

FIRST IN VIETNAM

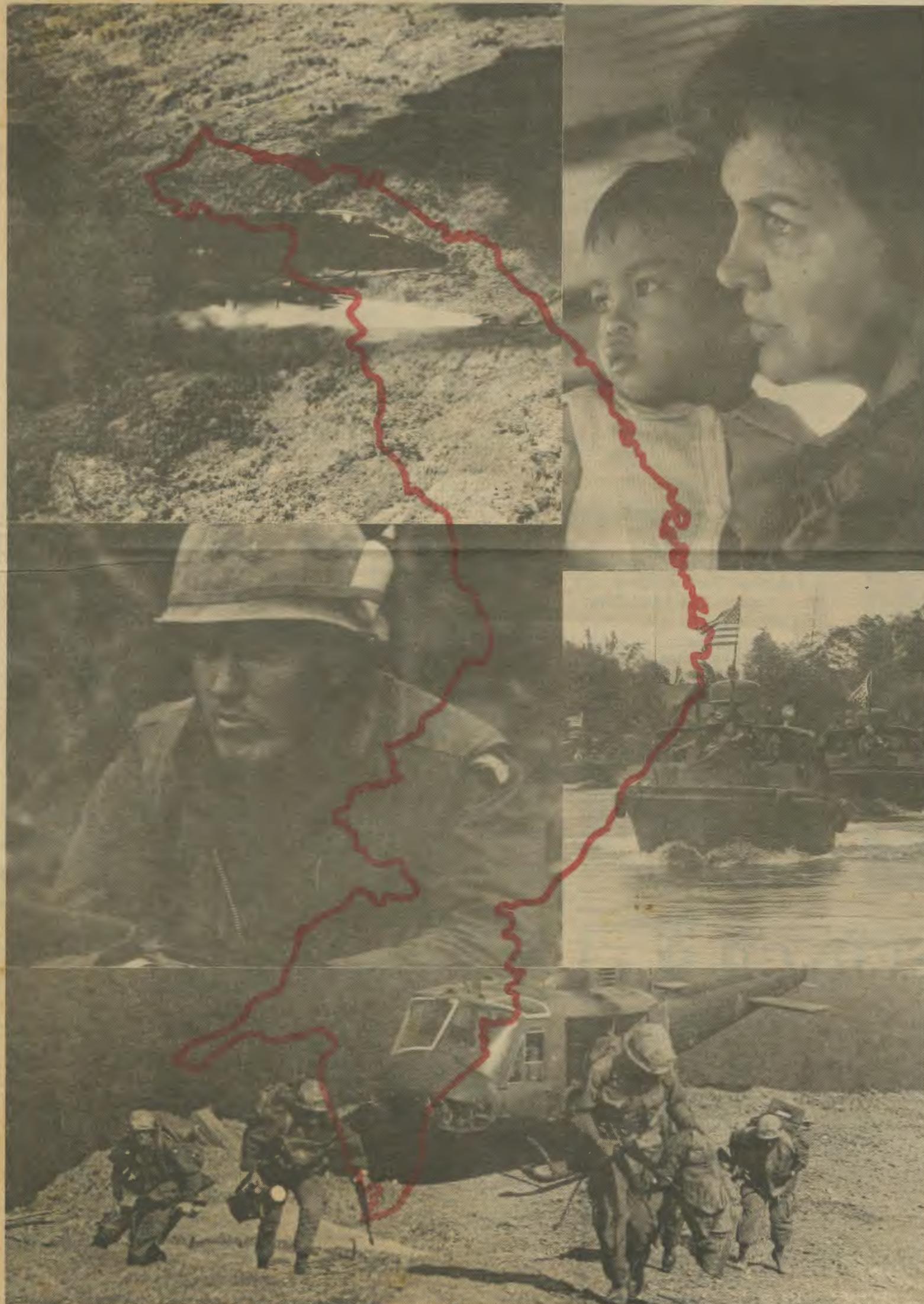
the OBSERVER



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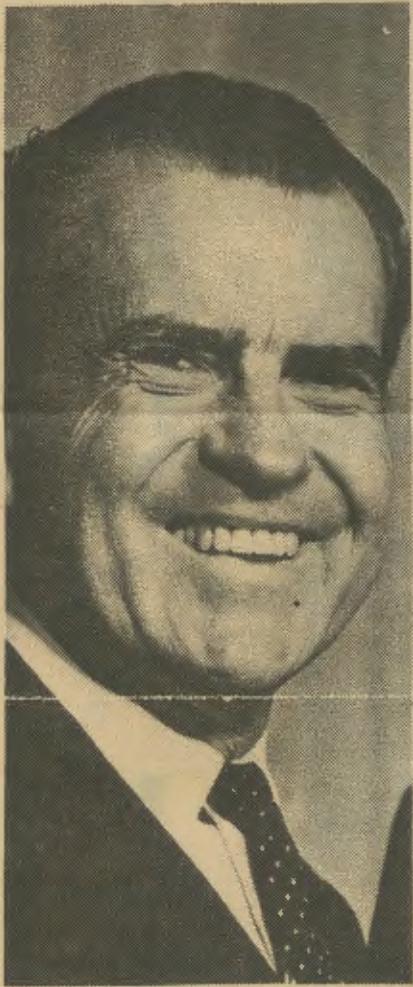
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PEACE WITH HONOR: The President's Message

EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the text of the address delivered by President Nixon January 23 announcing the Vietnam cease-fire agreement:

"Good evening. I have asked for this radio and television time tonight for the purpose of announcing that, we, today, have concluded an agreement to end the war and bring peace with honor in Vietnam and in Southeast Asia. The following statement is being issued at this moment in Washington and Hanoi:

"At twelve-thirty Paris time today, January 23, 1973, the agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam was initiated by Doctor Henry Kissinger on behalf of the United States and Special Adviser Le Duc Tho on behalf of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The agreement will be formally signed by the parties



participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam on January 27, 1973, at the International Conference Center in Paris. The ceasefire will take effect at twenty four hundred Greenwich Mean Time, January 27, 1973.

The United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam express the hope that this agreement will ensure stable peace in Vietnam and contribute to the preservation of lasting peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia." That concludes the formal statement.

A ceasefire internationally supervised will begin at seven p.m. this Saturday, January 27, Washington time.

Within sixty days from this Saturday, all Americans held prisoners of war throughout Indochina will be released. There will be the fullest possible accounting for all of those who are missing in action.

During the same sixty-day period, all American forces will be withdrawn from South Vietnam.

The people of South Vietnam have been guaranteed the right to determine their own future without outside interference.

Throughout the years of negotiations, we have insisted on peace with honor. In my addresses to the nation, from this room, of January 25 and May 8, I set forth the goals that we considered essential for peace with honor. In the settlement that has now been agreed to, all the conditions that I laid down then have been met:

By joint agreement, the full text of the agreement and the protocols to carry it out will be issued tomorrow.

Throughout these negotiations, we have been in the closest consultation with President Thieu and other representatives of the Republic of Vietnam. This settlement meets the goals and has the full support of President Thieu and the government of the Republic of Vietnam as well as that of our other allies who are affected.

The United States will continue to recognize the government of the Republic of Vietnam as the sole legitimate government of South Vietnam. We shall continue to aid South Vietnam within the terms of the agreement and we shall support efforts for the people of South Vietnam to settle their problems peacefully among themselves.

We must recognize that ending the war is only the first step toward building the peace. All parties must now see to it that this is a peace that lasts and also a peace that heals. And a peace that not only ends the war in Southeast Asia, but contributes to the prospects of peace in the whole world. This will mean that the terms of the agreement must be scrupulously adhered to. We shall do everything the agreement requires of us and we shall expect the other parties to do everything it requires of them. We shall also expect other interested nations to help insure that the agreement is carried out and peace is maintained. As this long and very difficult war ends, I would like to address a few special words to each of those who have been parties in the conflict.

First, to the people and government of South Vietnam: Your courage, by your sacrifice, you have won the precious right to determine your own future. And you have developed the strength to defend that right. We look forward to working with you in the future, friends in peace as we have been allies in war.

To the leaders of North Vietnam, as we have ended the war through negotiations, let us now build a peace of reconciliation.

For our part, we are prepared to make a major effort to help achieve that goal. But just as reciprocity was needed to end the war, so too will it be needed to build and strengthen peace.

To the other major powers that have been involved even indirectly, now is the time for mutual restraint--so that the peace that we have achieved can last.

And finally, to all of you who are listening, the American people: your steadfastness in supporting our insistence on peace with honor has made peace with honor possible.

I know that you would not have wanted that peace jeopardized. With our secret negotiations at the sensitive stage they were in during this recent period, for me to have discussed publicly our efforts to secure peace would not only have violated our understanding with North Vietnam, it would have seriously harmed and possibly destroyed the chances for peace. Therefore, I know that you now can understand why during these past several weeks I have not made any public statements about those efforts.

The important thing was not to talk about peace but to get peace and to get the right kind of peace. This we have done. Now that we have achieved an honorable agreement, let us be proud that America did not settle for a peace that would have betrayed our allies, that would have abandoned our prisoners of war, or that would have ended the war for us but would have continued the war for the fifty million people of Indochina. Let us be proud of the two and a half million young Americans who served in Vietnam--who served with honor and distinction in one of the most selfless enterprises in the history of nations.

And let us be proud of those who sacrificed, who gave their lives, so that the people of South Vietnam might live in freedom and so that the world might live in peace.

In particular, I would like to say a word to some of the bravest people I have ever met--the wives, the children, the families of our prisoners of war and the missing-in-action. When others called on us to settle on any terms you had the courage to stand for the right kind of peace so that those who died and those who suffered would not have died and suffered in vain and so that where this generation knew war, the next generation would know peace.

Nothing means more to me at this moment than the fact that your long vigil is coming to an end.

Just yesterday, a great American who once occupied this office died. In his life, President Johnson endured the vilification of those who sought to portray him as a man of war. But there was nothing he cared about more deeply than achieving a lasting peace in the world.

I remember the last time I talked to him--it was just the day after New Year's. He spoke then of his concern with bringing peace--with making it the right kind of peace. And I was grateful that he once again expressed his support for my efforts to gain such a peace. No one would have welcomed this peace more than he. And I know he would join me in asking for those who died and for those who lived: Let us consecrate this moment by resolving together to make the peace we have achieved a peace that will last. Thank you, and good evening."



FIRST IN VIETNAM the OBSERVER



COMUSMACV
Chief Of Information
Chief, Command Information

GEN F.C. Weyand, USA
COL R.L. Burke, USA
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PRESIDENT NIXON visits Di An, Vietnam during 1969 tour.

