

HAWK

AUGUST 1969





1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

HAWK

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VOLUME II

NUMBER 12



3/17 Air Cav.p. 2



U-21p. 12



145th CAB.p. 17

CH-47 'Chinook' recovers a downed slick. Photo by 1LT William C. Bayne

Door Gunner silhouetted against gathering darkness over Saigon. Photo by SP5 Joseph H. Whinnery.

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Feature stories, photographs and art work of general interest to 1st Aviation Brigade personnel are invited. Write HAWK Magazine, Information Office, 1st Aviation Brigade, APO 96384.

EDITORIAL

"SHORT!"

This is an expression you have heard since the first day you arrived in Vietnam. Now or in the not too distant future you will qualify to use that magic word, signifying the end of a tour in RVN and the return home to a life of normalcy.

It's a great feeling to be short. But don't be short in the sense of shortsighted. You have served a year or longer and have cause to be proud that you answered your country's call. Even though you may ETS when you return to the States and have fulfilled your active military obligation you still have an obligation to your country.

Our society at home is in need of the stabilizing factor which you, as a Vietnam veteran, represent. Because you have served honorably while so many have not, you will be expected to serve as an example to those who are as yet undecided as to their own course of action. You will be looked up to as a source of strength in the midst of weakness.

The time of irresponsibility is over for you. It was over the day you took the oath and entered the Army. You have served with honor and you will be called upon to serve with honor again. And, as before, you must not hesitate.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chaplain (CPT) Clarence M. Brooks

7/17 Air Cavalry Squadron



How can a man return to the States unmarked by his tour in Vietnam? He cannot because a steady diet of war leaves powder burns on a man's conscience. A man who has served a year geared toward "kill or be killed" cannot help but be marked.

As this man returns to the states he must also return to a "non-war" status. One day he sees man as an enemy to be killed, the next as a man whose life is to be honored. How does a man keep a balance? The answer is in compassion.

Compassion is the fine line between human awareness and the animal life. Contrary to popular opinion a man with a compassionate heart is not one who withdraws from death and hurt in life, but he is the only man who can remain a man while being involved with death and hurt.

A spark of compassion in a soldier is that ability to dislike the end results of war and death, and still do his job. Compassion in war is often the thin line between sanity and madness. It is a naive person who thinks life can be without war, but it is a good thought.

And it is a person in great danger who thinks he can come through a war intact without compassion.

Where does such compassion come from? Jesus Christ!

from the CAREER COUNSELOR

Army aviation is today playing a vital role in the defense of our country. In Southeast Asia, along the demilitarized zone of Korea, in Europe and other far-flung bes-tions, Army aviation is in the fore-front.

One of the many highly technical courses in the Army aviation field is that of ATC Ground Approach (GCA) Specialist or 93J20.

Training for this important MOS begins at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., where navigational aids, FAA flight rules and air traffic control are learned in an extensive 18-week course.

The course provides the student with a working knowledge of basic air traffic rules, traffic control procedures, communications operating procedures, flight assistance procedures and other important aspects of the Army's Air Traffic Control System.

If the GCA Specialist is assigned to Vietnam, he is given an additional four weeks of training at the 165th Aviation Group's GCA Radar School located at Long Thanh. There he receives an orientation to Vietnam and training with the AN/TPN-18 radar set which is used almost exclusively in RVN.

The Army considers men in this MOS so valuable that they have assigned them a Variable Reenlistment Bonus (VRB) multiplier of four, the highest VRB multiplier available at this time. They are also authorized proficiency pay in the category P-4, also the highest authorized.

For details on prerequisites for reenlisting for this and other highly skilled MOS's see your Army career counselor.

Remember it's your future, your decision. Stay Army.



Looking For Trouble...

3/17 Air Cavalry Squadron

Story and Photos by SP4 David R. Wood



Members of the "Silver Spur's" aero-rifle platoon question the inhabitants of a hootch with interpretation by Vietnamese National Police.

Sunday dawned just like any other day in the Republic of South Vietnam for the men of "C" Troop, 3rd Armored Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry at Di An. A day like all the rest. Waiting for 'Charlie' to start trouble.

Mission of the day: develop a tactical situation. The aero-rifle platoon of the 3/17 would be inserted to sweep an area north of Cu Chi for the 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

Some of the men of the aero-rifle platoon were writing letters home while others were catching a few more minutes of sleep.

"SADDLE UP!"

Instantly the men came to their feet. Pistol belts were fastened snugly, M-16's were locked and loaded, the machine gunner adjusted his M-60 on his shoulder, the medic secured his satchel and the RTO fought, as always, to balance his field radio on his back.

The men hustled to the pick-up zone where their ship designations would be given. Three UH-1H 'slicks' settled to the ground to pick up their payload, 26 infantrymen of the 1st Aviation Brigade. The

ships were airborne within minutes.

The three slicks were accompanied by a Command and Control (C&C) ship, and a Hunter-Killer Team of one OH-6A Light Observation Helicopter (LOH) and one AH-1G HueyCobra. The LOH flew low over the jungle floor and marked his target approximately 10 kilometers north of Cu Chi where a system of suspected enemy bunkers had been located.

Before the violet smoke of the grenade could clear, the men were on the ground. After the last helicopter departed, an estimated platoon size VC force opened fire from bunkers with light weapons fire.

Before the enemy bunkers could be quieted two more Hunter-Killer teams were brought in for suppressive fire.

The 3rd Armored Squadron, 17 Air Cavalry, one of the three air cavalry squadrons in the 1st Aviation Brigade, provides direct support to several units in III Corps.

