man crew, consisting of a pilot, co-pilot, flight engineer and crew chief. The flight engineer sits in a glass bubble directly behind the pilot. Expert teamwork is essential in order to drop the big hook into place. The

Maintenance on the Skycrane is never a one man job.



ARVN engineers attach the big hook to a 9,000 pound beam.

engineer will center the pilot over the load, and check the rigging. Once the object is hooked and the cable taut, the crew chief watches for clearing. Both crew chief and engineer sit backwards, in order to watch the load.

It's important that the load does not oscillate. If it does, air speed must be reduced or power applied to bring the craft up fast. The Crane is equipped with an automatic flight control system which enables the pilot to sit back with his hands off of the controls, permitting the craft to fly by itself. It will maintain a constant power setting and altitude.

The craft carries no armament, but the crew is required to wear steel vests at all times.

The 355th provides direct logistical support for the 4th Infantry Division and I Field Forces in the II Corps area. They also provide support, periodically, to ARVN and Korean units. Few will argue that the Skycranes of the 355th have lived up to the name "Workhorses" in recent months. During the month of April for instance,



the company logged 963 sorties, over 500 mission hours flown, and hauled more than 2,000 tons.

Skycrane missions can often be placed in the "unique" category. When 1LT Larry G. Hatch and CW2 Homer C. Rogers received the word that containers of poisonous chlorine gas were leaking at Tuy Hoa, they donned their gas masks and hauled the containers several miles out to sea before dumping them. On another occasion, LT Hatch and CW2 Obery Mercer were informed that a CH-47 Chinook was shot down in the An Lo Valley. Despite the darkness of the night, and adverse conditions, the pilots, with the aid of landing lights, picked up the 18,000 pound craft in a river bed and carried it five miles in the valley. They set the craft down, went to a nearby LZ to refuel and returned for the Chinook. And guess who gave a lift to a reconnaissance patrol boat which had run up on a sand bar? Yes, the Crane. When a barge carrying bombs for the Air Force sank, the Crane, once again, moved in for the recovery.

Just recently the Crane carried a dental pod consisting of everything but the dentist to an outpost, and the Crane has continued its practice of carrying a portable PX pod to the men in the field at Fire Base Dong Tre, who really appreciate that much deserved candy bar or carton of cigarettes. The bulk of the missions however, consist of transporting artillery, fuel, heavy equipment, or downed aircraft on the Crane's external sling.

One project in which the Cranes are presently engaged, is that of aiding the 201st ARVN engineer Battalion and the U.S. 84th Engineer Battalion in building the longest bridge in South Vietnam, across the Da Rang River. The Cranes are saving the men valuable time by lifting 9,000 pound beams and carefully setting them into place.

Flying the Skycrane is no easy task. CPT Robert Kean prefers the 355th over other helicopter units because, he says "The missions are more organized. Everything must be coordinated to have a successful mission, and carrying cargo externally gives one more to look out

for." He also feels that the Crane is "more involved as far as system analysis is concerned." Executive Officer CPT Gary Johnson states that he likes the Cranes because they are a "more sophisticated type aircraft."

The pilots of the 355th are all highly experienced with the majority having accumulated over 2,500 hours before ever flying the Crane. All pilots take a six week transition course which includes 45 hours of flight time. Commanding Officer MAJ Reeves states that "Only a select few get into the company. Their experience and ability makes my job much easier." He also says that even the mechanics, who deserve a lot of credit for working long arduous hours, are "some of the most ambitious young men around."

One might think that being situated along the coast of the South China Sea would be a refreshing blessing from the heat of Vietnam. But the ocean has presented nothing but problems for the 355th Cranes. Because of the great magnesium content of the Cranes, they are highly susceptible to corrosion from sea spray. New parts are continually on order and valuable hours of maintenance time are taken up painting and scraping corroded areas. Unless the problem is solved soon, the Cranes may be forced to move into another area or face a drastic reduction in usage, which cannot be afforded.

The 355th has made great progress since its tough first days at Pleiku. Men like SSG Melquiades Lerma and 1SG Rex Paul have struggled with the company from its early days to the present. They have witnessed the evolution of a sophisticated, well organized and highly conscientious unit.

Skycranes are a necessary and vital asset to our troops in Vietnam. So remember, if you need a lift, the 355th won't let you down.

Hovering, a Skycrane prepares to position a flatcar.





SCRAMBLE

Story and Photos by
SP4 Art Hannum

Approximately half-way between Vung Tau and Cam Ranh Bay, where the unsparing mountains of the highlands lower themselves into a congenial, flat valley, bordered by the dog-lapping waves of the South China Sea, rests the town of Phan Thiet.