They also served



SMILES ARE THE UNIFORM OF THE DAY as American Red Cross recreation worker Barbara Crippen of Youngsville, Pa. pauses for a chat with troops during a visit to Firebase Jamie near Phuoc Vinh in 1970.



A COOLING DRINK for a man on a hot wing is offered by American Red Cross recreation worker Sharon Bernardi of McAlester, Okla. at Tuy Hoa in 1970.

For a soldier

Vietnam is a very personal thing!

South Vietnam, Vietnam, 'Nam. Impossible to define, impossible to explain. For a Soldier-eight impressions today - sixteen tomorrow. On a good day all beautiful, on a bad day all bad - number Ten.

Rice paddies, a million of them all identical. Different only in size, shape, color, texture and smell. Tree lined streets in suburbia, Saigon. Pine forests near Dalat, Wait-A-Minute Brush in Quang Ngai, white sandy beaches at Cam Ranh, triple canopy jungle in Pleiku, desolate dunes in Quang Tri, Rubber plantations (trees 8 meters apart) in Binh Duong. Mekong Delta, flat, with ten thousand serene canals and impenetrable banks. Central highlands with hills-and mountains-and hills.

Renault taxis, Mustangs, Cyclos, Citroens, buses, and jeeps. Push carts, covered trucks, Lambrettas, and ornate wagons pulled by miniature horses. Sedans, ox carts, and all the Hondas in the world.

Red roofed villas, thatched huts. Beer can walls and ammo box houses. Apartments, bunkers and hootches. Market stalls and massage parlors. Hoctocs, hotels, hospitals and headquarters. Schools and Temples and Pagodas. Boulevards, twisting alleys, trails, highways, canals and tracks connecting them all. Different world measured in kilometers on 1:50,000 maps, in a sing song language.

Momma San-Papa San-Baby San. Coolie Hats and black pajamas. Ao Dais, mini-skirts and flip flops. Trim fitted blouses and flared slacks. Bikinis at Vung Tau and China Beach. School girls in white and school boys in blue and cowboys in knit shirts and Levis. Hang Tens and Hip Huggers on Tu Do Street. Venerables in black gowns, monks in yellow and mourners in white. Hindus in skirts and Montengards in loin cloth, refugees in rags. Their husbands, fathers and brothers were tankers in black berets, infantry in OD, Rangers in glossy helmets and flak jackets. Airborne in red or National Police in tan camouflage or RF or PF or CIDG in anything. Sailors in denim and pilots in black.

They came to help. Big Red One, First Cav, First and Third Marines, Fighting Fourth, Fifth Mech, Old Reliabes, Americal, Tropic Lightning, All-Americans, Screaming Eagles, Blackhorse, 173d Brigade. Advisors and Special Forces, Brown Water Navy, SEALS, 7th Air Force Fighter Jocks and hot shot carrier pilots from 7th Fleet, Crewmen on Iowa, Newport News and Rowan and a hundred gray ships. Helped and left their mark. So did the ROKs, the Aussies, the New Zealanders and the Thais. For a just cause and in the National Interest.

At Claymore Corners, Thunder Road, Highway One, Street Without Joy, Khe Sanh, Michalen Plantation, U Minh Forest, Rung Sat, A Shau

Valley, Dak To, Hue, Bu Dop, Kontum, Chu Lai, Iron Triangle, Ho Bo Woods, War Zone C, and a hundred other places each with its own story of courage, valor, and unnamed heroes-and misery.

VC and NVA, Nguyen Charlie, Bad Guys, Sappers. 1st NVA and 9th VC, Phu Loi Battalion. Farmers living off the land, say the misinformed, but driving T54's and MIG 21's and firing sophisticated SAM-2's and 130's with deadly precision and setting mines and booby traps. Digging tunnels with an energy that would rival the builders of the Great Wall and collecting taxes and rice and villagers.

Interval for a too short R&R. Hawaii - "Best Vacation I've ever had." Australia- "Someday I'm gonna go back there." Hong Kong- "Spent a thousand bucks there on bargains." Taiwan, Manila, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Tokyo- "Greatest place I've ever been."

Came back to M-60's and belts of ammo worn bandoleer fashion, M-16's, with nineteen rounds carefully counted in each magazine - and Huey's - constantly moving Hueys. AK-47's, 12.5's, SAM's, Dusters and Dustoffs. 8" Howitzers and 175 guns and 105's and mortars. M-48's and APC's- T-54's and PT 76's. 122 Rockets, 122 Guns and 130's. And Claymores - theirs and ours. All tools for a deadly job and used with devastation by professionals.

Soup sold by a vendor with his bamboo clacker. C-Rats and "A" rations. French restaurants. Ten-in-ones and sundry packs. Noodles and Nuoc Mam, Tropical Chocolate and Cheese Spread. Chinese food with Coke. Ba Muoi Ba, fish and rice. Chop sticks and plastic spoons. Tabasco sauce and Kool Aid and ice cream and Saigon Tea. Cold Milk and Lister bag martinis, and Ham and Limas. Who's got a P-38?

Anonymous friends in Skyraiders and Phantoms and B-52's. Loaches and 0-1's, Birddogs and Gooney Birds, Chinooks with slung loads. Sky Cranes and C-130's and Jolly Greens from concrete strips at Tan Son Nhut, or PSP, or Blacktop or Laterite strips carved by sweating Engineers. At home in revetments surrounded by a billion sand bags on LZ's and chopper pads named Hotel 3, or Bien Hoa or An Khe. Other unseen friends in Puff's and Spookies, Fireflys, Stingers, Cobras, Flareships, Gunships, Slicks, Thunderchiefs, Broncos, Freedom Fighters, and A-37's.

Walking point, flying cover, escorting convoys, clearing tunnels, hot LZ's, night ambushes, Fire Missions, perimeter duty, Eagle Flights, extractions, humping hills.

Grunt, Trooper, Medic, Gunner, Snuffy GI. Vietnam is a very personal thing. TEH



SMOKE'S UP--And Hornet choppers from the 116th Assault helicopter Company set down to pick up the Bravo Company Warriors of the 25th Division's 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry who are ready for a lift back to Fire Support Base Pershing after a hot day's work in the South Vietnamese sun near Trang Bang.

Airmobile 'all the way'

By SSG M.M. Patterson

Speed, exact coordination, precise timing, and massive firepower were characteristic of the airmobile unit - a revolutionary tactical organization and concept developed and introduced during the Vietnam conflict. Use of helicopters for movement into battle saved time and lives. With speed unheard of in previous wars, battle-ready troops and supplies were moved over miles of rough terrain, inserted into multiple locations and when necessary, extracted to fight in other locations within minutes. The concept, perfected in Vietnam, continues.

THE AIMMOBILE CONCEPT

Airmobility means more than just the movement of troops into combat, however. Aviation support can be a massive task consisting of the airlift of thousands of personnel, and hundreds of thousands of tons of vital supplies yearly.

An Airmobile Division is responsible for this support, and must coordinate all the various types of missions. When missions are requested by the division operations center they must be carefully analyzed and all requirements considered. Once this careful planning is completed, missions are assigned to subordinate units by an air movement coordination element.

INSTANT REACTION

Whether the mission is resupply, redeployment of artillery pieces, or transportation of general staff or dignitaries it receives the same painstaking attention.

Airmobility also means the ability to take the muscle of artillery aloft and deliver it with pinpoint accuracy on the enemy. AH-1G Cobras can be in the air within two minutes of receiving a call for artillery support. While speeding toward the target area pilots receive the exact location and details of the mission, and upon arrival are prepared to hurtle down with blazing mini-guns and devastating rocket fire.

In the mountainous terrain of northern Military Region 1 these ships were able to provide close artillery support in situations conventional guns would be unable to reach. They have come up against everything from enemy bunkers and gun emplacements to NVA armor, proving the value of the fighting helicopter.

Obviously the helicopter makes the airmobility concept practical. It provides the speed, carries the firepower, and makes the timing and coordination possible. Without proper maintenance, though, these craft would soon be grounded. For a UH-1 Huey, the ship used primarily for troop transportation, about 14 hours of total maintenance time are required for every hour of flight. The larger, more complex Chinooks and Skycranes need even more attention to remain flight worthy.

The first line of maintenance on any aircraft is the responsibility of the ship's crew chief. It is not unusual for these men to put in a 20-hour work day caring for their birds. They must carefully examine their craft before and after each flight, making certain that the myriad of bolts and hydraulic hoses are unworn and tightened to exacting tolerances. They are responsible for promptly reporting any problems which are beyond their capabilities to repair.

When major repairs are needed the bird is turned over to full time maintenance personnel who are an integral part of the airmobile division. Working long, hard days these men keep the sophisticated aircraft flying. They are highly trained for their demanding jobs and are well aware that the lives of crewmen depend on their work. With expert maintenance the helicopters are kept ready to fly.



A CH-47 Chinook helicopter from the 213th Assault Support Helicopter Company sling loads sixteen 55 gallon drums of JP4 on a mission in support of the Australians.



A LOACH CREW SCANS the terrain for signs of enemy activity.



HUEYS IN FORMATION streak toward another LZ with a load of ground combat troops in the vicinity of Danang.



BLUE MAX COBRAS from Charlie Company, 2d Battalion, 20th Artillery of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, 3rd Brigade head out on a mission. Minutes before the crews sat waiting in the Hot Room for a call to action. They will move in and mark their targets, then 'fire for effect' with a burst of rockets, 40mm and 3.5 rounds before mission is completed.



MOUNTAIN TOP - Heavily laden infantrymen of the 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment of ARVN First Division dash from a helicopter which lifted them to a recently "cleared" mountain top landing zone overlooking Ba Long valley in Quang Tri province.

The advanced technology which produced and maintains the helicopters of today has made possible certain tactics which are typical of the airmobility concept. One example is the "pink team" which has been used with great success against enemy forces in Vietnam. This is a combination of the OH-6 light observation helicopter (LOH) and Cobras.

When working with such a team the LOH goes "down on the deck," flying at treetop level or lower, searching for signs of the enemy. Fully exposed to enemy fire, these scouts can recon a larger area in one day than men on the ground could cover in an entire week. When the enemy is sighted the LOH moves out of the area and the Cobras streak down to blast the target with their rockets and mini-guns. This type of operation makes life a little easier for troops on the ground, especially when enemy ambushes are detected and destroyed from the air.

A STATE OF MIND

The concept of airmobility in this way transcends all levels of command. Everyone from general to private is affected by it, for in reality, airmobility is a state of mind as well as physical happening.

An observer for the Australian Army, Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Argent, once visited the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and was greatly impressed by this high level of spirit and proficiency within the division.