Headquartered at Di An, the "Red Horse" squadron, commanded by LTC John B. Fitch, consists of four Troops. Also located at Di An is "A" Troop, better known as "Silver Spur," and "C" Troop or "Charlie Horse" commanded by Major Harold L. Smith and Major Billy J. Slusher, respectively. Major Willard D. Conklin commands "B" Troop at Dong Tam. Finally "D" Troop, the "Hatchet Force" or ground troop, is located in Bien Hoa and is commanded by Captain William C. White, Jr.

"D" Troop is known as the "Hatchet Force" because it is strictly a combat cavalry organization. It is completely ground and air mobile and is used as a guard force for the Long Binh and Bien Hoa areas.

The other three troops are unique not only in their composition, but also in the mission that they perform. The three troops are comprised of an aero-rifle platoon, an aero-scout platoon and a weapons platoon.

The aero-rifle platoons are composed of infantrymen assigned specifically to the 1st Aviation Brigade. This alone makes the air cavalry squadron unique from any other unit within the aviation brigade.

The development of the tactical situation described earlier is one of various missions performed by this platoon. Each situation that the aero-rifles are inserted into is different. Because of their extremely small numbers it is dangerous for them to decisively engage the enemy. Their mission is to determine the size of the enemy force and to draw him into taking action. The platoon then withdraws as a reserve force of the unit they are supporting. The platoon then either joins the inserted force or is extracted.

The "Silver Spur's" aero-rifle platoon commander, 1LT Stephen D. Henderson, known affectionately by his men as "Super Grunt," removes his headset and dons his steel pot as his aero-rifles prepare to be inserted on an aerial check point or eagle flight.

The two slicks hover above the jungle floor as the troops dismount.

Inhabitants of a series of hootches, the 3/17 aero-rifle platoon was assigned to check out on an 'Eagle Flight' or aerial checkpoint.



Two of the 3/17 Kit Carson Scouts take a breather while RTO calls in for instructions.

LT Henderson motions his men to move up to a rice paddy dike about 50 meters to their front. Their destination, four inhabited hootches, is reached within a matter of minutes.

Henderson moves his men around the hootches forming a defensive perimeter. Two Vietnamese National Police or Vietnamese Rangers used as interpreters, question the inhabitants. Their identification papers and reasons for being in the area are cleared. The hootches





LOH of the 3/17 flies low over rice dikes and paddies searching for signs of the enemy.

are thoroughly searched for enemy fire arms. Lt. Henderson is satisfied and moves his men back to the LZ. A yellow smoke is popped signifying that his troops are ready for extraction.

Another mission of the aero-rifle platoon is completed. An aerial check point or eagle flight is simply a spot check on groups of populace. If a suspected enemy were ever found, he would be taken to the headquarters of the particular unit the platoon was working for and further investigated.

The "Silver Spurs" work in direct combat support of the Capital Military Assistance Command (CMAC) and the units under this command. This command covers primarily the Saigon area.

The Bien Hoa Tactical Area (BTAC) is directly supported by "Charlie Horse" Troop. This troop also supports units in the Tay Ninh, Cu Chi, Xuan Loc, Black Horse and Dau Tieng areas. The Dong Tam area is directly supported by "B" Troop.

Another mission for the aero-rifles of the 3/17 is the seizure of caches. After the men have confirmed an enemy cache, a defense perimeter is set up around it. One

squad is used to inventory the cache and prepare it for extraction. After the extraction of the cache is complete, the aero-rifles perform a sweep of the area in visual reconnaissance and are then extracted.

The operation for Monday was an aerial check point for the rifles of the "Silver Spurs." Two slicks were airborne under cover of one LOH and two HueyCobras. Destination was approximately 10 miles east of Saigon, an island situated in the middle of the Dong Nai River.

Before the destination could be reached, the C&C ship was notified

that a Cobra had gone down somewhere between Di An and the destination island. The mission abruptly changed from an aerial check point to the locating and securing of that downed aircraft.

Neatly placed within the jungle canopy, the aircraft was spotted. The slicks inserted their rifles and a defense perimeter was formed around the Cobra. Within minutes, APC's from the Royal Thai Volunteer Force aided the aero-rifles in their perimeter defense. A call was made for a CH-47 'Chinook' to extract the downed Cobra as the two injured pilots were evacuated.

Without the "eyes and ears" of the air cavalry troop, the aero-rifle platoons could not function. The aeroscout platoons are the "eyes and ears" for the three troops the "Red Horse" squadron.

The mission of the aero-scout platoon is to gather intelligence. It is employed to find and fix the enemy and, when possible, destroy or assist in the destruction of the enemy.

The success of the air cavalry concept is dependent upon the proper use of the scout capability. The scout, a LOH, is responsible for reporting accurately, concisely and thoroughly any and all information which may affect any aspect of the mission.

The weapons platoon for the

A slick of the 3/17 carries elements of the aero-rifle platoon on a mission high over III Corps Tactical Zone.



"Red Horse" squadron supplies fire support for the aero-rifles and areo-scouts with what is known as a Light Fire Team. If the rifles do make contact with the enemy, light fire team of two Cobras is called in to lay down suppressive fire until the reserve force can be inserted or the rifles extracted. This platoon performs two other missions as well.

One operation is that of the Hunter-Killer Teams. One LOH plays the part of the hunter. The killer is played by the Cobra. The LOH is deployed to fly low over the jungle floor as the Cobra flies at a higher altitude above it. The hunter's role is to draw enemy fire. If this does occur, the Cobra rolls in directing his fire to that position. "To date this mission has been quite successful with many confirmed kills," says Captain Robert H. Howard, "C" Troop rifle platoon commander.

