

HAWK



FEBRUARY 1970

HAWK MAGAZINE salutes

17th Aviation Group (Cbt)



Formed in Saigon on December 15, 1965, the 17th Aviation Group (Cbt) transferred to Nha Trang in March 1966. The Group's name, "Freedom's Eagles," denotes the 17th's participation in numerous actions in Vietnam, the latest of which was staged in the Ban Me Thuot—Pleiku areas.

From October through December 1969, companies of the 17th Group combined and coordinated their efforts in a single operation, with a single goal. Hueys, Chinooks, Cobras, and Skycranes worked together from one operations center to support the isolated firebases and ground operations in this area near the Cambodian border. Using the characteristics of the different helicopters to the utmost degree, the 17th Group operations sent skyward from 40 to 50 ships each day to do a job that could be done only by aviation.

Three companies, doing three different jobs at the same time, worked together on the same re-supply mission to efficiently and successfully complete the task. This is the sort of cooperation and teamwork that was necessary in an operation of the immense scale that was staged out of Ban Me Thuot, and the professional attitudes and capable personnel of the 17th Group provided nothing less.

HAWK



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FRONT COVER:

The new addition to the Chinook family, the "Super C," accomplishes a feat previously impossible for the CH-47's. This "Shrimp Boat" CH-47C is not only lifting a 155mm Howitzer, but also two heavy sling loads. HAWK photo by SP5 Richard M. Emerson

BACK COVER:

An OV-1 Mohawk of the 225th Aviation Company (Surveillance Airplane) patrols the skies of II Corps. The specially equipped aircraft has the capability of detecting the enemy at night. Photo by SP5 Gordon C. Darragh



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EDITORIAL

THE ADVANTAGES OF EXTENDING

If you are looking forward to that DROS date but not an accompanying ETS, you might consider the benefits derived from extending your tour in Vietnam. The Army has made available many provisions designed to entice the Vietnam veteran to remain where he is needed.

More money, due to overseas pay and hostile fire pay, is received in addition to normal military earnings. Since income tax is not a problem for the military man in Vietnam, his real earnings are boosted even further.

A second R&R is available for those extending between three and six months. A 30-day special leave, non-chargeable to normal accrued leave, is available to anyone extending six months or more. Free round-trip transportation is provided to anywhere in the Free World.

If one extends long enough so that he returns to the States with 150 days or less before his normal release date, he will be released from active duty.

A soldier can obtain a specific duty assignment in a unit in Vietnam if he agrees to extend and the unit accepts him as qualified for a vacancy. In this instance a person is not committed to extend unless he actually gains the desired assignment.

The Army needs experienced men in Vietnam; why not take a good look at what the Army is offering you to stay?

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

**Chaplain (LTC) David F. Tate
HQ 17th Aviation Group (Cbt)**

What is your mainstay of reading while you are here in Vietnam? Are you strictly a "girlie" magazine type reader?

While we are here in Vietnam, we really have more time on our hands than we care to admit. Many hours are frittered away just doing nothing and time which could be used to advance our minds is lost. When we sit down to read, it is much more pleasurable to pick up a light magazine than discipline ourselves to do any extensive reading. It does take discipline to read a good book and stay with it. It takes effort and will power!

What do you read? Do you only go to the light reading or is there some reading of substance in your time off? Reading of books can give you an insight into other people's problems and their means to overcome them. Reading can give you an opportunity to relive the great moments of history. Reading can enlarge your faith as you read the writings of the giants of faith of our time.

If we are honest with ourselves, we recognize that we do have many loose hours to study and advance if we so desire! The question is, where does your ambition drive you? No where! You must decide what will be your future—the future is in your hands!

Recognize that God has given us but one opportunity to walk this earth—use it wisely and to the benefit of others.

from the

CAREER

COUNSELOR

Often a young soldier in the Army only sees the "bad points" about Army life. Inducted unwillingly, he never gives the Army a chance—until it is too late. So let's take a look at your future, Army vs. civilian.

The Army needs experienced men. Today it costs more than \$5,000 just to train a raw recruit to hold a rifle, learn a few basic Army drills and hopefully defend our country.