For the most part, it is a quiet habitat, nothing to attract the at-

tention of a passer-by. Even the somber air strip and Army base squatting on the sandy bluffs above the town is too common a sight to draw more than a glance.

Now and again, at odd times of the day or night, a nearby farmer's head will suddenly turn, a villager's sleep will be interrupted, a clerk's ear will cease listening to the bar-

gainer and focus their attention on an urgent call coming from the barbed encampment. There, just off the air strip, an ancient European ambulance siren, long since detached from the ambulance, clamors for attention as it "Whoop-Whoops" its cry.

Immediately, scurrying forms burst forth from nearby quarters

to charge headlong across the brief expanse of airfield. There is no hesitation, no doubt, as they dash toward the waiting C-model gunships. In less than three minutes after the siren's first blast the Scramble team is heading wherever its services are needed.

The men and ships of the 192nd Aviation Company (Aslt Hel) answer the siren. Much like the well publicized "scramble" operations performed by the Strategic Air Command, the men of the 192nd's gun platoon, "Tiger Sharks," are on an around-the-clock stand-by, waiting to assist anyone in their sector of operations.

The ships assigned to primary stand-by status are kept 100 per cent ready to fly. When the crew jumps in, its "switch on the engine," and go.

The crews must stay in the immediate area with clothes and gear on, or available.

There is no regulation stating that the ships must be off in the three minutes or less time the 192nd constantly attains. This mark is set by the men themselves

and it is part of their esprit-de-corps to maintain it.

Says LT Charles T. Mitchel, a 192nd gunship pilot, "When I first got here last January, I'd hear that siren and within the next few seconds see guys tearing out of their hootches and the mess hall and making for the ships. It wasn't just the crews of the ships either, almost anyone in the company could be out there helping get the ships scrambled. An extra crew was there just in case one of the regulars didn't make it. Everybody knew what to do. While the crew strapped itself in, other guys would be taking the covers off the guns or unhooking the rotor blades. For a new guy, it is really something to see."

When the call comes for the ships to scramble, the men know that somebody needs their help immediately. The request is received at the 192nd's operations room where the siren is activated. The crews don't learn the nature of their mission until they are "pul-

ling pitch" off the air strip.

The mission could be any of a number of various types, each requiring a distinct technique and all necessitating cool professionalism. The gunships could be off to cover a "Fire-Fly" operation, "May-Day" call, medevac, convoy ambush or providing additional support for a troop insertion.

The 192nd's area of operation (AO) extends mostly west and north of Phan Thiet. It covers all of Binh Thuan Province with a few flights as far away as Da Lat, Cam Ranh Bay and Tuy Phong. The crews of the scramble ships never know, as they hurriedly prepare their ships, where in this vast region their mission might take them.

Typical of the competitive attitude of the unit, the Tiger Shark's favorite mission is also their most difficult. They have long supported and continue to do so, the "Charlie-Rangers" (Company C Rangers, 75th Infantry,) who conduct an operation similar to that of the

Within three minutes, the Scramble team is airborne.



long range patrols.

"In the Ranger's case, if we don't get out there immediately when they call, it's only a short time before those six men could be overrun," said Tiger Shark pilot CPT James D. Godfrey. "Even if the enemy force isn't capable of overrunning the Charlie-Rangers, we still want to get out there as fast as possible. We don't want any of the enemy getting away."

The enemy knows that when in heavy contact the Charlie-Rangers depend a good deal on the support they receive from Tiger Sharks.

"We have to know the Charlie-Ranger's exact location," says CW2 Patrick C. Rooney, another Tiger Shark pilot. "Often we have to put in our fire close to them." He added, "When we do a good job for them, they come out of their way to thank us. It's a good feeling."

Medevacs are often the cause for a 192nd scramble. It is well known that the medevac ships often descend into situations termed "HOT" in order to rescue wounded. Car-

rying no armament themselves, these ships, with the brightly painted red crosses, sometimes require the services of a well flown, combat seasoned gunship; especially gunships that can be available as readily as those of the Tiger Sharks.

Called out on a scramble late one murky night, the crews of the gunships were informed that a medevac ship had been shot down by an enemy B-40 rocket while attempting to rescue wounded civilians and ARVN's.

As the gunships lifted off the air strip, CPT Godfrey, flying the lead ship, tuned in the emergency radio beeper from the downed ship. He knew there were survivors.