"My main objective has been to gain ideas and experience while studying the airmobile tactics employed by the 101st," he explained when his visit with the Screaming Eagles had ended. "Observing these aircraft and crewmen, I believe this division to be the best equipped and most highly trained fighting division in the world. The pilots and personnel I've seen are top-notch and would be outstanding in any army."

A TYPICAL OPERATION

A typical airmobile operation, such as the ones Lt. Col. Argent observed, might begin when LOH scouts discover the enemy. They flash a message to the operations center to start the crushing wheels rolling. An Air Force forward air controller is first called in to mark the target area. Immediately fighters roll in to pound the target with their deadly ordnance.

A scout helicopter recons the area to assess damage done by the Air Force. The LOH withdraws and seconds later artillery begins to rain a deadly fire. When the barrage lifts the scout again recons the area and moves out quickly to let the Cobras have their chance at the enemy.

While the enemy is taking this pounding a suitable landing zone (LZ) is being selected for the insertion of troops. When an LZ is found near the point of the initial sighting, pathfinder teams are dropped in to guide the troop ships.

Immediately upon landing and securing the area, the Airmobile Troops sweep through the area of sighting, searching for any enemy troops who may have survived. If the enemy has been lucky enough to escape it is likely that he will again be spotted by scout ships. In this case the entire process starts again, and the troops inserted initially can be extracted and re-inserted within a matter of minutes.

When the U.S. forces in Vietnam turned more to a supporting role, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) took over the ground action. This could be plainly seen during February and March of 1971 in operation Lam Son 719. During this period Airmobile operations supported the equivalent of two U.S. divisions and two and one half ARVN divisions. This operation clearly demonstrated the flexibility of the airmobile division and proved conclusively that the concept of airmobility is a sound one.



A MEDEVAC HELICOPTER hovers over the pad prior to taking off on a mission to retrieve a wounded soldier.



NIGHTHAWKS OF THE 11TH Combat Aviation Group head for LZ Sally on the northern coast of South Vietnam. (Observer Photo by PH1 Ken George)

A reporter's observations

Reviewing the 11 years of war

By SFC Stanley S. Johnson

The situation gradually became more serious during those years. Matters weren't helped any by the political scene in South Vietnam. President Ngo Dinh Diem was assassinated in November 1963 and the government overthrown. For nearly two years, one administration followed another; the political turmoil of this period hindered the Republic's efforts to defend itself from local terrorists and their North Vietnamese supporters.

On August 2 and 4, 1964, North Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked two U.S. destroyers, the *USS Maddox* and *USS Turner Joy*, in international waters off the Vietnamese coast. President Lyndon B. Johnson asked for and received from Congress approval to use all necessary means to defeat aggression against South Vietnam.

After a couple of days of in-processing at Cam Ranh, it was down to Saigon, and U.S. Army Vietnam headquarters at what became, a few months later, the MACV Annex. What the hell was I doing here, anyway? What kind of a nut in a comfortable Stateside assignment volunteers for duty in a combat zone?

Everybody has his reasons. Maybe it was because history was being made here, and I wanted to see it first-hand. Maybe because a lot of buddies had volunteered. Maybe it was just temporary insanity....

Saigon. They used to call it "Pearl of the Orient." The streets teeming with people, swollen by refugees from the countryside, barbed wire and sandbags all over the place. Some "pearl." But the girls were pretty, slender and graceful in their colorful ao dais....

In the wake of the North Vietnamese attack on the American ships, preparations were made in the United States for what became known as "the big buildup." Also at that time, it was apparent that the South Vietnamese armed forces were not able to reverse the Communist threat by themselves; ground forces from allied countries were needed. During 1965, troops from Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea joined U.S. forces in South Vietnam.

The first American ground combat unit was the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, of the 3d Marine Division. Next came the Army's 173d Airborne Brigade which, immediately after arrival, began field operations in the area around Bien Hoa. The buildup was going on in earnest by mid-1965. U.S. Army combat engineers began construction of a huge deep-water port complex at Can Ranh Bay, and the first Australian troops arrived.

Communist forces were increasing on a large scale also. Several battalions of them attacked Duc Hoa, indicating that they were going into conventional warfare in an effort to overcome allied forces before the buildup could be accomplished. It wasn't just VC; several North Vietnamese Army units had been identified by this time in the South.

But the Allied buildup continued. During 1965, troops of the 1st Infantry Division, more Marine units, the 1st Cavalry Division - which revolutionized warfare with the airmobile concept - and the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, had landed and were in combat. The counteroffensive was under way.

April 1967. One man's first impressions of Vietnam...the dazzling sun reflected from the steel-matted runway and white sands of Cam Ranh Bay after a tiring trans-Pacific flight...wooden barracks at the replacement center...a chance meeting with an old buddy who invited me to his hooch for a cold beer—the most welcome beer I ever had...the boom of artillery somewhere in the hills, and the NCOIC of the center reassuring the newcomers: "Don't sweat it; that's just the ROKs chasing 'Charlie.'"

After the French-Indochina War ended in 1954, the Geneva Accords created a North and South Vietnam. Late in that year President Dwight D. Eisenhower initiated economic aid for South Vietnam—aid which steadily increased over the years as it became increasingly obvious that the North was out to subjugate the South.

As time went on, the United States began sending military advisors to help the fledgling military and police forces of the Republic of Vietnam. By 1961, however, guerrilla action had reached the point of open warfare. President Kennedy increased our military commitment by augmenting the advisor force and adding pilots and support personnel. This was considered the real starting point of our military involvement in the country; 1961 was also the year in which the first American soldier in Vietnam was killed, in a Viet Cong ambush.

From 1961 on, U.S. strength in Vietnam rose steadily. But the enemy grew ever bolder. Warfare was leaving the terrorist stage and entering a phase of small-unit attacks on hamlets and villages. Despite American military aid, some 20,000 South Vietnamese military were killed from 1959 through 1964.

...review of war

The Central Highlands...it could get pretty chilly in the night at Camp Enari. A field jacket came in handy, and I was glad I had brought it along for the few days I was there—especially that night when there was a rocket alert, and the occupants of the 4th Division's visitors' quarters had to hit the bunker. There happened to be four visitors at the time: one itinerant Army reporter in the men's side, and two cute Filipinas on the club circuit and an American Red Cross girl in the women's side, but the bunker was co-ed. The girls though it was pretty funny....

Other memories of that time...Plei Chi Tei, a Montagnard resettlement village not far from Camp Enari, established under the protective wing of the "Ivy Division." A taste of rice wine with a group of men from the village. After a couple of days there, when it became time to leave, I was the proud possessor of a Montagnard copper bracelet—a symbol of friendship....

The year 1966 saw still more free world support of South Vietnam. The U.S. Army's 1st Signal Brigade was activated, elements of the 4th Infantry Division landed and, in September, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment arrived. A 2,000-man Philippine Civic Action Group came to help the civilian population, as did a Spanish medical team and the German hospital ship *Helgoland*. Allied combat operations covered the country in an effort to turn the tide of battle.

On the political front, the prevailing calm was shattered in April with Buddhist protests against the government of Premier Nguyen Cao Ky. A general strike closed the port of Da Nang—South Vietnam's second largest city—and 20,000 Buddhists demonstrated in Hue. But by April 12, the anti-government forces pledged to fight communism alongside the government.

The rotor blades of the big Chinook clattered over the bright green rice fields of Binh Dinh Province. It looked peaceful down there, but the province had long been infested with VC. Aboard our chopper was a contingent of the country's National Police Field Force, a couple of psychological operations specialists and two American advisors—one a soldier, the other a civilian, an ex-policeman from Los Angeles.



MORTARMEN FROM 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, prepare to send another 60mm round against the enemy during Operation Dewey Canyon in 1969. (USMC Photo by Cpl. Robb Straub)



AERIAL VIEW OF HILL 260, occupied by B Battery 3/82 Field Artillery. As part of Task Force Gimlet, they supported the 3rd Battalion until they were withdrawn from the field as one of the last American ground combat units in Vietnam. Da Nang AB is in the distance to the right. (USA Photo by CPT G.A. Redding)

We landed without opposition for a search mission through a few hamlets. It was routine for the most part. The police knew the area and poked around in bunkers and piles of straw, or any other potential hiding place, using steel rods to probe the ground. Then they would assemble the villagers for a talk by the psyops people. The idea was to show them a government presence, and to warn them against cooperating with the VC.

In one hamlet they turned up a packet of VC flags and an old ammo can full of enemy propaganda. They also picked up a couple of suspects.

On the way back to the Chinook we ran across some unfriendly types who were not suspects; they were definitely bona fide enemy, and the bullets were real. As I hit the ditch alongside a rice paddy dike, an image of one of Bill Mauldin's World War Two cartoons flashed through my mind: Willie and Joe were on the ground with bullets zipping overhead. One said to the other: "I can't get no lower—me buttons is in the way."

A squad of police fanned out towards the VC while the others laid down covering fire. But the vegetation was dense beyond the paddy, and the VC melted away. The police, lightly armed with carbines, weren't prepared for a major engagement. One of the advisors reported the incident over the radio and we all made it back to the chopper and into the air without further incident.

From the base camp I managed to catch another chopper headed south for Nha Trang. The MACV press camp there was a welcome respite from the past couple of days, with a warm shower and turkey dinner.

It was Thanksgiving Day, 1967.

In 1967 the enemy was feeling the pinch, yet he continued to fight. Spectacular battles took more than 87,000 enemy lives; at Loc Ninh, about 75 miles north of Saigon near the Cambodian border, American artillerymen lowered their howitzers—normally an indirect-fire weapon—and literally fired point-blank at charging waves of the enemy.

But the biggest battle of the war up to the time took place in the highlands around Dak To. Two companies from the 4th Infantry Division made contact with a strong North Vietnamese force, which pinned down the Americans. The

enemy was so well entrenched that even the pounding by air strikes and artillery didn't stop his fire; American and South Vietnamese ground reinforcements were called in and, by bloody foot-by-foot fighting, the NVA were gradually forced back towards the Cambodian border.

The land....There was an island somewhere up the coast north of Nha Trang, with a wide, curving beach and clear water, sheltered on the mainland side. There was a grove of tall coconut palms and, under the trees, a quiet fishing village with clean-swept lanes of packed earth. The war seemed very remote and I wondered how it would be when peace came. Such places as this island, as beautiful as any vacation spot in the Caribbean, could certainly be an attraction to visitors.