This platoon also flies a night Fire Fly mission in the Tay Ninh



Members of the aero-rifle team pack up in preparation for the days mission.

province area. This mission employs three aircraft; two UH-1H helicopters, one mounted with a search light and the other with miniguns and .50 caliber machine guns, and

one Cobra fully armed. For maximum success of the operation, coordination among the three ships is essential.

There is one additional aspect that has made the "Red Horse" squadron unique from any other Air Cavalry squadron within the aviation brigade; that is the use of Kit Carson Scouts.

In May, the squadron acquired 18 Kit Carson Scouts from the 1st Infantry Division. These men came from the National Chieu Hoi Center in Saigon as Hoi Chanhs. Previously they had been active either as VC or NVA regulars.

Before joining the 3/17, they participated in a one-week orientation on American weapons and tactics. Five scouts were then sent to each of the three aero-rifle platoons. The remaining three were sent to "D" Troop.

The mission of the Kit Carson Scouts is to aid the rifles in finding enemy activity because of their first-hand knowledge of enemy tactics. The results of their mission has been quite significant to the operation of the aero-rifle platoons.

The "Silver Spurs" were recently awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.



AH-1G HueyCobra rolls in with rockets after enemy movement was spotted by LOH scout.

NEWSLETTER

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY HAS ANNOUNCED the following campaign designations for service in the Republic of Vietnam.

The Seventh Campaign is terminated as of June 30, 1968, and designated "Vietnam Counteroffensive Phase IV."

The Eighth Campaign is designated "Vietnam Counteroffensive Phase V." It extends from July 1, 1968 to November 1, 1968.

The Ninth Campaign is designated commencing November 2, 1968. The name of this campaign and the termination date will be determined at a later date.

All members of the U.S. Army who are serving or who have served in the Republic of Vietnam and contiguous water or air space in accordance with paragraph 74.2, AR 672-5-1 are authorized to wear a battle star on the Vietnam service ribbon for service in Vietnam during the periods of the designated campaigns listed above. (ANF)

ARE YOU COOKING THOSE LATE-NIGHT steaks on a captured VC cooking stove? If so, that stove can be instrumental in helping the Cam Ranh Bay Air Base Museum to get started.

A vacant quonset hut at the air base was recently turned into a museum. The renovation of the hut features an Oriental front into the multi-colored building. The exterior is complete, but a museum is not a museum until its interior is complete.

Personnel at Cam Ranh Bay have experienced difficulty in obtaining enemy equipment and have requested assistance from the 1st Aviation Brigade. Any material in the form of captured enemy equipment such as uniforms, weapons, and other equipment used by the VC/NVA will be accepted. Units contributing such material will be given appropriate recognition for all items given.

Transportation of contributed material can be arranged by contacting Major Charles W. Quattlebaum, Assistant G-2, 1st Avn. Bde., telephone Long Binh 2622.

HIGH FLIERS

Awards of the Silver Star and higher for the period 4 May 1969 through 20 June 1969.

First Lieutenant Michael L. Willsey, 175th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

Specialist Four Thomas N. Stowell, 117th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

*Chief Warrant Officer Carl M. Creal, 118th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

*Warrant Officer Richard L. Turley, 7/17 Air Cavalry Squadron.

*Captain Robert C. Boucher, 7/1 Air Cavalry Squadron.

*Warrant Officer James M. Gilbert, 3/17 Air Cavalry Squadron.

*Specialist Four Mark J. Hansen, 7/1 Air Cavalry Squadron.

Captain Thomas P. Stempky, 189th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

Specialist Five Joseph L. Pullen, 195th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

Specialist Four Richard B. McNees, 195th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

Captain Charles T. Daily, 189th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

Chief Warrant Officer Millard C. Rushing, 195th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

Chief Warrant Office Vernon D. Tortello, 195th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

Captain Edward W. Thomas, 7/1 Air Cavalry Squadron.

Warrant Office Jerry W. Marshall, 195th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

First Lieutenant Hill W. Stancil, 195th Aviation Company (Ambl).

First Lieutenant Hill W. Stancil, 195th Aviation Company (Ambl).

First Lieutenant John Birmingham, 195th Aviation Company (Ambl Lt).

Chief Warrant Officer Waldo H. Price, 7/1 Air Cavalry Squadron.

*Major Robert W. Arnold, 334th Aviation Company (Aerial Wpns).

Warrant Officer David P. Samuels, 135th Aviation Company (Aslt Hel).

Warrant Officer John W. O'Neill, 135th Aviation Company (Aslt Hel).

*Private First Class Richard J. Sigworth, 7/17 Air Cavalry Squadron.

*Specials Four Paul E. Goonan, 129th Aviation Company (Aslt Hel).

*Warrant Officer Kenneth E. Witmer, 129th Aviation Company (Aslt Hel).

Captain Dennis J. Marvicsin, 3/17 Air Cavalry Squadron.

Major William H. Overholser, 240th Assault Helicopter Company.

*Posthumous

HAWK HONEY



Gwen Wong
Photo Courtesy
Playboy

COMPLACENCY OR SAFETY?

CW2 J.A. Suarez
7/1 Air Cavalry Squadron

The basic principles learned at flight school concerning aircraft attitude apply to both contact and instrument flying. Reference to the tip path plane in VFR conditions, whether in level flight, takeoff or landing, facilitates maneuvering and sharpens accuracy, but the biggest reward is safety.

Utilization of the tip path plane as reference to control aircraft attitude provides the pilot the added advantage of avoiding a mid air by keeping his head out of the cockpit.

The pilot at the controls is in fact the pilot in command during that portion of the flight. A fast cross check of the instrument panel, followed by *division of attention* to see what is up front, above, below and to the sides of the flight path will prevent mid airs. Obviously, radio tuning duties and voice communications should be reserved for your counterpart.