With his pilot, WO1 Steven L. Alford, and the wing ship flown by WO1 John A. Berthiaume and WO1 Thomas Dunno, CPT Godfrey began scouring the vicinity of the crash, using the ships' landing lights.

Upon locating the wreckage, the 192nd's flare ship, flown by

CPT Calvin Musgrove and WO1 Charles Homeijer, was called in to evacuate the survivors and wounded. The gunship's presence overhead gave Charlie no choice but to retire for the night.

If it were not for the immediate reaction by the Tiger Sharks, the men in the wrecked helicopter and those wounded would have faced a grim night indeed. It is likely that some would not have seen the dawn.

Men who fly gunships must have an extremely positive attitude toward their job. As they leave the ground at the beginning of a mission, they cannot be thinking, "Am I going to be hurt this time," or "Will the ship take rounds?" These thoughts enter their head but must be shunned. Their minds are focused on another thought, "What is it we can do, how can we best support those people in contact."

It is this sort of thinking that makes the quick reacting Tiger Sharks the formidable gunship platoon they are.

Tiger Shark gunship means death to Charlie.



IMPERIAL

CULT OF

Athens, Rome and "The Great Wall" of China bring to mind eras of power and greatness. Aside from the literary renaissance that accompanied each ancient epoch, the present student of history may get a glimpse of their former grandeur through the massive stone ruins that persist today.

Vietnam is neither without its own renaissance nor without remnants of once great courts and palaces. Hue, the former center of Vietnam's imperial cult, teems with evidence of one of the most brilliant cultural outbursts in Vietnamese history.

In the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century, Vietnam fell under the rule of the Nguyen dynasty. It was during this period that Hue became the focal point of Vietnamese culture.

Following a power struggle among influential Vietnamese families, Vietnam was united under Nguyen Anh in 1802. Nguyen Anh then became the Emperor Gia Long (Gia Long being the contraction of Gia Dinh, then Saigon, and Thanh Long, Hanoi) and founded the Nguyen Imperial Dynasty. He named the country Vietnam and initiated a vast program of public works centered on his chosen capital at Hue.

This imperial city lies on the north bank of the River of Perfumes, shadowed on three sides by pine covered hills. Even today the most noticeable landmark in the city is the commanding presence of the imperial citadel modeled after its prototype, the Manchu court at Peking.

The walls of the citadel stretch for more than half a mile along the north of the river. A broad moat, now dry except for an occasional puddle, surrounds the six mile enclosure of Thanh Noi (the Interior City) which sheltered the citizens of the imperial capital.

A second moat surrounds the Dai Noi (the Great Interior) which housed the Emperor and his immediate retinue. Nearly 100 luxurious palaces and official buildings were once clustered within these interior walls until the communists vented their destruction in 1945 in an attempt to sever Vietnam from its past.

The principal entrance to the "Great Within" is the Ngo Mon, or Noon Gate. Rising above the Noon Gate is the Ngu Phung or Five Phoenix building. It was at this site that

Emperors made their appearance on important occasions.

Further within "The Forbidden City" lies the Thai Hoa Palace (or Throne Hall) where the Emperor entertained his court of mandarins. The imperial palace is fronted by two square stoned courtyards—the upper level for mandarins of higher rank, and the lower level for their subordinates.

These courtyards encompass the full 150 foot imperial porch on the facade of the Throne Hall. During official court receptions, the mandarins, garbed in ceremonial attire, would settle into nine separate ranks and prostrate themselves five times in deference to the imperial majesty.

Astride the entranceway, which cuts beneath the imperial porch, is a tablet bearing the inscription "Khuyng Cai Ha Ma" (take off your hat and dismount).

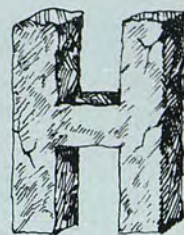
Within the audience hall, deep scarlet, dragon bedecked pillars cordon off the approach to the imperial stage where an intricately carved, gilt throne greets the visitor's eyes. The throne, sheltered by a tinselled red and gold canopy, was used by the Emperor for official receptions of foreign dignitaries.

To the East of the Throne Hall is the Longevity Palace, the residence of the Queen Mothers. Nearby stretches a large sheet of water surrounding a man-made island equipped with small Buddhist shrines and shade trees. It was here that the Queen Mothers, and often the Emperor, would relax, and turn to literature.

An interesting sidelight in the imperial history is the legend associated with the Linh Mu pagoda, located three miles east of Hue on the bank of the Perfume River.

According to legend, an old woman sent by Buddha appeared to a distant ancestor of Gia Long, Nguyen Hoang. The visionary predicted he would be the founder of a flourishing dynasty. Nguyen Hoang built a pagoda on the site of the apparition and called it Linh Mu, the beautiful woman.