From the air—and you got a lot of time in the air during the years of the buildup—the land looked soft and comforting, especially in the green and gold colors of late afternoon in the slanting sunlight. The best way to see it was from the open door of a Huey or one of the smaller observation helicopters. There were the rice fields and the occasional, surprising pile of monster boulders, freaks of geological processes of some ancient time. Then—shocking contrast against the natural beauty of this country—the ugly scars of bomb craters. You never forgot that there was a war going on. After a rain the water shimmered in the round pockmarks below. Sometimes you could see a man fishing in them.....

On January 31, 1968, the Allies began their 36-hour Tet truce. Less than half the truce had passed when the enemy hit Da Nang with rockets. Street fighting broke out in Nha Trang and enemy sappers struck at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. Almost simultaneously, fighting raged in South Vietnam's eight major cities and in at least 30 smaller towns.

The Tet offensive—that phrase was quickly picked up by newspapers and broadcasters around the world. The North Vietnamese held nearly all of Hue and half of Kontum City. Terrorism was reported everywhere; at least 1,000 civilians were assassinated in Hue alone. And destruction was great. Parts of Saigon were reduced to rubble, especially in the suburbs, and at the end, Hue lay in ruins.

...review of war

But during close to two months of fighting, more than 27,000 of the enemy died; the offensive was by no means any sort of military victory. The Communist command, in the end, failed to hold a single town of any size. Neither was it a psychological victory—the enemy's call for a general uprising was a total failure across the country.

On the other hand, the civilian population in the cities suffered terribly. As Dean Rusk said, "This is a time of trial for the South Vietnamese and their Allies...."

In an attempt to break enemy strength in the provinces around Saigon, a force of more than 50,000 Allied troops was assembled in mid-March for Operation *Quyet Thang* (Resolved to Win). By the time it ended on April 9, some 2,600 of the enemy had fallen.

Tet, the Lunar New Year, 1968....the elderly man who took care of our barracks, boots and laundry at Long Binh had invited a couple of us, in a gesture of friendship, to visit with him and his family in Saigon. Unfortunately, we couldn't make it; Tet dinner was out because the enemy was at the gate. Fighting on the base perimeter....Cobra gunships firing salvos of rockets at Viet Cong who had penetrated near the 90th Replacement Battalion and were working their way down a ditch in the fields just beyond. The rockets passed low over the battalion's buildings, causing no end of consternation among some of the new arrivals awaiting their orders. They hadn't yet been issued weapons....

"Charlie" was also across Highway 1, taking potshots at the headquarters of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade. But, even under those conditions, there was a note of humor. A brigade information specialist called our office at USARV headquarters. Over the phone I could hear pinging sounds—the sounds of bullets ripping through the sheet metal of the Quonset hut.

"Where are you calling from?" I asked.

"I'm calling from under my damn desk, that's where I'm calling from," he replied.



THEY COME IN SHOOTING during a combat assault by men of 2nd Battalion, 5th Cav, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. (USA Photo by Sp4 Larry Buehner)



RADIOING BASE CAMP, a member of Company C, 75th Infantry, Rangers, nears the end of a reconnaissance patrol in 1970. (USA Photo by Sp5 Carl Million)

The year 1968 was significant for other developments. General Creighton Abrams replaced General William C. Westmoreland as commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam. President Johnson, on March 31, announced that he would not run for another term. He also cut back bombing in the north to below the 19th parallel in an appeal to Hanoi for peace. The next day, President Thieu announced general mobilization plans to place another 200,000 South Vietnamese under arms by the end of the year.

The Paris peace talks began on May 13, but enemy rockets continued to hit Saigon and other cities. In November, President Johnson ordered a total halt to the bombing of North Vietnam.

Early 1969 saw the beginnings of "Vietnamization" with RVN forces taking over more and more of the fighting. President Nixon was inaugurated, and the Paris talks were continuing—however slowly. The strength of American forces in Vietnam peaked at 543,000 in April and, in May, Presidents Nixon and Thieu met on Midway Island and announced the beginnings of American troop redeployment. A turning point had been reached.

The Vietnamization program began to show clearly in the fall of 1969 when operations in the Mekong Delta were exclusively Vietnamese. Everywhere else, U.S. units and ARVN forces were working together. Better training and modernized equipment were making the difference. Progress was such that by March 1970 President Nixon was able to announce the fourth cutback of U.S. forces in the country.

This war was definitely different....World War Two had its famous battles, involving tens of thousands of men and huge fleets of ships, or many battalions of tanks...Anzio Beach, the Battle of the Coral Sea, Iwo Jima. These names will be long remembered. But Vietnam? How long will we remember Task Force Oregon and Operation Wheeler? Or the Mobile Riverine Force and Operation Coronado V in the waterways of the Delta? The men who participated will certainly remember them—their personal pieces of hell....

Cambodia figured prominently in the news during the first few months of 1970. Students, angered by the increased presence of North Vietnamese troops and Viet Cong on Cambodian territory, caused the deposition of Prince Norodom Sihanouk while he was visiting Moscow. The new government, under Premier Lon Nol, then asked that the International Control Commission take action to force NVA

regulars and VC from the country. This proved to be a fruitless request.

In mid-April ARVN troops crossed the border and were joined by Cambodian troops in a drive to strike at base camps of their common enemy. On May 1, an American armored force slashed into the Cambodian jungle to join the friendly forces already there.

Allied forces captured the largest munitions caches of the war and destroyed the enemy's heavy equipment. But the headquarters of COSVN (the enemy's Central Office for South Vietnam) remained undiscovered. President Nixon had set a 60-day deadline for U.S. operations in Cambodia, and on June 29 the Americans had all returned to South Vietnam. There were no other large-scale operations during the rest of 1970; the enemy seemed to be returning to small-unit and terrorist actions. It was not a strategy for winning, but for avoiding total defeat.

Early in 1971 a force of 10,000 South Vietnamese infantrymen, Marines and Rangers drove into Laos to strike at enemy base camps and supply depots along the Ho Chi Minh trail. This was a major test of the progress of Vietnamization; although U. S. forces gave air and artillery support, no American ground forces entered Laos.

In May, RVN government forces began to take over at the DMZ as the U.S. Army's 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division began to redeploy. Later, as the National Assembly elections neared, the enemy began adding pressure. But 78.5 per cent of the electorate turned out in August despite Viet Cong terrorist attacks.



STRAIN of heavy fighting for an NVA bunker complex is reflected in the face of SFC Samuel Ragin of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry. (USA Photo by Sp4 A1 Gregory)



FIRST CAV troopers, members of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 3rd Brigade, warily cross a stream near a large enemy bunker complex in 1971. (USA Photo by Sp4 A1 Gregory)

...review of war

Another milestone in the standdown of U.S. forces was reached in November as the last remaining division, the 101st Airborne, began phasing out of combat.

Redeployment was speeding up as Vietnamization progressed. Nearly twice as many U.S. servicemen were sent home in January 1972 as were redeployed in January 1971. Remaining ground units were being used more and more in support and advisory roles, rather than in actual combat. U.S. casualties dropped sharply as RVN forces took over most of the fighting. But the war was far from over. At the end of March 1972 Hanoi sent entire divisions across the DMZ, capturing Quang Tri Province and occupying areas farther south. President Nixon ordered resumed bombing of the north, striking at military activities throughout the country almost to North Vietnam's border with China. In order to stem the flow of war materiel by sea, he also ordered the mining of Haiphong harbor and other major North Vietnamese ports. But the enemy had unexpectedly large stockpiles already in place throughout Indochina, and bitter fighting raged across the length and breadth of South Vietnam.

At first, some enemy units had initial successes. For the ARVN, as time passed, however, and their troops became hardened to combat, their overall fighting ability and morale improved in many instances. For example, some units were at first demoralized by enemy tanks which were used by the enemy in numbers for the first time. Experience with the U.S.-supplied light anti-tank weapons soon showed them that tanks are not invincible.

Battles of epic proportions raged in some areas; the fight for An Loc, astride a major enemy infiltration route from Cambodia, was one. Another was the bloody drive to retake Quang Tri City where the enemy had dug in and for months resisted the South's efforts to retake the province capital. But finally the RVN's tough Marines and Ranger units prevailed, driving the North Vietnamese from the city. Still, many areas of the country remained in enemy hands.

During this time U.S. ground forces continued to withdraw. The last of the maneuver battalions, the 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry, departed the Da Nang area on August 11. This officially ended U.S. participation in the ground war.

On October 26, 1972, Dr. Henry Kissinger announced to the nation—and to the world—that "peace is at hand." There were still details to be worked out, and the Saigon government was less than happy with the form of the agreement which was shaping up in negotiations between Washington and Hanoi. But it was apparent that progress, and maybe a major breakthrough, had been made.

However, differences came up during the negotiating sessions which couldn't be immediately resolved. The world watched for three more months as the on again, off again, peace conferences were held in Paris and the full-time war continued in Vietnam. Speculators professing inside information gave the world deadlines which would see the signing of the peace document. They also watched their deadlines of election day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and the presidential inauguration pass without a peace agreement.

Tension, and hopes, kept rising until January 23, when President Nixon announced that the cease-fire papers had been initialed, and would be signed by the four powers involved in the war January 27 (8 a.m., January 28, Saigon time).

Peace!

Peace with honor!



AS OPERATION QUYET THANG jumps off in Phuoc Tuy Province, an Australian fords a stream with his weapon ready.

Campaigns



1. Vietnam Advisory Campaign - March 15, 1962 to March 7, 1965
2. Vietnam Defensive Campaign - March 8, 1965 to December 24, 1965
3. Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase I - December 25, 1965 to June 30, 1966
4. Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase II - July 1, 1966 to May 31, 1967
5. Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase III - June 1, 1967 to January 29, 1968
6. Tet Counteroffensive Campaign - January 30, 1968 to April 1, 1968
7. Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase IV - April 2, 1968 to June 30, 1968
8. Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase V - July 1, 1968 to November 1, 1968
9. Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase VI - November 2, 1968 to February 22, 1969
10. Tet Counteroffensive Campaign - February 23, 1969 to June 8, 1969
11. Vietnam Summer-Fall '69 Campaign - June 9, 1969 to October 31, 1969
12. Vietnam Winter-Spring Campaign - November 1, 1969 to April 30, 1970
13. Sanctuary Counteroffensive Campaign - May 1, 1970 to June 30, 1970
14. Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase VII - July 1, 1970 to June 30, 1971
15. Current Campaign - July 1, 1971 to a date to be determined

Any member of the Army who is serving or who has served in Vietnam or contiguous waters or air space, in accordance with AR 672-5-1, is authorized to wear a bronze battle star on the Vietnam service ribbon for each period in which he served in Vietnam.