The challenge and response method "clear right and below", "clear left and overhead" as applicable or "clear tail boom right" if a pedal turn is executed at a hover, stresses safety as the most important aspect of flight. This is the attitude of a professional pilot.

This habitual performance will pay off in a high density traffic area. But let us not be complacent and use caution only when in the vicinity of a busy terminal or during marginal weather. Mid airs, as you well know, have occurred in excellent weather and far away from crowded airspace. Complacency was no doubt a contributing factor.

In God we trust, but remember, check everything else!

THE GOLDEN HAWK

(Tribute to the 1st Aviation Brigade which "The Golden Hawk" symbolizes.)

Lost in the sun she hovers, eyes on

The earth,

Her whirring wings dim blurs

Against the blue.

With vigilance she scans the

Jungled land

And eyes each river bend that

Curls beneath...

Defender of the skies, and in her

Talons

Reposes strength to strike a lurking

Foe.

Swiftly she darts, awesome in her

Power,

Engaging those whose dedicated
aim

Denies its freedom to a peopled

Land

That dreams of peace and equal

Rights for all.

Golden Hawk she is, who seeks no

Gain

But that a nation may fulfill its

Dream.

Queen of the skies, yielding to none

Her place

From which she wings, a guardian

Of the peace!

—Chaplain (LTC)

Paul K. McAfee

Brigade Chaplain

FLYER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

1. I am an American flying man. I am entrusted with the technical maintenance and mechanical operation of 1st Aviation Brigade Aircraft. I will fulfill these responsibilities to the best of my ability and training.
2. I am responsible for the life and welfare of the aircrews and passengers who ride my aircraft. I will perform the highest quality pre-flight inspection and follow all regulations to assure the safety of each flight.
3. I will allow no personal consideration or desire to affect performance of duty. I will remember that a crew as a team is no stronger than its weakest member. I will endeavor to be a crewman of sound technical training and good moral character.
4. I will keep my tools and equipment in top condition. I will remember that a clean aircraft is a well maintained aircraft, and a clean crew a good crew.
5. I will keep both myself and my flying machine within the flight envelope. I will never push my aircraft beyond its capabilities, nor will I perform my duties when my own mental or physical condition could lead to maintenance or pilot error.
6. I pledge perpetual loyalty and faithfulness to my God, my country, my fellow-airmen, and myself. I will do everything possible to ensure the success of each mission and the safe return of the aircraft.



ABOUT VIETNAM

Nha Trang



City of Nha Trang on the South China Sea 200 miles north of Saigon.

The high, hot tropical sun beats down on sunbathers along the sandy beaches of the South China Sea. Palm trees sway to the gentle breeze off the refreshing crystal ocean. The smell of salt air mingled with sun tan oil is sharp and brings back memories of home.

This scene could have taken place in the Virgin or Bahama Islands, but it is a familiar one right here in Vietnam as well. The beaches of Nha Trang, home of the 17th Combat Aviation Group, 1st Aviation Brigade, are famous throughout Vietnam.

The busy Duong Duy Tan (Beach Road) carries traffic along its two lanes under tall trees out of the city to the south. The highway, bordered by IFFV Headquarters, gives an excellent view to the west of the mountains and Hon Tre



Island to the east. Covered with thick vegetation, Hon Tre houses a fishing village and AFVN-TV which broadcasts from the tall rocky island peak in the bay to central Vietnam.

To the north is located a large Buddha built in 1964. A temple at the base of the hill encloses carvings, statues and paintings of the Buddhist religion. Yellow robed monks pay homage to a large golden Buddha in the adjacent wooden temple surrounded by artwork, flowers and fruit. Long concrete stars lead to the giant Buddha guarded by two colorful dragons at the base of the steps.

The view from the hill is unobscured giving a view over the entire city and surrounding area. The mountains encircling Nha Trang cast a rugged yet dynamic beauty to complement the waters of the bay.

Also to the north is the serene fishing village of Ca-Loa on the picturesque Song-Cai river filled with fishing boats returned from their night anchorage in the bay. Skilled boat makers and repairmen work dilligently to keep the wooden fishing boats ship-shape.

Medical research is carried out in the Louis Pasteur Institute, founded in Nha Trang in 1895 by Dr. Alexander Yershin, a French doctor who discovered the cause of Bubonic Plague.

The French have left their mark on Nha Trang in the form of gourmet foods. The open air Hostelleria La Fregate is the equal of fine dining locations throughout the world. Such sea food dishes as lobster or a local dish known at "Cha Ghia," make dining a pleasure after a day sightseeing or on the beach.

Just 200 miles from Saigon, Nha Trang takes on all the worldliness of resort areas around the globe. It is an experience—not just a city.



A pilot's Dream...



U-21

Swiftly, the small two-engine green and white airplane hummed down the short runway and leaped into the air, climbing rapidly, banking and darting off on course to a distant military base. The entire sequence took only a few moments.

The airplane is the military mating of Beech Aircraft's "KingAir" and "QueenAir" models, a twin propjet turbine powered, low

wing, all metal transport known to the military as the U-21A, "Ute." The "Ute" combines the larger cabin of the "QueenAir" with the wings and engines of the "KingAir" to give the best possible performance needed by the Army for its newest utility transport.