Much later, the Phuoc Duyen, a seven story octagonal brick tower, was built in front of the pagoda. The tower is flanked by a massive Chinese bell on one side and on the other by a large stone stele erected on the back of a marble tortoise. Behind the tower stand the



**Story and Photos by
SP5 Brian S. Shortell**



PHUOC DUYEN TOWER



IMPERIAL PALACE



**THRONE
HALL**

gates leading into the pagoda grounds. On either side of each entranceway and lining both walls inside are spirits of good and evil. Smiling and frowning respectively, these spirits keep a constant vigil on the pagoda. Today, however, the grounds serve more as a picnic area and romantic spa for young lovers.

Set in the rolling hills south of Hue are thousands of tombs dating from the imperial era, including six of royalty. The royal tombs are large, park-like enclosures with massive gates. The imperial remains are enshrined in mausoleums with sundry monuments, courtyards, and porticoes scattered throughout the grounds.

Two imperial tombs, however, are more worthy of note. Ming Mang's tomb is the best preserved. Dotted with frangipani and flower almond trees, Minh Mang's tomb offers the most intact evidence of imperial elegance.

Large ceramic urns decorate courtyards; small islands indent reflecting lotus ponds; rampant dragons cling warily to rooftops and creep down long stairways.

Tu Duc's tomb is the nearest to Hue and, therefore, the most accessible. Situated in a dense pine forest, Tu Duc's tomb offers the best evidence of use as a summer resort. Construction of tombs usually began as soon as the Emperor acceded to his throne; and, as a result, the "tombs" were built to serve the Emperor in both life and death.

Unique to Tu Duc's tomb are the ornate pavillion built on piles overhanging a reflecting pool and the marble imperial guards (once inlaid with gold) which adorn the terrace approaching the funerary temple. The massive area covered by Tu Duc's funerary compound and the numerous temple like residences reflect Tu Duc's long and productive reign.

The imperial ruins at Hue pay tribute to the power of imperial rule. Unfortunately, contemporary accounts abound with stories of peasant suffering, some literally worked to death on these royal projects. Under the entire period of dynastic rule, moreover, the Emperors appeared isolated from the people, so effective were the fortresses they built.

Giving credit where due, however, much progress has been associated with the Nguyen era. Agricultural reforms, effective government, and cultural revolution were hallmarks of this period. But, whatever the verdict on the Nguyen dynasty, it can be said that a truly great Vietnamese heritage exists in the rolling hills of Hue.

The Royal Coachmen

Story and Photos by
SP4 Christopher H. Molloy

The Royal Coachmen, the men of the 62nd Corps Aviation Company, fly VIP's for the XXIV Corps. The men flown in their Hueys, Kiowas, and U-21's range from Presidents to PFC's.

Aside from the daily commitments to headquarters of the XXIV Corps for Generals, top staff, and couriers, the Coachmen may in one week carry an assortment of Senators, government officials, and entertainers who are touring Vietnam.

The Coachmen have had the distinction of flying President Thieu and other high level dignitaries. How do they feel about carrying world important figures? Most Coachmen, while respectful, are not uncomfortable with the VIP's they carry. "If they come to XXIV Corps, we fly them," remarked one cavalier doorgunner. "We fly all kinds of people," says WO1 Edward J. Hickey, of Linden, N.J. "A lot of them I never heard of before. We treat them all the same."

One VIP passenger everyone in the company had heard of was Miss America 1969. "Almost every enlisted man asked to be my door gunner that day," recalls Mr. Hickey. Miss America 1969 received more special treatment than most VIP's. The Coachmen even painted "Miss America" on the nose of her chosen Huey.

Indicative of their exacting standards, the company motto is: "the difference between superior and outstanding is meticulous attention to detail." The high standards of the company are reflected in the magnificent condition of their ships. The ships reserved for the Commanding General and Deputy Commander of the XXIV Corps are Brassoed regularly and are certainly the most "shipshape" ships in Vietnam. SP4 Charles Fritz, minimizing the role of Brasso in his ship's appearance, says, "We take the utmost pride in our ships and it shows, that's all."

The VIP traffic keeps this small, small company very busy. Meetings involving several high ranking officers and civilians often also involve most of the Coachmen. "It's not unusual," says WO1 James P. Douglas, of Lawton, Okla., "to find several Coachmen ships waiting for people at the same place."