The Army realizes, however, that something must be offered to each man, something more than a flag-waving parade. For instance, in 1966 the Variable Reenlistment Bonus was established. Men with critical skills are now offered an opportunity to receive up to \$10,000—depending on their MOS, years of service and pay grade. Also available (together with the VRB) is the overseas area you want. Europe, the Far East—practically any place in the world you want to go—and your initial assignment is guaranteed.

But the Army offers more than just a bonus and overseas area. Quarters, food, medical care, clothing, 30-day vacation and even retirement after 20 years (without contributing to a fund) are other benefits given to every soldier.

If a civilian employer can provide you with the above benefits plus the satisfaction of serving your own great country and defending the freedom of the entire world, the U.S. Army is not for you.

But if the answer is "NO," see your career counselor today! He holds the ticket to your success. He can inform you of the many choices open to you at reenlistment.



The Army's List of Famed Battles Is Lengthened by One.

“Freedom’s Eagles” at Bu Prang

Twenty-five years ago, on December 19, 1944, Brigadier General Anthony C. McAuliffe was given the order: “Hold Bastogne.” And so began one of the most important battles of World War II. It was no secret that the enemy needed Bastogne and the entrance it afforded to a wider complex of roads leading west.

Here in Vietnam, two and one-

half decades later, a sector in the II Corps Tactical Zone has come under heavy attack. This enemy wants the sector just as badly as the Germans wanted Bastogne.

Since late October, the “hot-test” area in II Corps Tactical Zone has been in the Dar Lac-Quang Duc sector of the western Central Highlands. Located in this sector are such encampments as

Bu Prang, Mike Smith, Duc Lap, Dory and Volcano. These bases stand in the way of enemy supply routes from Cambodia and are therefore a major threat to the communist aggression in the south.

The responsibility of aviation support in the area is assigned to the 155th Aviation Company “Stagecoaches” at Ban Me Thuot. When mortar and rocket attacks

Choppers provide Bu Prang's sole means of supply.



Crane lifts “cat” over Bu Prang's airstrip.





361st "Snakes" aid in thwarting the month-long assault.

began at Bu Prang in late October, the job of resupply, medevac and low-level reconnaissance outgrew the 155th. Due to the heavy burden, various other companies from the 17th Aviation Group (Combat) were called upon to assist.

During the month-long action at Bu Prang and the surrounding area, Hueys, Cobras, Chinooks, Skycranes, LOHs and Bird Dogs from the 17th's "Freedom's Eagles" were controlled from a consolidated operations center (COC) set up by the 10th Aviation Battalion (Combat) at the home of the 155th. From October 28 to November 30, COC was coordinating a daily average of 24 Hueys, 12 gunships, 9 Chinooks and one Skycrane, all from the 17th CAG. "Freedom's Eagles" choppers flew

5,000 sorties during that time period accumulating 5,300 hours of flight time.

COC continued to control the operation after the enemy action subsided at Bu Prang, such as scheduling a crane to transport a bulldozer to Mike Smith to help dig in for the offensive that they felt certain was imminent, or co-ordinating re-supply by Chinooks and Hueys, or planning escort missions by gunships.

Chinooks from the 179th and 243d Aviation Companies, Skycranes from the 355th Aviation Company, Hueys from the 92nd, 48th, 281st, 170th and 155th Aviation Companies flew daily resupply missions to Bu Prang. Cobras from the 361st Aviation Company flew cover for the resupply, and Bird Dogs from the

185th Aviation Company were invaluable in surveillance and reconnaissance.

"Without the continuous resupply, it would have been impossible to hold for any length of time. They were our sole means of supply. Many times they would drop in their 'hooks' and then set down to pick up casualties," said LTC Franklin W. Collins, of Company B, 5th Special Forces Group at Bu Prang. "Many times the Chinooks and Dustoffs had to be waved off because the risk was too great to set down for a second. The pilots have been great and the 'gutsiest' men I've worked with," he continued.

Frequently what is scheduled to be a routine supply mission ends with the crew risking their lives for the mission's success. There is always an element of danger.