Two Pratt and Whitney PT6-20 turbine power plants producing 550 shaft horsepower speed the

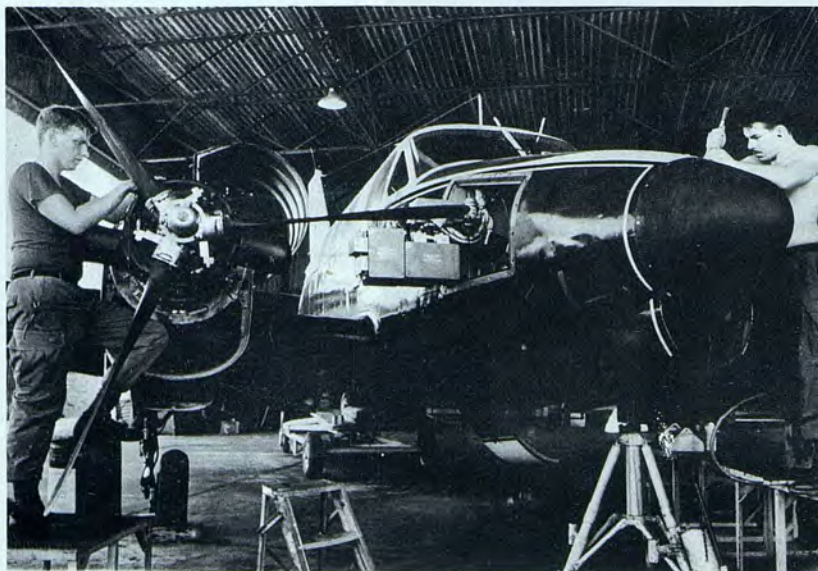
"Ute" to a maximum speed of 208 knots, cruise speed of 180 knots. Hartzell 3-blade, constant speed, fully featherable props may be reversed to reduce ground roll during short field operations and for use in maneuvering.

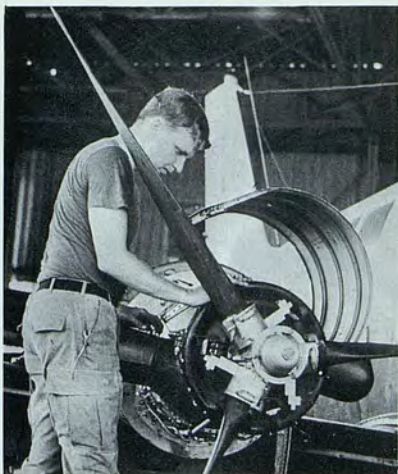
The U-21, with a crew of two is capable of carrying a gross weight of 9650 pounds of supplies and equipment, 10 combat-ready troops which can be air dropped, can be used as an ambulance ship for six patients and attendants or can carry eight passengers in staff use. Empty weight for the stripped cargo version is 5379 pounds and 5523 pounds for staff use with forward facing airline type seats.

An all-weather radar set (AN/APN-158) in addition to omni, TACAN, ODF, glidescope, VHF, FM and HF navigation aids and radios enable the "Ute" to fly day or night, in all types of weather. It is flown around the clock transporting supplies, commanders and passengers in weather that ranges from perfect VFR to near zero visibility during the monsoons.

Although not needed in Vietnam, the U-21 is equipped with deicing and anti-icing systems built in the airfoils (wing and stabilizers) and

Maintenance is important on the U-21 as two mechanics from the 201 CAC pull PM on the craft.





Mechanic pulls maintenance on one of the turbo prop engines of the U-21.

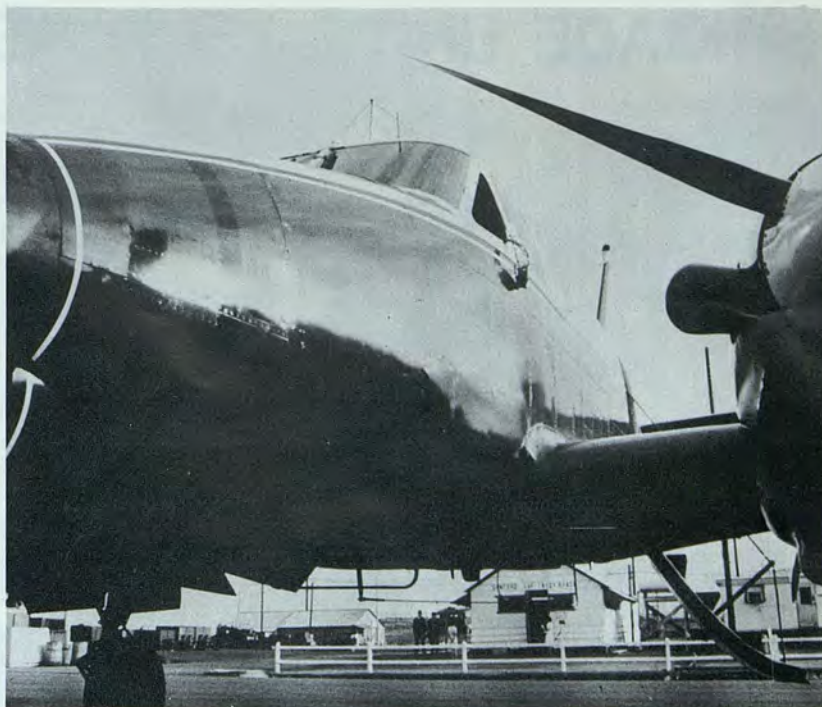
**Story and Photos by
SP5 Joseph F. Whinnery**

in the propeller blades making it possible to fly in sleet, snow and extreme cold. It is the Army's only light transport equipped with these refinements.

The craft is sleek and fast and according to CW3 Elmer Cook, Springfield, Va., pilot for 1st Aviation Brigade Commanding General Allen M. Burdett, Jr., "It's a pilot's dream. It has just about everything in navigation equipment in it but a ground speed indicator. The allweather radar is an outstanding feature which makes the Ute 21 a joy to fly in any weather."