1st Infantry Division



1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)



4th Infantry Division



5th Infantry Division (Mechanized)



9th Infantry Division

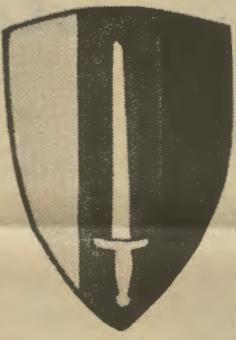


5th Special Forces Group



Military Assistance Command,

Vietnam



U.S. Army, Vietnam



I Field Force, Vietnam



II Field Force, Vietnam



173rd Airborne Brigade



11th Armored Cavalry



196th Light Infantry Brigade



199th Light Infantry Brigade



198th Light Infantry Brigade



11th Infantry Brigade



108th Artillery Group



Americal Division



XXIV Corps



25th Infantry Division



82nd Airborne Division

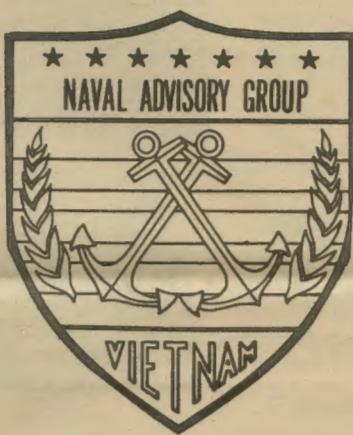


101st Airborne Division

1961 - '73



7th Air Force



Naval Advisory Group, Vietnam



U.S. Marine Corps



34th General Support Group



U.S. Engineer Command, Vietnam



18th Engineer Brigade



1st Aviation Brigade



18th Military Police Brigade



1st Signal Brigade



44th Medical Brigade



20th Engineer Brigade



TSGT. WILLIAM W. CAMERON, a U.S. Air Force advisor here in 1961, instructs Vietnamese airmen in the operation and maintenance of the gunsight on a T-28 fighter-bomber at Nha Trang Air Base.



COMING HOME -- An Air Force F-4C Phantom comes in for a landing after flying a close air support mission in 1967. Seventh Air Force tactical aircrews conducted offensive and defensive air operations in Southeast Asia in support of MACV operations.

Advisory group here first

Air operations in RVN span 22 years

By TSgt. Jim Morrow

For more than 22 years, U.S. Air Force advisors have been working out of Saigon, contributing to the defense of the South Vietnamese people.

Established Nov. 8, 1950, the advisory unit was known as Flight A (Air Force Section, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Indo-China), 1173rd USAF Foreign Mission Squadron. Their mission from activation to 1954 was to "assist and advise the French Air Force in the preparation of requests under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program; provide technical assistance, regarding supply, operations and maintenance of material."

Troop strength of the advisory group is not available for 1950, but in 1954 there were 55 airmen and officers assigned, with the number growing to 65 the following year when the Vietnamese Air Force officially established itself as a separate independent aerial component from the French Air Force.

In 1956, the Vietnamese Air Force moved from meager facilities in Saigon to its present headquarters at Tan Son Nhut AB, and the American advisors then numbered 77.

Reflecting the earlier signing of the Geneva Accord in 1954, the term Indo-China in the advisory unit's name was changed to Vietnam Aug. 1, 1956.

Although the foreign mission squadron's advisory role expanded a few years previously, the French retained training missions for the Vietnamese aerial forces until May 1957. A joint, French-American training relationship existed for a year before the withdrawal of all French forces from Vietnam in 1957. At that time, there were 122 Americans assigned to the Air Force advisory unit.

The diminutive role of the foreign mission squadron of advising fewer than 100 Vietnamese pilots with a like number of airplanes ended when it was recognized that the country would probably remain partitioned. From 1956 through the end of 1961, Air Force advisors aided Vietnamese aerial forces in a modest program of expansion. Aircraft such as L-19s, T-6s, T-28s, A-1s, U-17s, H-19s and H-34s replaced many of the older airplanes acquired from the French. During this same period a U.S. Air Force-style logistics depot, a training center, a rudimentary tactical air control center and a total of five bases were developed through U.S. military assistance and advisory resources.

Each wing controlled air operations in one of the four military zones established in Vietnam. Additionally, both a reconnaissance-transport wing and an air logistical wing were established as part of the program.

Following North Vietnamese attacks against U.S. vessels in the Gulf of Tonkin, squadrons of tactical fighters, bomber and reconnaissance aircraft were deployed to Southeast Asia in August 1964.

Heavy ground fighting in early 1965 increased the need for air support. U.S. Air Force strike aircraft flew their first mission over North Vietnam in support of Vietnamese A-1H Skyraiders on Feb. 1, 1965. Later that month, USAF F-100 Supersabres and B-57 Canberras hit Viet Cong positions in South Vietnam, the first use of jet strike aircraft within the borders of the republic.

Seventh Air Force, which has seen several phases of activation and inactivation since it was formed in 1916, was reactivated April 1, 1966 at Tan Son Nhut AB. Within months, it had wings and squadrons operating from fields at Da Nang, Nha Trang, Phan Rang, Phu Cat, Cam Ranh Bay, Bien Hoa, Pleiku and other improvised airfields throughout the country. Other aircraft, such as the B-52 Stratofortresses, flying from bases in the Pacific and Thailand, were under the operational control of Seventh Air Force while flying strikes over Vietnam.

This gradual buildup, training and exposure to American equipment and techniques helped the Vietnamese Air Force standardize its operational functions. It was the steppingstone not only to a larger Vietnamese Air Force, but also to a greatly increased assistance and advisory role for American airmen.

Gradual expansion came to a conclusion when the Vietnamese Air Force's inventory and personnel strength more than doubled between 1962 and 1965. The force grew from about 4,000 to more than 10,000 officers and enlisted men. Aircraft increased from about 180 to more than 380 during that period. The number of U.S. Air Force advisors doubled during these same years, increasing to nearly 400 Americans by 1965.

The main effort of the Air Force advisors during the early 1960s was directed toward assisting Vietnamese Air Force leaders in the complete restructure of their air arm. The restructure included the activation of four tactical wings. An airbase had to be built to accommodate one of the new wings.



NOT ALL THE FIGHTING WAS IN THE AIR. Flares light up the perimeter of Phan Rang Air Base as security policemen fire their M-60 machine guns into suspected enemy positions.



B-52 STRATOFORTRESS' of the Strategic Air Command rain their bombs on enemy positions in 1968. The bombers, which flew from Guam and Thailand, were employed over both the north and south.



PREPARING FOR A MISSION, a pilot and crew chief check out an A-1 Skyraider.

...Air operations

On June 29, 1966, for the first time, pilots struck against strategic petroleum, oil and lubricant (POL) depots in and around Hanoi and Haiphong.

The air war reached a new intensity in 1966, as critically important targets such as the Thai Nguyen industrial complex, thermal power plants and the Kep and Phuc Yen airfields were hit.

For the first time, an occupied North Vietnamese airfield was struck when USAF fighter-bombers, striking from bases in Thailand, bombed Hoa Loc airfield April 24, 1967.

May 1967 was the biggest "MIG-kill" month of the war, when 20 MIGs were downed. Six of the 20 MIGs were downed May 20, the second time in four months that six or more MIGs were destroyed in a single day.

Air force fighter-bombers hit Hanoi (Paul Doumer) highway and railroad bridge Aug. 11, 1967. Two days later, F-105 Thunderchiefs hit the Lang Son Railroad yards, less than 10 miles from Red China's border.

One of the biggest tactical airlift operations of the war began Jan. 21, 1968, when Khe Sanh, a U.S. Marine stronghold, came under heavy enemy attack. U.S. Air Force, Army and Marine strike aircraft flew around-the-clock support of the embattled installation. During a four-day period, U.S. aircraft flew 1,615 tactical air strikes against enemy positions around Khe Sanh.

Following the 1968 Tet and June offensives, through the balance of the year, and then beyond, Seventh Air Force airmen and aircraft continued carrying the war to the enemy.

In November 1968, President Johnson ordered a halt to the bombing of North Vietnam, in order to enhance the US-RVN position at the Paris peace talks. Seventh Air Forces crews continued to support the ground combat troops in the south, however, and concentrated much of their effort to interdict convoys carrying supplies down the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos.

Last spring, when the communists launched their new offensive drive, President Nixon renewed bombing attacks on North Vietnam, seriously crippling their resupply effort. Joining in the bombing effort were B-52s flying from Guam and Thailand, and F-111 and F-4 aircraft from bases in Thailand, as well as Navy and Marine air crews from carriers of the Seventh Fleet.

Three F-4 Phantom crewmen have achieved "ace" status during the war. All were assigned to the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing in Thailand, and made their fifth kills last year.

The first was a pilot, Captain Steve S. Ritchie, and the other two were weapons system operators, Captains Jeff S. Feinstein and Charles D. DeVellevue.

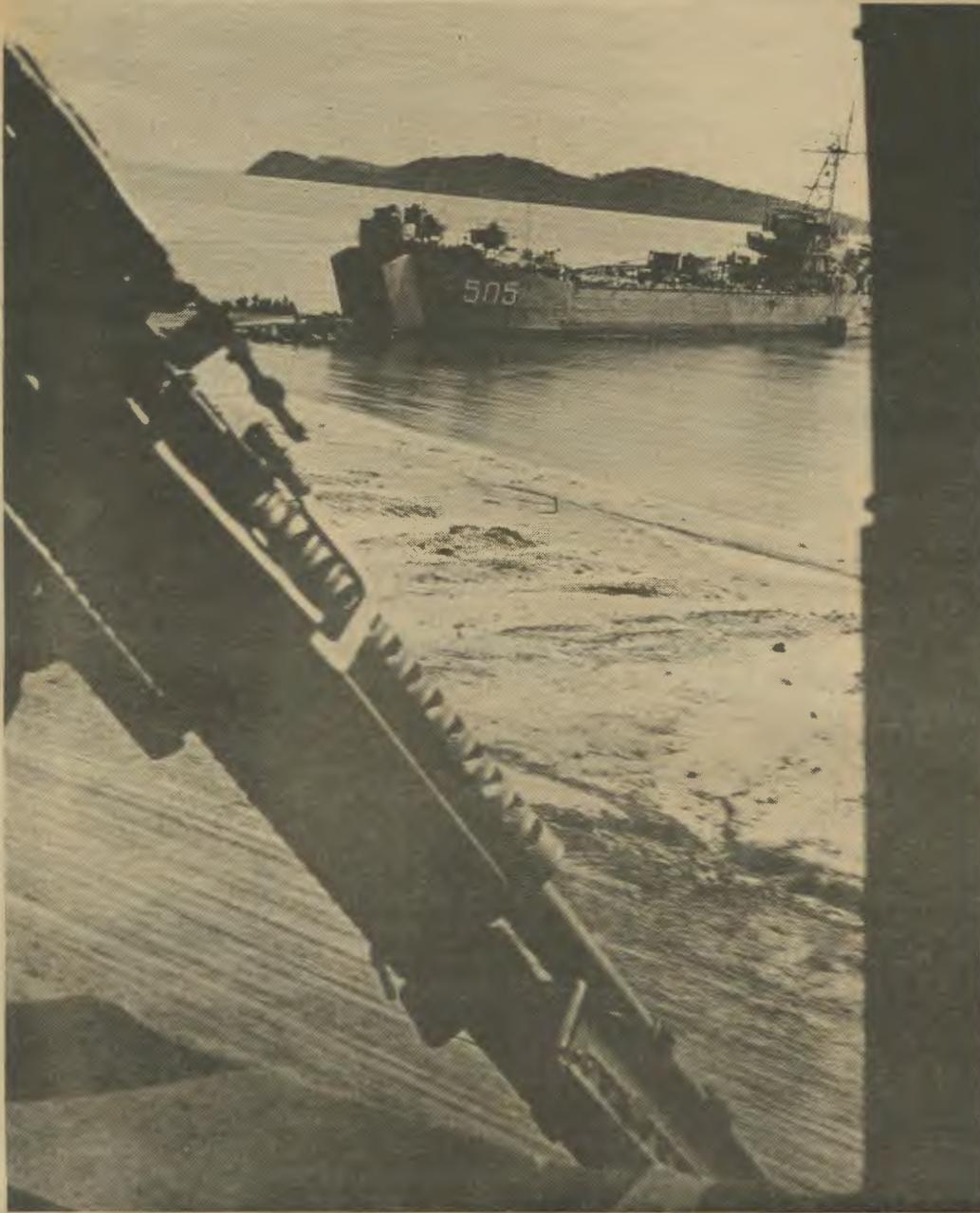
Bombing over the north was again restricted in October, when President Nixon ordered strikes above the 20th parallel halted, as a sign of good faith in renewed peace negotiations.