Picture a "Stagecoach" slick from the 155th as it approaches a fire support base (FSB) at 95 knots and 30 feet. Ahead is FSB Mike Smith on top of a knoll in the Duc Lap area. During the dry season, it is one of the dustiest places in Vietnam and during the rainy season, one of the most muddy.

The inhabitants of Mike Smith, members of an ARVN regiment, their American advisors and two U.S. artillery batteries, live and work in bunkers, many of them underground. Their mission is to give artillery support to the Duc

Stagecoach slick approaches Mike Smith.



Heavy action forces night-long maintenance.



**Story and Photos by
SP5 Chas'Boots
and
SP4 David R. Wood**

Lap area.

As the chopper sets down outside of the perimeter, a huge cloud of red dust rises and hangs over the area for minutes after it shuts down. The pilots get out and head for the camp. The crew stays with the ship.

The hill on which Mike Smith is located is like all the others in the area. There are no major settlements nearby. A year ago this hill had no strategic value. Now it is the home of American and ARVN artillery units, and a major road-block to enemy supply lines from Cambodia.

The two chopper pilots enter the camp and head for the American command bunker. There they meet with LTC Leo Boucher, 45th ARVN Regiment senior advisor and official coordinator of U.S. forces in the Duc Lap area, and are briefed on the mission that they are to perform—re-supply the outpost on Volcano.

Volcano is similar to any other outpost in the area, except that it is perhaps smaller and definitely "hotter." As soon as the action at Bu Prang subsided, Volcano began taking daily, sometimes hourly, and more often continuous barrages of rocket and mortar rounds.

Vital men and supplies arrive at Bu Prang.



When the call comes, a Dustoff ship responds.

At the other end of Mike Smith, a Chinook makes its approach, hovers, drops off a sling load of supplies, and departs. A truck pulls out of its bunker, loads up and drives across Mike Smith to transfer the supplies to the Stagecoach ship.

On the first mission of the day to Volcano, food and ammunition are dropped. The chopper is on the ground less than 20 seconds. In those few moments, supplies are unloaded and the dead and wounded are loaded to be medevaced from Mike Smith.

In resupplying the "hot" encampment, choppers sometimes fly in under the pounding of rocket and mortar rounds and often are chased out by the same. VC and

NVA gun crews have every square meter of the base zeroed in; and if a chopper pilot keeps his ship on the ground longer than 30 seconds, he is inviting death.

The route out of the Volcano, like the route in, is through enemy territory and is covered by heavy and light machinegun positions. The chopper flies over hills and valleys with continuous cover from above and behind by two Cobra gunships from the 361st "Pink Panthers."

After returning to Mike Smith, in relative quiet and temporary safety, the crew is able to breathe easier. There will be more missions during the day, but they do not think about them. They have made it through this one, and the men on the Volcano have been temporarily sustained.

This was just another mission for the men of the 17th Aviation Group. But to the men on the Volcano, that chopper popping up and over the hill and into their camp meant life. "There are no words to describe the effectiveness of aviation on top of that hill," said LTC Boucher. "The Volcano is no picnic in any way shape or form." The men who fly the helicopter into the Volcano have to be there. They are the life line to every man on the top of that hill.





The War Against Fear

There is another war in Vietnam. Soft brown eyes, shy smiles and silly giggles started it. It is a war of construction—one people showing another that there is much to live for. It is a war against helplessness; a war designed to show the people involved that the future is nothing to fear, that there is a great deal they can do to make their tomorrow better than today. The principal weapons in this war are concern, understanding and generosity.

Members of the 1st Aviation Brigade have done much to help the children of Vietnam. They have donated, constructed, treated, taught and fed in an effort to make the young lives of as many as possible just a little more comfortable, just a little more enjoyable, just a little more meaningful.

Perhaps it is because the aviators miss their own children so much. Perhaps it is because the only peace that can be found in this war-torn land is in the tranquil eyes of the children. Perhaps it is because the children themselves have shown the aviators that the thought of someone caring means so very much.

Whatever the reason for the volunteer work, one thing is certain: the war against helplessness and fear of the future will go on as long as the men of the 1st Aviation Brigade are here to help.