"It's the most reliable and versatile twin engine airplane I've flown," commented Major George Kraus, Louisville, Ky., operations officer for the 201st Command Airplane Company, Nha Trang. "It's at home on short strips as well as 10,000 foot runways."

During TET 1968, ammunition was flown into Ban Me Thout, in U-21's of the 201st CAC. One ship took seven hits but kept flying. For cargo runs the troop seats are folded against the wall and upright seats removed. The regular cabin entrance is built into a large cargo door and cargo tiedown rings are



Sleek lines of the "Ute" are attractive as well as functional.

standard equipment.

Troops, cargo or high-ranking passengers, the U-21 can handle them all with ease. Whether on

short unimproved strips or modern concrete runways, the "Ute" is easy to handle, a pleasure to fly and a pilot's dream.

Landing, the U-21 shows a grace unequalled by any other Army transport.



BRIGADE UNITS LEND HELPING HAND

Thai Lac

Story and Photos by
SP5 Joseph F. Whinnery

The American soldier has long been known, not only as a ferocious fighter, but also as a compassionate human being when confronted with the suffering of others. The image of the dusty, battle-weary G.I. happily making friends with children is one that was born in the France of World War I, grew up on the battlefields of Italy in World War II and matured in the hills of Korea in the early 1950's.

Now in the Vietnam war the image lives again. And in this war the natural compassion becomes an important ingredient to success. For in Vietnam it is not enough to win militarily. This is a war in which the hearts and minds of the people are of utmost importance rather than the pieces of property over which other wars have been fought.

On the following pages are stories of two civic action programs which sprang from the soldier's desire to help the people better their living conditions and provide for them some of the things that a battle-torn country cannot. For the most part the men involved do not realize that they are actively helping the war effort. They are only conscious of the smiles, the looks of delight in the children's eyes and the knowledge that they have brought a hint of happiness to a people whose lives have been led in the darkness of fear.

Fifteen years ago a large contingent of North Vietnamese fled their village to begin a long journey in search of freedom. They left their bereft homeland shortly after the Geneva Accords divided Vietnam in two and the Communists gained control of the North.

They traveled south for more than 900 miles, a trek which began 50 miles south of Hanoi, to the Duc Hoa area here in South Vietnam where they settled in hopes of finding peace. Shortly thereafter, the Viet Cong drove them out and they moved to the Saigon area and then to Tay Ninh province. Once again harassment drove them to move and they settled in Xuan Loc only to find that the VC were there also. Finally today they have settled permanently in Bien Hoa province, 12 miles from the American base at Long Binh.

They have vowed not to be driven out again.

The village, originally known as Xua Lac, Village of the Happy House, is now called Thai Lac, Village of the Happy Peace. The majority of the population of 700 people, 120 families, work as masons, carpenters and laborers at nearby military bases. They are quite poor, but fiercely loyal to the anti-communist government of South Vietnam. They provide their own perimeter defense.

During their journey south, the village priest became the central figure in the all-Catholic village. The present leader is Father Tran Quang Vu.

The 210th Aviation Battalion (Combat), 1st Aviation Brigade, learned of this village last February and undertook a program of assistance to the people of Thai Lac. Several visits were made with food and clothing before LTC Carl C. Johnson, commanding



LTC Schouman helps a Vietnamese boy tie up his balloon.



Children of Thai Lac crowd around Chaplain Furfey.

Blowing up a balloon is the same in any language as this Vietnamese youngster can testify.



Children crowd around as toys from America are about to be unloaded.

officer of the 210th and Chaplain (CPT) Joseph A. Furfey sent an appeal to St. Genevieve's Parish in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Chaplain Furfey was parish priest at St. Genevieve's and in addition, ran the parochial school as well as acting as moderator of the Christian Family Movement.

The parent-less children and the men, separated from all family, formed a strong comradeship. The newly adopted "Big Brothers" saw to it that none of the children were neglected.

By way of saying "thank you" the 100 children, and Sisters who accompanied them, presented a program of Vietnamese songs, dances and skits.

As the day ended, Sister Sussanah, the Mother Superior of Bethany Orphanage, remarked to the men, "you have made the children very happy, for many days."



Happily comparing toys, the children of the Village of the Happy Peace are as excited as children everywhere with new toys.



Three of the children of Thai Lac display happy smiles and a coloring book from America.

HAWK



Chaplain Furfey talks with Father Vu and a young seminarian.

Bethany Orphanage

When the children of St. Genevieve's heard of the need of the children of Thai Lac, they collected, packed and mailed 54 cartons of clothing, baby vitamins and toys. The postage was raised by selling cakes and cookies to the parishioners after Mass on Sundays. The 54 cartons represented about half the total collected. The rest of the clothing will be mailed when postage money is raised.

The officers and men of the 210th Aviation Battalion (Combat) delivered and helped distribute the toys and clothing assisted by men of the Command Airplane Company from Long Thanh, commanded by LTC Hazen D. Schouman.

A Village traveled more than 900 miles to find peace and found it. And children from more than 10,000 miles away worked to make that peace a happy one for Thai Lac, the Village of the Happy Peace.

The men of the 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, located at Di An, first heard of the Bethany Orphanage from Chaplain (CPT) James L. Bryan, the Squadron Chaplain. A few of the more interested soldiers went with him to deliver food, clothing and other needed items to the orphanage at Ho Nai Village in Bien Hoa province.

The men have shown enough interest to donate \$1000 for a new school building and to help out with decorations for a past Christmas party.

But food, clothing and money covered only the material necessities. There was one more thing the men needed to give—themselves. And it was not long before they answered the call.