Moving the men who move the war is not taken lightly by the Royal Coachmen. Their responsibility is to provide top echelon leadership the same helicopter mobility that has shaped the efforts of the Allied infantry in Vietnam.

Part of the Royal Coachmen's job is putting the Army's best foot forward. One of the company's most valuable assets is a friendliness worthy of a fine hotel or luxury cruiser. MAJ James E. Stone, of Murfreesboro, Tenn. commanding officer of the 62nd, says, "We have an unusual group of enlisted men. Our men are selected for their military bearing, personal appearance, and ability to express themselves. A man who can't talk to a general is not much good to us."

The 62nd Corps Aviation Company was activated on March 4, 1969, and was stationed at Phu Bai to support XXIV Corps headquarters there. When XXIV Corps headquarters moved to Da Nang, the Royal Coachmen moved to the Marble Mountain Air Facility just outside Da Nang. Nestled on China Beach between Marble Mountain and Monkey Mountain, the Coachmen now have one of the most scenic settings in Vietnam.

Of special interest to these men is maintenance. SP5 Pat Churnas, of Denver, Col., says, "We have the regular maintenance everyone else has and then we have a lot of cosmetic maintenance, too." SP5 Eddie Gonzalez of Livingston, Cal., does not remember ever having a standard of appearance set for the company's ships, but says, "We all just know we are a VIP company and we have to look the



Daily waxing and polishing is a must for any good VIP company.

best."

"This assignment is a real opportunity," commented Mr. Douglas. "I've gotten to meet a lot of people I'd never have met otherwise. I've really enjoyed it." Among the people he has flown is astronaut COL Frank Borman. "He was very pleasant and natural," recalls Mr. Douglas, "and wore jungle fatigues with 'Borman' stenciled on."

Not all VIP passengers blend in so easily as COL Borman. Frequently the Coachmen are called on to transport civilian entertainers such as cast members of the Bob Hope Show. And often they fly

rock and roll bands to outposts in the XXIV Corps. When this is the case their ships are likely to be chock-full of amplifiers, drums, long hair, and flashy clothes.

Whether their passengers are wearing olive drab or Joseph's coat, the Royal Coachmen work with a graceful professionalism that is a credit to the Army. "We sometimes take some teasing from pilots in Combat Assault units," says WO1 William Ginand, of Trumbull, Conn., "but we can take it. If I had my choice of any aviation company in Vietnam, I'd choose this one."

The Coachmen prepare to transport a rock band to a performance.



As the skids touch ground, "Screaming Eagle" troopers break from a 92nd AHC slick to form their perimeter. (Right)

A "Hook" of the 243rd ASHC provides the fledgling firebase with its tactical operations center. (Below)



"FSB IN 50"

Story and Photos by
SP4 Art Hannum

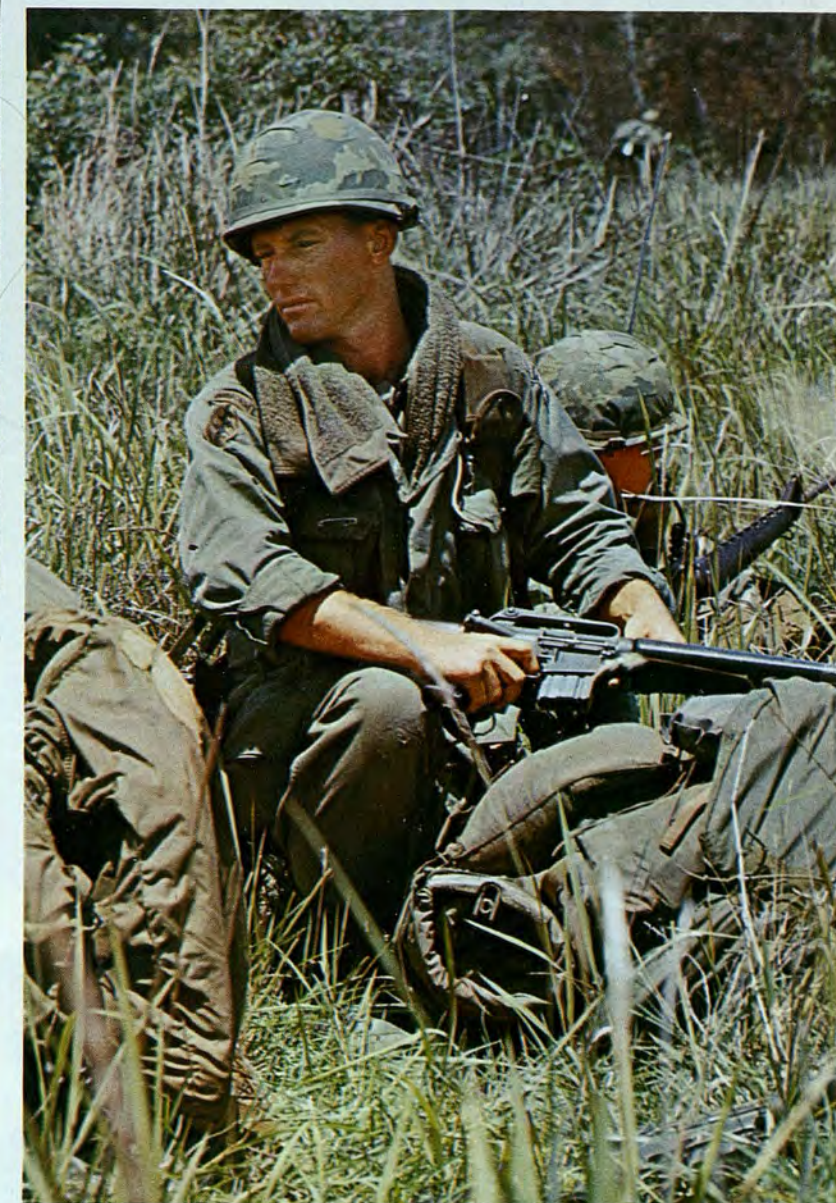
The slashing splinters of steel have come to rest where they may, the fine grains of earth settle and a translucent cloud of grey smoke drifts away with the breeze. The artillery barrage is over.