*Tomorrow in his arms
He forgets about today.*

*Tomorrow in his arms
He needs her in every way.*

*A child, a child
New life, new hope, so many fears.*

*A child, a child
Someday no more tears.*

*But now he's there
A quiet man, a gentle touch*

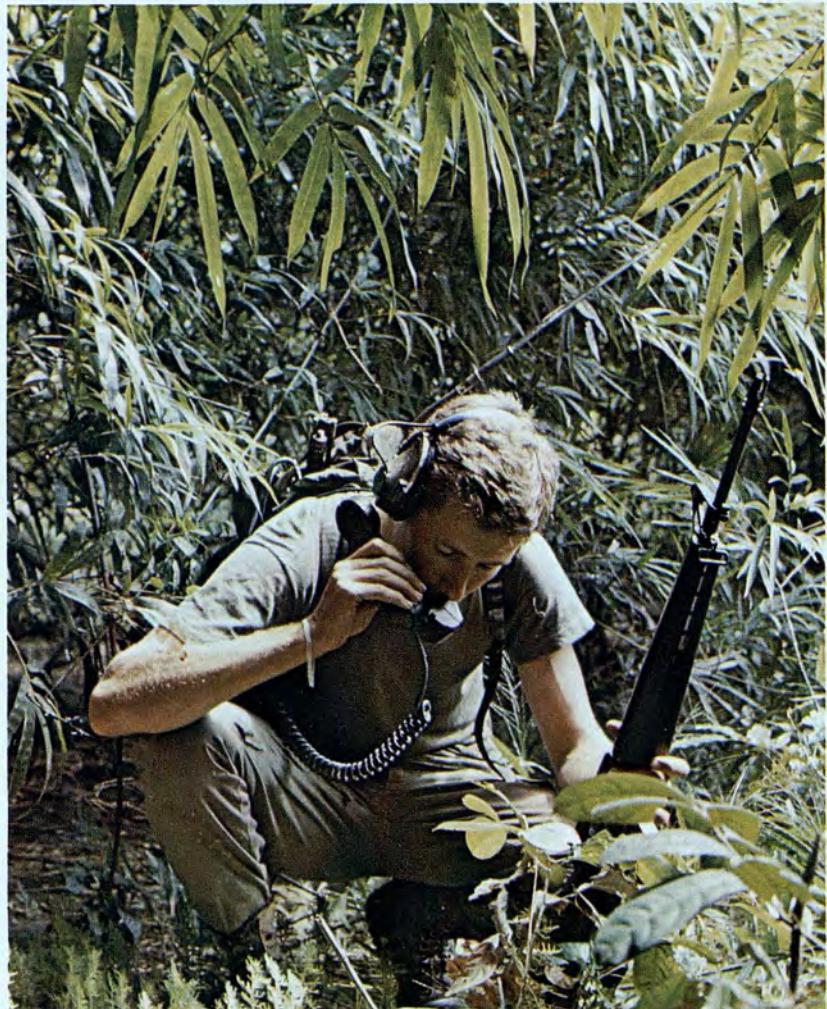
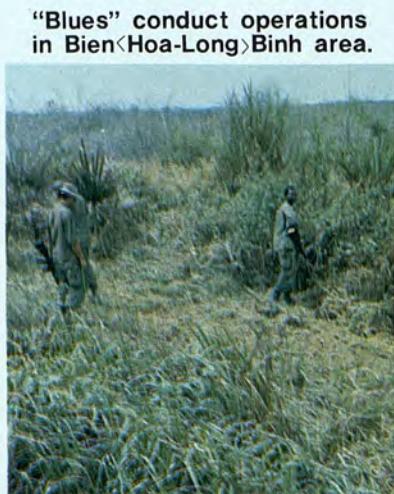
*But now he's there
And she needs him so much.*

Photos by
ILT Gerald W. Rudinsky
and
SP5 Anthony E.
Martinaitis



The Air Cav's Legs

**Delta troop "Blue
Tigers" provide 3/17
Air Cavalry with a
versatile infantry unit.**



Since the dog-fight era of World War I, aviation has always carried a touch of glamor. But for the "Blue Tigers" of D Troop, 3d Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, their job is ironically unglamorous but vitally important to the Long Binh-Bien Hoa area. They are the legs of the air cavalry.