In February and March, the squadron heard of a water shortage at the orphanage. After surveying the problem at the village, the "Cavalrymen" acquired a 500-gallon water tank for the orphanage's use. While installing the tank, many of the men from the squadron came into contact with the Vietnamese children for the first time, and saw that there were



Sister Sussanah has her picture taken in a LOH with one of the orphans from Bethany.



Children from the Bethany Orphanage are given a tour of Huey Cobra.



Each child from Bethany had his or her picture taken as pilot of 3/17 helicopter.

things money and gifts could not buy.

Chaplain Bryan was suddenly swamped with requests for permission to accompany him on his weekly "food run" to the orphanage. It was not long before visitors to the orphanage generated enough interest and enthusiasm among men who had not gone and a move was started to have the entire orphanage visit the squadron for lunch and a party.

The men at Di An began a series of meetings with key personnel to let the children know how the squadron felt like "adopted parents." The visit was arranged and with the assistance of the Transportation Motor Pool, Long Binh, buses were dispatched to bring the children to Di An.

Even though the missions of the squadron had to be maintained during the day, the men were determined to show the children a good time.

Headquarters and Headquarters Troop decorated their area in carnival fashion with "side show" attractions; there were clowns and "supermen", dart games, apple bobbing and Bingo. A Troop prepared the largest welcome cake ever seen in Vietnam. C Troop took the children on a ground tour of various helicopters and saw to it that each of the young "Aviators" received a picture of himself piloting his "own" aircraft.

Always First...



145th Combat Aviation Battalion

Tucked inside the South perimeter of the sprawling Bien Hoa Air Force base is a much-decorated battalion of soldiers with a combat mission that carries them through all areas of III Corps.

Members of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion lay proud claim to being "First in Vietnam," tracing their history back to Sept. 24, 1963. Since then they have grown to a 1,300 member force, supporting three divisions of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and doing heavy damage to enemy elements in diverse parts of the country.

The "Old Warriors" of the 145th perform such wide-ranging operations as inserting ARVN troops into trouble spots, destroying sampans on the Dong Nai River, airlifting supplies and training pilots of the Vietnamese Air Force in jet-powered hovercraft.

The battalion commanded by LTC John J. Top, is a part of the

12th Combat Aviation Group and II Field Force Vietnam. It is composed of four combat companies, all operating out of busy Spartan Airfield at Bien Hoa.

Operations in the battalion works around the clock, coordinating missions with the allies and with higher levels of command.

Every day, two companies put their Huey "slicks" in the air for combat assaults. Another company carries out "attack" missions exclusively.

The oldest member of the Old Warriors is the 118th Assault Helicopter Company, commanded by Maj. John A. Britton. The "Thunderbirds" were a part of the 145th when it was formed in 1963 out of the 45th Transportation Battalion. The bread-and-butter craft of that day was the CH-21C cargo helicopter.

Other combat companies are the 68th AHC "Top Tigers," com-

manded by Maj. Thomas C. Moody; the 190th AHC "Spartans," commanded by Maj. Hershell B. Murray, and the 334th Aerial Weapons Co. "Sabers," commanded by Maj. John H. Oliver.

The 68th AHC joined the battalion in March, 1964. That same year, the Old Warriors became the first Army unit in Vietnam to fly the UH-1B Huey.

Another "first" for the battalion came on Oct. 22, 1967, when the 334th AWC flew the first Cobra (AH-1G) mission in Vietnam.

The 334th was formed in September, 1966 as an armed helicopter company, taking over the assets of the 197th AHC. Its designation was changed to Aerial Weapons Company after the Cobra was put into operation.

The "Sabers" are unique in the battalion. They fly the "Fire Fly" missions at night, using two Cobra



"Top Tiger" mechanics pull maintenance on slick of the 58th AHC.

gunships and a slick equipped with searchlights to patrol the river. Any sampan that moves is a sitting duck for minigun and rocket fire.

Other missions of the 334th include support of Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols, "people sniffers" and emergency standbys.

The other three companies alternate on combat assault "lifts" and direct combat support missions. The "lift" is the basic operation of the battalion. All the assets of the Huey—its quickness, carrying ability, range and firepower—are used to

make insertions of friendly troops into potential hot spots.

Commanders of the 5th, 18th and 25th ARVN divisions initiate requests daily to III Corps for aviation support. After II Field Force clears the request, it comes down to the battalion.

A typical combat assault is comprised of nine lift ships, UH-1D or UH-1H Hueys. These slicks are capable of carrying a crew of four and up to eight or nine fully equipped ARVN's. Along with the formation is a lead gunship, which

Story and Photos by SP5 Joseph F. Whinnery

lays a protective cover of smoke in the landing zone, and the command and control ship, which carries both the American and Allied advisors for the mission.

After receiving an order, the formation flies in to pick up the troops. The area is marked by a smoke grenade and the ARVN's are already broken up in groups. As quickly as they can board, the formation takes off for the LZ, which may be from 100 yards to 100 miles away.

Quick deployment is the key in inserting troops. Since the cover provided by the smoke ship is effective for only a few seconds, all slicks must land, the men must deploy and the choppers must fly off again in a minimum amount of time. As soon as one lift is accomplished, it is time to start another.

Direct combat support missions, another staple of battalion operations, may take many different forms. The quota is 12 missions per day, with two gunships supplied to each of the three ARVN divisions and two more used for III Corps staff missions. A basic DCS

ARVN troops signal a farewell to "Old Warrior" slicks after ride to the LZ.





ARVN troops scurry to board slicks after completion of their mission.



Troop slick comes in low over rice paddies of the Delta for pick up of ARVN troops.

mission is "pigs and rice," in which supplies are airlifted to combat troops.