Fifteen minutes later the first of four troop-laden slicks descend into the small clearing as heavily armed gunships prowl the skies above. What was before, a quiet mountain dell encircled by the soundless jungle of the Central Highlands, is now catapulted into something akin to a three-ring Chinese fire drill.

The slicks leave their burden of

infantrymen. Looking more like turtles with their heavy rucksacks bulging above their bent backs, the men scurry into position at the sides of the clearing. A moment of silence, then those in charge begin shouting orders. A smoke grenade is popped for the next flight of slicks.

In all, three flights of troops are inserted before the first Chinook arrives, with its howitzer and ammo swinging freely beneath. Those on the ground shield themselves from the blasting wind as the Chinook settles the gun on the ground. At regular intervals more



The commander of Bravo Company, 3rd/506th, CPT Richard J. Lane, checks to see that his men are in place on the perimeter.

Men of the 320th Arty muscle their weapon into position. (Right)

One of six howitzers which give the firebase its punch is lowered with care. (Below)



Chinooks with additional guns and supplies arrive.

By now things are moving in orderly confusion. Everyone has a job to do and is busily engaged. To stand off at a distance and watch, it seems no more programmed than a hill of ants, but everyone has a job to do and is busily engaged.

Yet another Chinook arrives carrying two connexes filled with radios and other equipment. As soon as they are unhooked from the big helicopter, men begin unloading the supplies and assembling a radio antenna to be erected alongside. Working at a furious pace, a group soon converts the two connexes into a tactical operations center (TOC).

Meanwhile all six howitzers have reached their destination and are being emplaced by their crews. Trees are cleared from the lanes of fire, aiming stakes are driven, and coordinates are called. Within 50 minutes of the first grunt setting foot on this ground, rounds from the howitzers are outgoing.

The guns are operating and the perimeter is secure, yet the work is far from done. Chinooks, which will continue to supply this fire

support base with everything it needs to exist, bring in the first loads of sandbags. Everyone falls to, incessant shoveling begins.

By nightfall all the guns, their ammunition, the TOC, anything above ground of value will be amply protected by thick walls of sand bags. All else will be in fox holes with the sweaty, dirty, fatigued men who have just created a new pinpoint on the map. They have brought into being a fire support base.



A sledge hammer is used to emplace the gun. (Above)

The fire support base is secured, the guns adjusted and the first shell is loaded to fire within 50 minutes after the initial insertion. (Left)

HAWK HONEY



The 3rd/5th

From Custer To Cambodia

*Story and Photos by
SP5 Brian S. Shortell*

At the time of the American Revolution, the term "cavalry" was applied to that branch of the military service whose members served and fought on horseback. "Light" cavalry, furthermore, was the name assigned to those units that accomplished the little known but gallant task of reconnaissance.

With the advent of the mechanized Army, the "face" of the cavalry unit underwent a major change. Horseback scouts resorted to the jeep for their perilous sojourns near enemy lines. Cavalry

troops then climbed aboard Armored Personnel Carriers (APC's) which advanced under the reassuring protection of armored tanks and light artillery. But then came the Vietnam War. And with this war came new equipment and stratagems which would once again remold the appearance of the cavalry concept.