When the peace talks were halted in December, President Nixon again ordered bombing of the north resumed shortly before Christmas. It was during this period, and during the week after Christmas that military bombers concentrated their most massive raids on the Hanoi and Haiphong areas.

Build-up

The past four years has seen a tremendous buildup of the Republic of Vietnam Air Force. Many of the aircraft used solely by Americans in the beginning are now competently flown by RVNAF crews. These include the A-37 Dragonfly, the supersonic F-5 Freedom Fighter and the A-1 Skyraider.

Their airlift forces are operating the C-119 Packet, C-123 Provider, C-7 Caribou, and the newly-acquired C-130 Hercules. They are also equipped with a variety of gunships and forward air control craft.

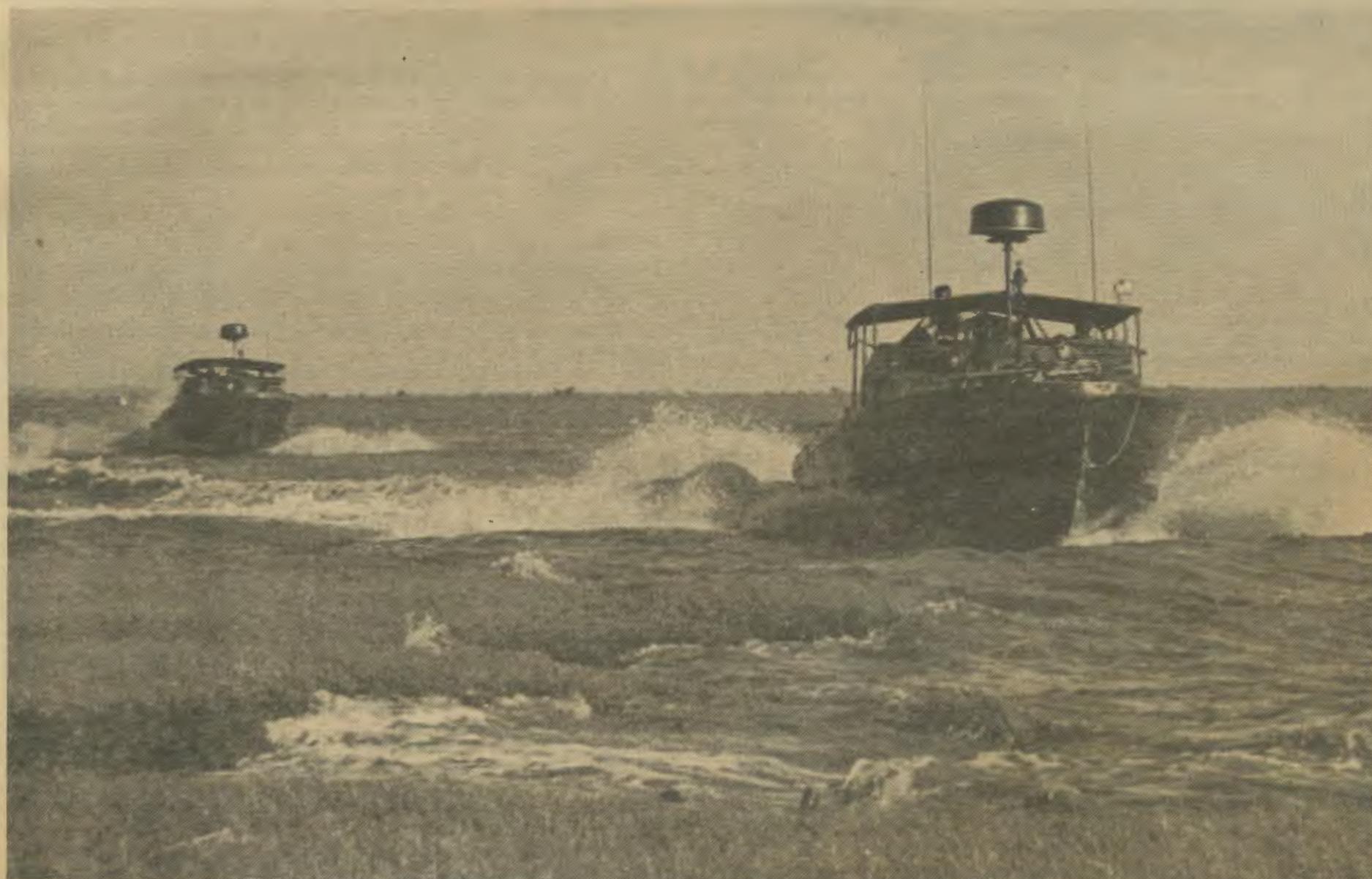


A NAVY LST anchored in the harbor of Anthoi is framed by the machinegun of a Sea Knight helicopter.

U.S. Navy operations in Vietnam



AIRCRAFT FROM USS SARATOGA overfly the ship after returning from a bombing mission over North Vietnam.



NAVY PATROL BOATS ply the Saigon River in 1971 as they go about the job of providing river security.

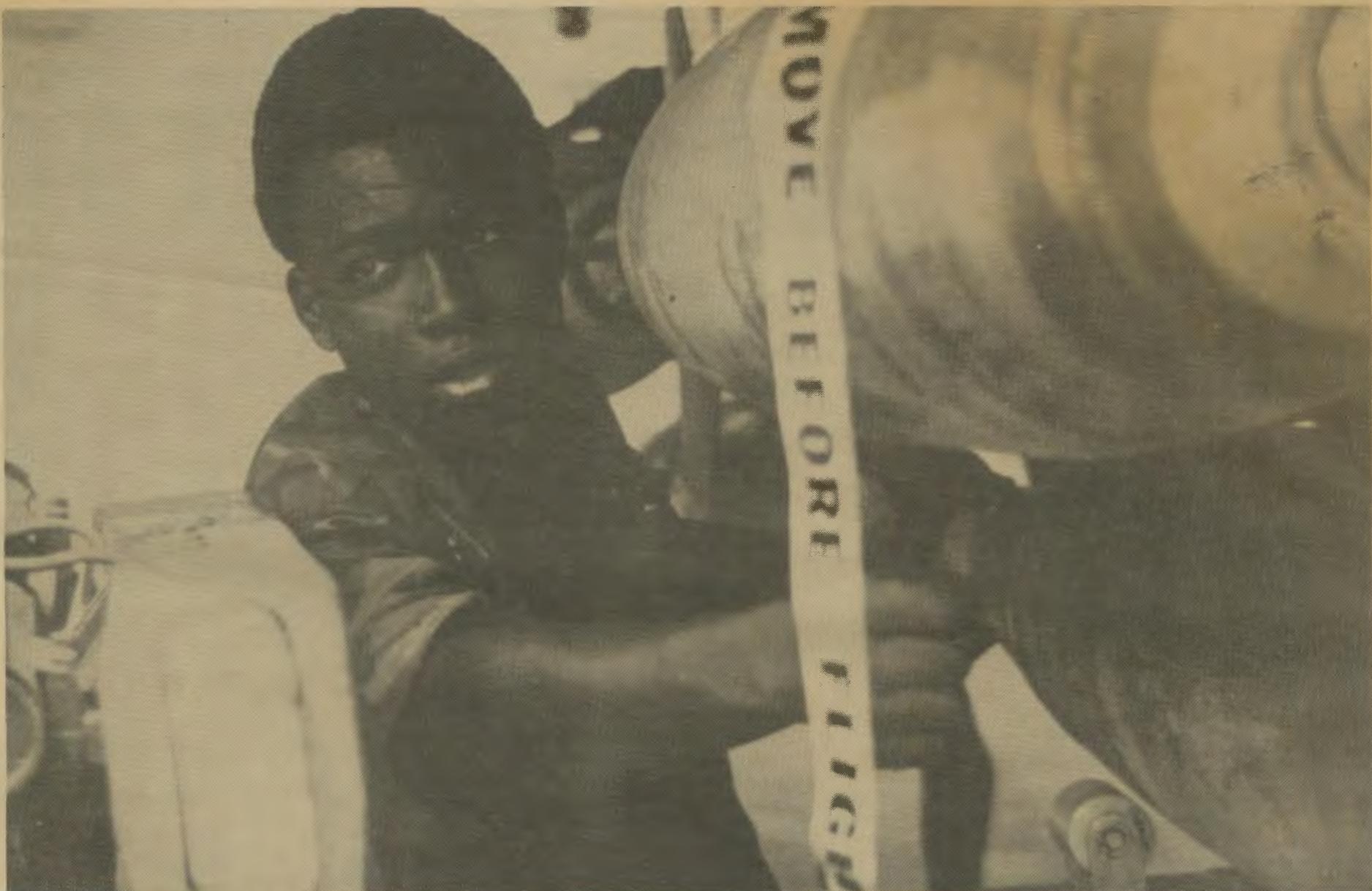


BIG GUNS FROM HEAVY CRUISER USS NEWPORT NEWS fire on enemy positions off the coast of North Vietnam.