Integrated into the combat program of the 145th is the training of Vietnam Air Force pilots, whose flight experience is usually limited to piston-powered craft.

The transition course usually takes three months for lieutenants, who study maintenance and operations procedures in the classroom

and then get at least 150 hours of training in the air. They leave Bien Hoa as fully qualified Huey pilots.

Transition training isn't limited to the VNAF's, however. Since most of the new pilots in the battalion are green warrant officers with no combat experience, those newcomers must be broken in as co-pilots for 300-500 hours before graduating to status as an aircraft

commander. Most novices soon branch out from lift ships and also qualify in gunships and Cobras.

The Old Warriors are proud of their "firsts" and of the numerous awards they have received during almost six years as a unit. At various times they have received Distinguished, Valorous and Meritorious Unit Citations. They have been awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with palm three times.

ARVN troops hurry out of slicks of the 145th CAB to meet the enemy.





LONG BINH, Vietnam—On the occasion of the 1st Aviation Brigade's 3d Anniversary, members of the staff were assembled at Brigade Headquarters here for organizational day activities. Front row (1 to r) LTC W. H. Pierce, AG; LTC W. C. Chamberlain, G-3; COL J. B. Williams, outgoing CofS; COL W. C. Boehm, DBC; BG A. M. Burdett, Jr., CG; COL G. E. Handley, Jr., CofS; LTC W. C. Walker, G-4; LTC G. R. Crook, G-1; and CSM

G. E. Owens, Bde CSM. Back row (1 to r) LTC G. M. Okraski, LRO; MAJ C. L. Ward, Surg; 1LT D. J. Franus, Hist; LTC E. T. Arndt, Sig; MAJ A. B. Lyles, SGS; 1LT W. A. Hale, Aide; CPT J. H. Raudy, I. O.; LTC W. E. Ledgerwood, Saf; Chap (LTC) P. K. McAfee, Bde Chap; CPT R. A. Johnson, HHC CO; 1SGT W. M. McConnell, HHC 1SGT, and C W4 M. B. James, Cdr, Bde Flt Sec.

— The Judge Says —

Two major laws—new “G.I. Bills”—have extended a wide range of benefits to veterans of military service who have served since 31 January 1955. These are Vietnam era provisions and provide benefits to eligible veterans similar to those granted the Korean conflict veteran.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE: The new laws provide benefits for both veterans and members presently in service. A *veteran* becomes eligible for educational assistance if he had at least 181 days’ continuous active duty, any part of which occurred after 31 January 1955, or was released from active duty after 31 January 1955 for a service connected disability. A person *in service* becomes eligible if he has served on active duty for at least two years, 181 days of which must be continuous active duty. Each eligible person may select a program of education, an apprenticeship, on-the-job training, farm or flight training at any approved educational institution which will retain him as a student. This applies to any field or branch of knowledge or vocation which the individual is qualified to undertake.

For each month a serviceman spends on active duty, the Veteran’s Administration will provide assistance for 1½ months of schooling or vocational training, up to a maximum of 48 months. Payments range \$130 a month and up (for full time study). Payments at a reduced rate for part-time study are also available.

A special provision in the law allows a veteran pursuing high school training after release from active duty to receive an educational assistance allowance without a charge against his basic entitlement. This additional entitlement is provided in order to qualify veterans for admission to an approved institution of higher learning. This program also applies to those veterans who must pursue additional secondary school training such as refresher courses or deficiency courses needed to qualify for admission to an appropriate educational institution.

Restrictions are few in the new G. I. Bills, however, there are several worth noting. The educational allowance is not payable in some instances if the veteran is also enrolled in a course paid for by the United States Government under the provisions of another law. This restriction is to prevent the duplication of benefits from the Federal Treasury. Also, a change of program may not be approved for a veteran where his original program has been interrupted or discontinued by his own misconduct, neglect or lack of application. Further, any course which is vocational or recreational in nature may not be approved unless the veteran shows that the course will be of bona fide use in his present or contemplated business or occupation.

LOAN AND LOAN GUARANTY BENEFITS: A major benefit for eligible veterans is the privilege of securing financing under a liberal credit system for a variety of purposes. A veteran is eligible for loan guaranty benefits if he had at least 181 days’ continuous active duty, any part of which occurred after 31 January 1955. Persons on active duty at least two years, even though not discharged, are eligible while their service continues without breaks.

A G. I. Loan is actually a loan from a private lending institution such as a bank, savings and loan association, insurance company or mortgage company. The amount of the loan is usually limited only by the serviceman’s or veteran’s ability to repay, and in most cases there is little or no down-payment. The VA will guarantee the loan up to a certain percentage, and thus effectively increase the Individual’s “credit-rating” with the particular lending institution by guaranteeing repayment of that percentage of the loan. Of course, loan benefits are not a gift, and if the VA loses money because the loan is not paid as agreed, such loss will be a debt the veteran or serviceman owes the government.

Loan Guaranty Benefits may be for the purpose of purchasing homes; to make alterations, repairs or improvements in homes already owned and occupied; to purchase farms or farm supplies or equipment; to obtain farm working capital, and refinancing certain delinquent indebtedness.

In certain rural areas, small cities and towns where private financing is not available, VA may make a direct loan from government funds.

Generally, the basic advantages of a G. I. loan include the receipt of a more favorable interest rate than is available on other types of loans; longer term mortgages, and permission to repay all or part of the loan at any time without premium or fee.

The VA and your lender will assist you at all times with devising the plan best suitable to your needs. Don’t hesitate to ask for assistance whenever you feel it is needed. Much more detailed information on G. I. loans can be obtained by contacting the nearest VA Office and asking for VA Pamphlets 26-4, 26-5 and 26-6.