The war in Vietnam, often labeled the "helicopter war," has effected the most dramatic change in combat developments in recent years—taking to the air. The result

has been the formulation of the Air Cavalry unit.

Huey "slicks" have replaced APC's as a means of troop transport; light observation helicopters (LOH's) have replaced the jeep as the primary tool of reconnaissance; and the ground trodden armaments of yesteryear have been superseded by the sinister Huey Cobra gunships. The cavalry concept, however, has remained the same.

D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Armored Cavalry, headquartered in

The Cobra provides massive aerial firepower with the aid of a lethal rocket system.





A Cobra is checked and rearmed for an upcoming mission.

Vinh Long, has witnessed these progressive modifications of cavalry apparatus. The 3rd/5th was first constituted on March 3, 1855; and, since its founding, has participated in every major war involving the United States.

In the free-wheeling days of Kit Carson, the 3rd/5th launched successful campaigns against terrorist bands of Indians in the West. When the American Civil War broke out, the unit fought for the North in most of the larger encounters with "Johnny Reb."

During the battle of the Little Big Horn, 3rd/5th elements stood side by side with Custer who was temporarily in command of two of their units—the only losing cause in which the unit has ever been engaged.

Following encounters in the Mexican Expedition of 1916,

World War II in the Pacific, and the Korean conflict, the 3rd/5th thundered off to Vietnam.

D Troop then served as the chief reconnaissance unit for the 9th Infantry Division until September of last year when the unit was attached to the 7th Squadron, 1st Air Cavalry of the 1st Aviation Brigade. And since their joining the Brigade, the unit has provided ample evidence that it intends to continue in the great tradition of its daring heritage.

Operating throughout the IV Corps area, the 3rd/5th (nicknamed the "Lighthorse") was one of the first units to venture into the unfamiliar communist asylum of Cambodia. Their mission was (and is) to "find and fix" the enemy. The Lighthorse accomplishes this task with a three pronged, lightning quick strike force utilizing

LOH's, Cobra gunships, slicks, and a Command and Control (C&C) ship.

"The LOH's provide the eyes and ears of an Air Cavalry unit," comments MAJ Delmer Livengood, Commanding Officer of the Lighthorse, "and without these scouts we would be completely ineffectual." MAJ Livengood is referring to the highly maneuverable OH-6A "Cayuse" LOH—or "Warwagons" according to Lighthorse lingo.

After securing information that an area is suspect, a team of Warwagons is dispatched to the location. On reaching the site, the Warwagons literally trim the tree-tops in their low level search for the enemy.

Encircling the area from above are AH-1G Cobra gunships. The "Crusader" gunship team awaits notice from the Warwagon scouts for signs of enemy activity. In an instant, they may arch high in the sky to dive and unleash their deadly armament.

"The bite of the Cobras is as much psychological as it is real," states Crusader pilot, 1LT John Helms. "It has been said that the Viet Cong are warned 'not to bite the little fish [LOH's] because the big fish [Cobras] will get you.'"

Over all the others flies the

C&C ship. The pilot of the C&C ship is the Air Mission Commander or "Front Seat" whose responsibility covers all aerial assets. Behind him rides the Mission Commander or "Back Seat"—usually the commanding officer of the Vietnamese troops that the Lighthorse is supporting. Reinforced by his thorough knowledge of the area of operations (AO), the back seat is the decision maker in questions involving permission to fire, clearing areas for reconnaissance, and the insertion of troops. A liaison between the two commanders is maintained by a U.S. Advisor who rides alongside the back seat.

H-model slicks remain on constant alert at the staging area. With Vietnamese "Doughboys" at the ready, the slicks are poised in the event a more thorough search of the area is needed or the Mission Commander decides to "pick a fight." The slicks, or "Longknives," will then insert the Doughboys into the landing zone (LZ) amid the suppressive fire of the Warwagon's miniguns and the more deadly armaments of the Crusaders.

Back at the home base, the backbone of the entire operation is busily at work. The "Scavengers" of the maintenance platoon scurry about acquiring, patching and fix-



"Warwagons" and "Longknives" shut down to await orders.

ing to maintain the three separate aircraft types flown by the unit.

Traditionally, Air Cavalry units have flown more hours than other unit configurations. While teams of two LOH's and two Cobras are out, a like team is refueling and rearming at the staging area. Suffering no interruption in the mission, the fresh team relieves the other "on station."