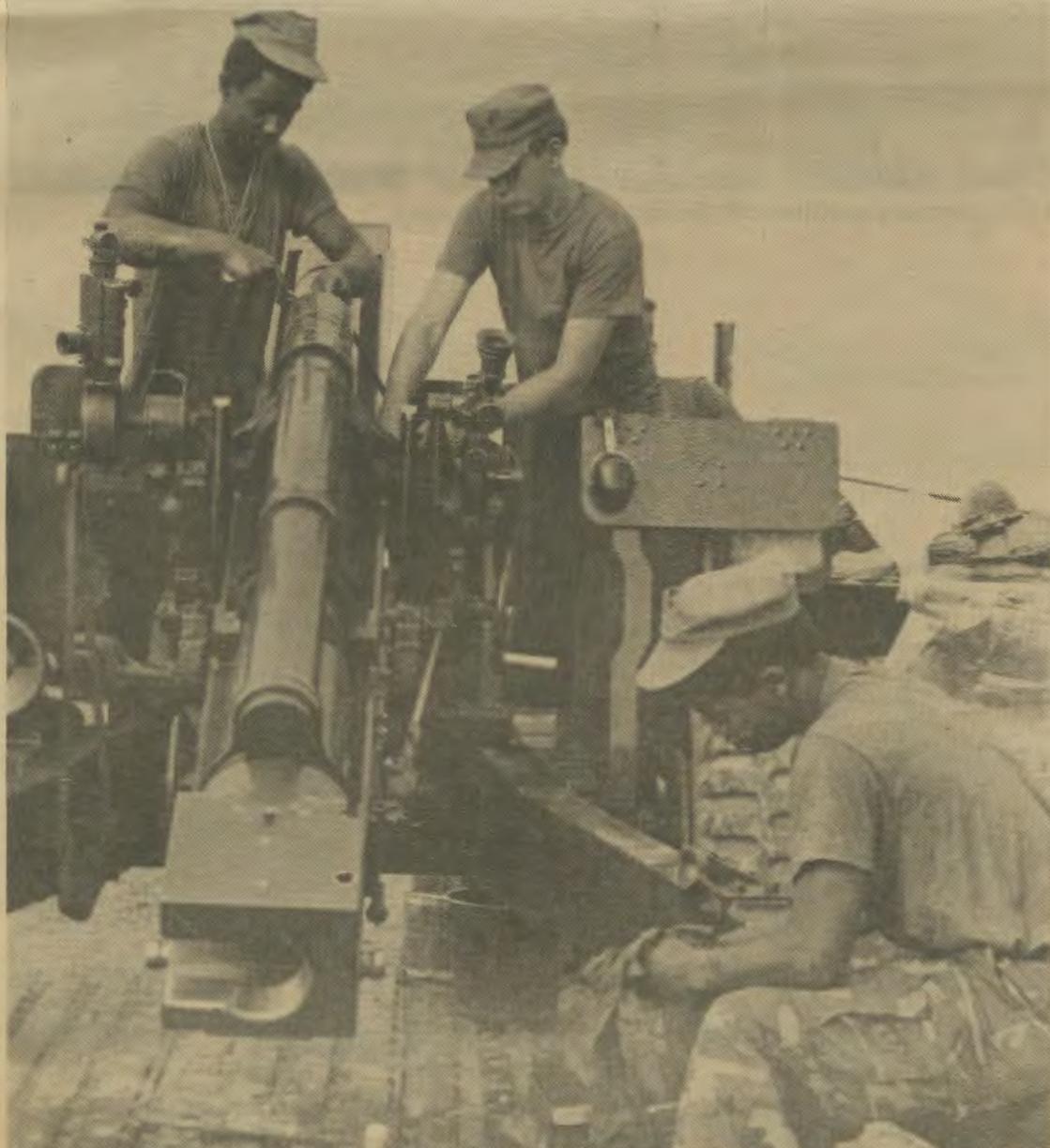
MAKING SURE EVERYTHING IS READY at the beginning of their mission, a Navy lieutenant and a Vietnamese petty officer check the .50 caliber machinegun on their 50-foot wooden junk.



MAKING SURE EVERYTHING IS READY at the beginning of their mission, a Navy lieutenant and a Vietnamese petty officer check the .50 caliber machinegun on their 50-foot wooden junk.



LANCE CORPORAL EDWARD E. WILLIAMS of Washington, D.C., an ordanceman with Marine Attack Squadron 211, readies the bomb load under an A-4 Skyhawk jet at Bien Hoa AB.



THREE ARTILLERYMEN of the 1st Battalion, 11th Marine Regt., 1st Marine Div., prepare their 105mm howitzer for a firing mission in the Que Son Mountains south of Da Nang.

Marine Corps operations in Vietnam



PFC JOHN T. ACCESTA AND LCPL TERRY L. FITZSIMMONS watch a helicopter coming into a landing zone near Mutters Ridge, 10 miles northwest of Dong Ha. The men were part of a machinegun crew attached to "M" Co., 3rd Bn., 4th Marines.



MARINES BOARD HELICOPTERS from the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263. The squadron deposited the Leathernecks of the 1st Marine Regt., 12 miles southwest of Da Nang.



FIRE DIRECTION CENTER -- LCPL Larry L. Town plots fire for the 81mm mortar platoon during Operation Bold Mariner on the Batangan Peninsula.



EXAMINING THEIR KILL are Marines of the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion who shot the 400 pound tiger after it injured one of their members at Fire Support Base Alpine, about six miles from the Laotian Border. It was believed to be the same tiger which had killed a Marine in the vicinity earlier.



ON HIS BED OF STRAW after a patrol, PFC Billy Jackson of the Twenty-sixth Marine Regt. rests while action is quiet on Operation Bold Mariner in Quang Ngai Province in 1969.