In light of the mounting problems imposed by the many hours aloft and the dangerous character of Lighthorse missions, it is indeed

a tribute to the Scavengers that they have consistently provided one of the highest aircraft availability rates in the Brigade.

Also an organic part of an Air Cavalry Troop is the "Doughboy" platoon composed of crack infantrymen. With the present accent on Vietnamization, the Doughboys have been replaced by Vietnamese troopers from each staging area.

Troop insertions by an Air Cavalry Troop are designed for initiating conflict. On engaging large forces of the enemy, however, the Air Cavalry unit will call on Assault Helicopter Companies to transport the larger numbers.

"The Air Cav's actions are largely determined by the combat situation," reflected CPT Charles L. Schettler, operations officer. "But with the recent success in Cambodia and the resultant disrupted supply lines and disorganized troop movement, the Air Cav unit can now handle most anything it engages."

For the Air Cav unit, unlike other units, the war never ends. Lighthorse will find and fix and start the fight. If they must call for help, they then move on to start another, and...

A spunky "Warwagon" swoops down for a face to face confrontation with Charlie.



NEWSLETTER

164th Welcomes New 'Delta 6.'

The 164th Combat Aviation Group received their new commanding officer July 2nd. He is Colonel Leo Soucek, who assumed command of the Group from Colonel William J. Maddox Jr. Colonel Soucek comes to the 164th after serving as G-3 for the Delta Military Assistance Command, headquartered in Can Tho.

Valorous Unit Award Presented To 366th Aviation Detachment

The 366th Aviation Detachment (Divisional), 165th Aviation Group was presented the Valorous Unit Award on July 14th for extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations. Brigadier General George W. Putnam, Jr., commanding general of 1st Aviation Brigade, presented the award.

HIGH FLIERS SILVER STARS 14 May-25 June

WO1 Robert L. Hofmann II
*SP4 Gary A. Turnbull
SP4 Claude L. Taylor
CPT John A. Synowsky
WO1 Jesse C. Miller Jr.
CPT Ernest L. Norbeck
SP5 Gregory E. Holliday
WO1 Timothy J. Wright
CWO Alden A. Conners
WO1 Richard D. Jadowski
CPT Trevor L. Byrd
CPT Edward J. Sweeney Jr.
CPT Paul C. Hollowell II
MAJ Joseph V. Lenoci
WO1 Robert L. Parker
CPT William J. Staffa
SP4 Robert L. Luke
SGT Hosie Tate
1LT Dennis A. Schoville
*posthumous

SP4 Steven A. Nelson
WO1 Robert B. Rogers
MAJ Ronald G. Maxson
SP5 Bruce J. Mathis
LTC Theodore E. Mathison
MAJ Richard H. Marshall
SP4 Dean A. Peterson
CWO Harold E. Coverdale
*CPL Herndon A. Bivens
CWO Jack R. Lore
*WO1 Marlin J. Johnson
*WO1 Larry Rabren
CPT Christopher C. Pixton
CPT James G. Lucas
PFC Robert R. Ramos
SP4 James A. Ridges
CPT Richard R. Nicholls
CPT Robert C. Codney



WING TIPS...

IF YOU CAN'T GO UNDER, AROUND OR OVER IT-GO HOME

The initial reports are phoned to the Aviation Safety Office at Brigade Headquarters. "Aircraft missing enroute to Pleiku, last contact 0920 hours." A check with the weather station reveals a low ceiling and thunder storm activity in the area. It is not a common occurrence, but it happens frequently enough to warrant comment. The pilot of this particular aircraft was found 300 meters away from his O-1 Bird Dog with third degree burns and a broken neck.

In the last few months several of our aviators have found Dragon Mountain while looking for Pleiku; it is an inhospitable runway to say the least. The average young aviator arriving in country is equipped with Tactical Instrument Ticket and has the knowledge to fly in IMC weather conditions. Knowledge is one thing and experience another. It takes only one experience in the middle of a squall line or thunderstorm to realize the affects of vertigo (not knowing which way is up) or instruments dancing the first act of Swan Lake to make you wish you had stayed Infantry.

Accidents of all kinds are bad enough, but weather connected accidents take proportionately more than their share of lives. The damage that results from an engine failure and hard landing is much less serious in terms of fatalities than flying blind into the ground with an airspeed of 90 knots. The regulation governing Army aircraft flight in marginal weather conditions in Vietnam and stateside both come to the same conclusion—DON'T, the only exception being in cases of extreme tactical necessity. Walking in the rain might be your bag, but in Vietnam's monsoon season do a 180° and head for home.

By Kerry Kirsten