HUMOR.. A look at the Observer's lighter side during the past 10 years

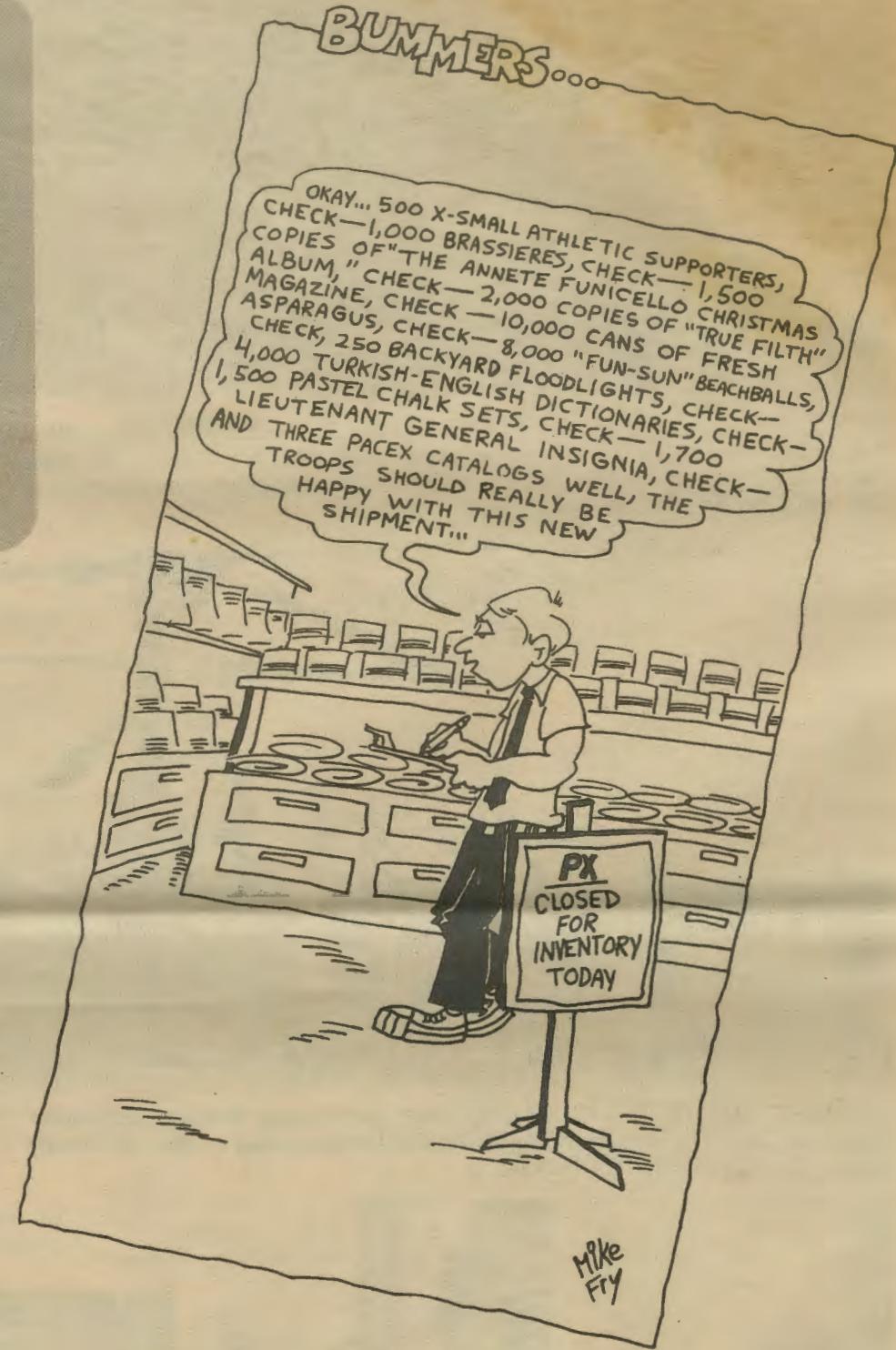
GI Jive*

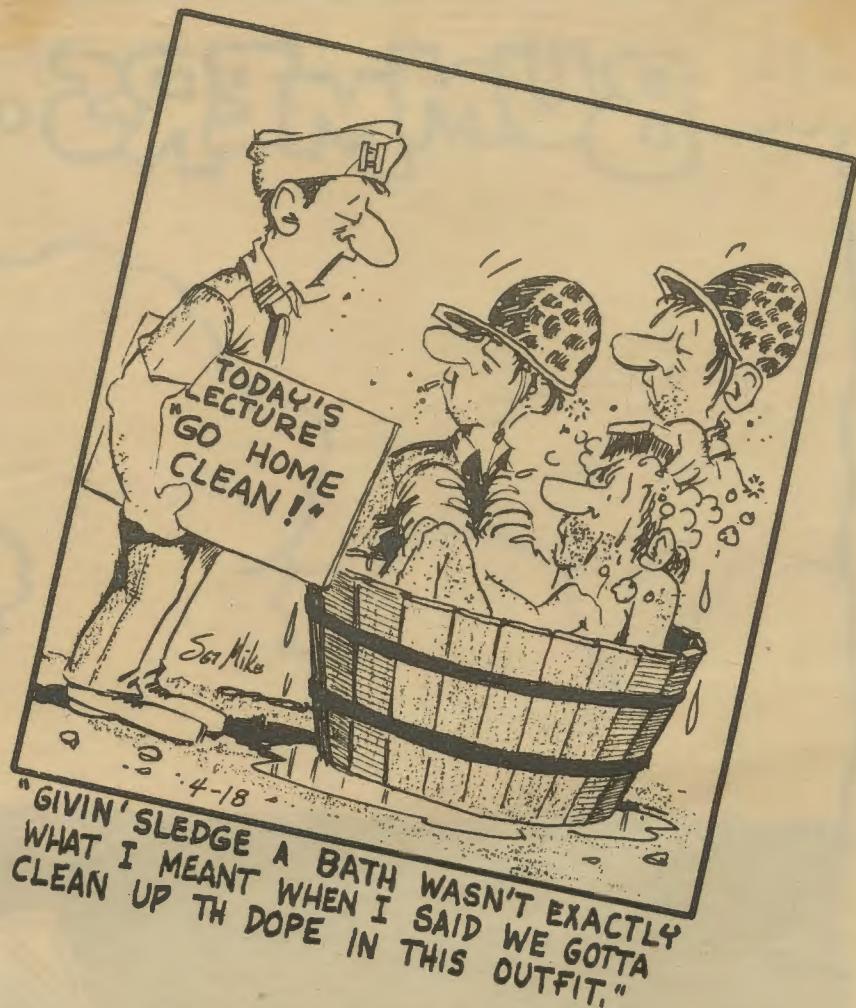
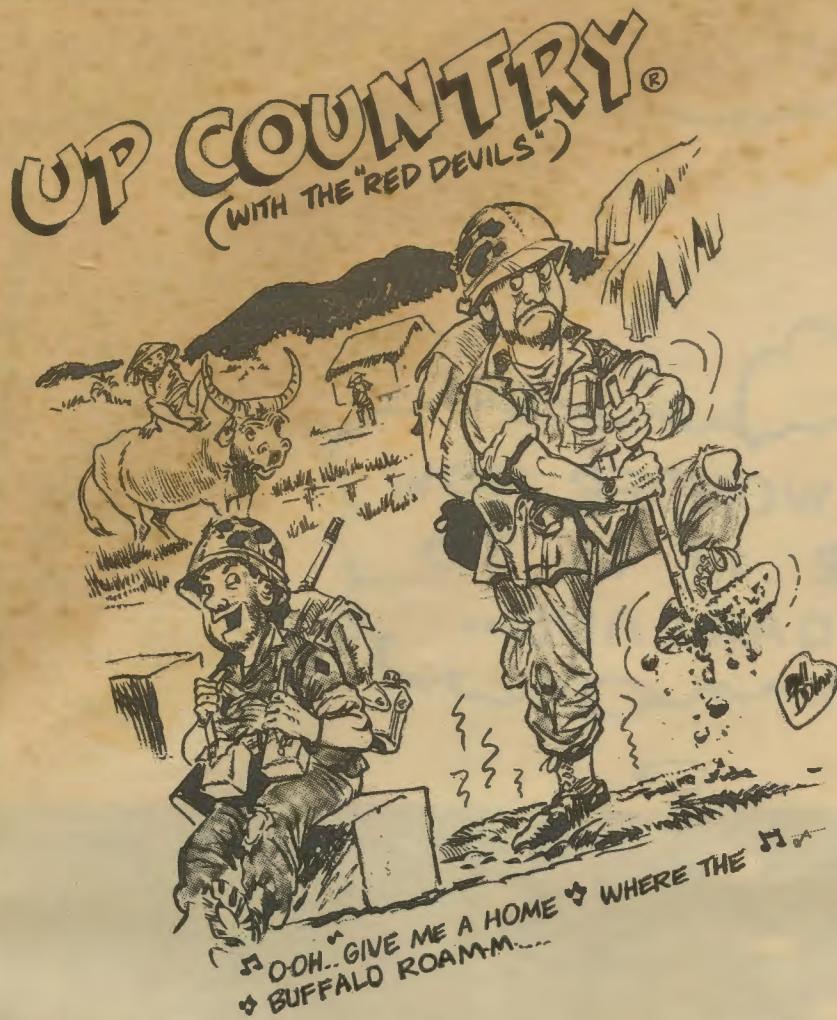
Flag waving is an old American tradition. Chief Warrant Officer James Hoffman added his own day for flag waving — but it wasn't the Stars and Stripes. Hoffman, a Cobra pilot with A Battery, 4th Battalion, 77th Aerial Rocket Artillery, 101st Airborne Division, made a forced landing in Laos while supporting an ARVN unit in heavy contact. Seeing a Medevac ship flying fairly close to where he was, he picked up a piece of red cloth he found lying on the ground and began waving it. But the bird didn't stop. When the enemy fire let up he moved up the hill and reached the ARVN's position. Once back at the main base he remembered the cloth he had waved at the Medevac and pulled it out of his pocket. No wonder the Medevac bird didn't stop. It was an NVA flag.



GI Jive*

First Lieutenant L. E. Wojciechowski, a platoon leader with the 1st Air Cav, was recently jolted out of a sound sleep by one of his men shouting "I've got one!! I've got one!" as he rustled and bumbled about on the ground in the middle of the night. But arriving at the scene of action, all the lieutenant found was PFC Dennis Caforie wrestling with 2Lt Ron Klipfel...no nasty "Charlies" in sight. Seems that the two "newbies" got started in their mistaken identity brawl when a lizard fell on Caforie and crawled up his leg, causing him to poke Klipfel, which led to... well...what probably passes best for a classic case of the "new guy shakes."





GI terminology

Choy Oi, or what's the latest adopted expression?

Vietnam 1961 - 1973

NUMBER TEN: Bottom of the scale of 1 thru 10. Used to describe people, places, action or things.

SAIGON TEA: Expensive liquid refreshment (non-alcoholic) purchased for beautiful, talented young ladies in places of amusement by rich, virile young Americans.

CHEAP CHARLIE: Rich, virile young American who won't purchase Saigon Tea.

"P": Piaster, local money.

DINKY DAU: Dien Cai Dau. Crazy, usually used in expression, "You Dinky Dau."

DI DI MAU: Verb "to go." Used to express desire to go, for some one else to go, or to tell some one to go.

FREEDOM BIRD: Aircraft for R&R or DEROS.

BA ME BA: Ba Muoi Ba: "33." Local beer.

MPC: Abbreviation for military payment certificate used in lieu of US "Greenbacks" in-country.

BUFFIE: Big, Ugly, Fat, Funny (?) Elephants. Term to describe locally made ceramic elephants sold as souvenirs to unsuspecting Americans.

CYCLO: Three-wheeled motor bike for hire. Passengers ride in ferris wheel seat forward of driver. Drivers are known to be former Kamikaze pilots, stunt men and/or ex-jalopy derby drivers with suicidal inclinations.

FRONT LOADER: A cyclo.

WORLD: That portion of the earth excluding Vietnam.

364 and a Wakeup: Number of days remaining to be served by newly arrived man in Vietnam on the day of arrival.

SHORT: Term to describe individual who has less time to serve in country than the other persons present during a particular conversation.

NEWBY: Most recently arrived person in group described above.

CAN DO EASY: Term to indicate that the request can be fulfilled.

NO CAN DO: Term to indicate the request cannot be fulfilled under any circumstances.

DISNEYLAND EAST: Affectionate term for HQS MACV.

XIN LOI: "I'm sorry" or "Too Bad."

SORRY 'BOUT THAT: Expression indicating there is no way to get your request fulfilled and there is no other person to help.

ROUND EYE: American, Australian or European girl.

DONUT DOLLY: Round eyes employed by Red Cross. Great morale builders and dispensers of smiles, warmth and friendliness to Grunts.

GRUNT: Field soldier.

SAIGON COMMANDOS: Rear echelon soldier. Opposite of Grunt.

HUMP: To cross hills, swamps, jungles or rice paddies as was the habit of grunts.

CLAYMORE: Directional explosive mine used by friendly and enemy troops.

ARVN: Army of the Republic of Vietnam, or term to indicate individual Vietnamese soldier.

COWBOY: Local thugs who prey upon soldiers for extortion or robbery. Usually mounted on motorbikes.

HONDA HONEY: Girls of questionable virtue, often seen on the rear of a motor bike.

UP TIGHT: In military jargon an expression which means the unit, plan or whatever is completely ready.

NO SWEAT, GI: Same as Can Do Easy above.

NUOC MAM: Fermented fish sauce of indescribable aroma used on rice, or with meat by Vietnamese. Believed to be used as after shave lotion by GI's who "go native."

CHI COM: Short term applied to any weapon or equipment manufactured by Chinese Communist.

BRING SMOKE: The act of someone energetically and personally demanding immediate corrective action by another individual.

SOC MAU: (Sac mau) to hit, used in expressions such as "I soc mau you, Cheap Charlie"

P-38: GI can opener M1938

BOONIES: Areas where grunts operate.

100 P ALLEY: Areas where Saigon Commandos operated.

CHOY OI! (TROI OI) expression of surprise, wonderment, or pleasure.

TURTLE: Newby assigned to replace one who is short.

TI TI: Small, little.

HO CHI MINH'S REVENGE: Diarrhea

TWO DIGIT MIDGET: One who has 99 or less days to serve in country.

SINGLE DIGIT MIDGET: One who has nine or less days to serve in country.

SINGLE DIGIT FIDGETS: Nervousness on the part of a single digit midget.

TONKIN GULF YACHT CLUB: US Navy Seventh Fleet.

CHOP CHOP: To eat.

LATERITE: Red Clay found in many regions of Vietnam. Has consistency and adhesive quality of flour paste when wet and of concrete when dry.

LZ: Landing Zone for helicopters.

HOT LZ: Landing Zone which is under enemy fire used in air assault

INDIAN COUNTRY: Areas in which enemy troops are to be found.

FINI: The end, or that's all, or to stop activity.

BUMMERS...

I WONDER HOW
FAR IT IS TO
OAKLAND...



Mike
Fry

THE LAST MAN
TO LEAVE VIETNAM---