D Troop is a classic military example of the versatility of a ground reconnaissance force. A high level of training and aggressiveness has enabled its men to perform a wide variety of missions. Broad training as cavalry has fitted the Blue Tigers to accomplish every task from

clearing supply routes for the 25th Infantry Division to protecting Long Binh and Bien Hoa from surprise rocket and mortar attack and, more recently, performing as infantry in the jungles of War Zone D.

However, the Blue Tigers were specifically trained for their participation in a wide variety of combat missions in Vietnam. With the build up of U.S. forces in Vietnam, there was a need for a means to gather intelligence as well as increase reconnaissance capabilities which would be immediately available to the field commander. To

**Story and Photos by
SP4 Frederick Hypes**

fulfill these functions, the unit was activated on November 25, 1966, at Ft. Knox, Ky.

How well the Blue Tigers were trained was evident when the unit was sent to Dahlonega, Ga., for five days of practical application of Ranger techniques. D Troop was given a set of tactical problems to solve during modified war games. The Blue Tigers not only solved the problems, but beat the special forces unit at their own game. The men were awarded the Special Forces red beret for their accomplishments in Georgia.

The unit arrived in the Republic of Vietnam in November 1967, and was given more intensive combat training by the 2d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Aside from the familiarization with Viet Cong mines, booby traps, weapons and tactics that they would soon face, the Blue Tigers were trained on all weapons. This training was given in order that they could cope with all situations that might arise during ground reconnaissance operations.

Early in 1968, under MAJ William Lozano, the Blue Tigers participated in OPERATION YELLOWSTONE. Moving from Di An to Tay Ninh, D Troop was assigned the mission of conducting reconnaissance-in-force to the north and west of Tay Ninh. The unit conducted, mounted and dismounted patrols, provided security for artillery base camps, cleared the main supply routes for the 25th Infantry Division and escorted harassed convoys.

The troop's training enabled it to secure highways and supply routes from snipers and booby traps. The unit uncovered many enemy sites and base camps, sniper positions and most of the traps laid by the Viet Cong to sabotage vital supply convoys.



While team members "take ten," a Blue Tiger keeps watch.

Call to overhead Bird Dog marks likely enemy locations.



In 1969, under the new command of CPT William R. Condos Jr., the Blue Tigers proved their worth as a supporting infantry unit. While protecting their own area of operations around the perimeter of Bien Hoa and Long Binh, the cavalrymen were also used as a ready reactionary force for the 75th Infantry Ranger's long range patrols (LRP) when they made contact in the jungles of War Zone D.

While serving as the only unit conducting combat operations in the Bien Hoa-Long Binh area in a recent three-month period, the Blue Tigers were inserted in support of LRP's approximately 50 times.

On one occasion, a D Troop platoon had to cut its way through a stretch of jungle while wearing protective masks. The mission was to recover a cache of CS gas the enemy had been storing for a possible future ground attack in the surrounding area.

While much credit is given to the noted Hunter-Killer teams of the 3d Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, the Blue Tigers continue their unheralded war. It is a war of sweep and ambush, of mud, jungles and elephant grass, stopping an enemy that fights only in small

Three troops await team at rendezvous.



"Blue" and ARVN find time to share humorous story.

guerrilla bands.

To maintain the versatility, the Blue Tigers continue to train in areas that are not presently being used. They will be ready to utilize any one or a number of capabilities

is support of the fast and changing situation of combat.

No matter what the future holds, if skill, precision and leg work are required, the Blue Tigers will answer the call.

"Ground Mobile" does not only mean "humping."



CORNCOB 6

He leaned back and looked through his blue-grey pipe smoke at yesterday. "I've seen America in the raw, men fresh off the college campus with advanced degrees, men from factories and off the farm. I've seen them work together, and I think they're the best Americans to come down the pike in a long time. They have a lousy TV image though."

COL John C. Hughes, 12th Aviation Group commander, emptied his ever present corncob pipe and went on. "Today's soldier is every bit as good as his father; better really. His intellect is better, his health is better, his conduct is better, and his ability far exceeds his father's. And he is every bit as patriotic as his dad, although he's not as demonstrative about it. Today's soldier doesn't need a brass band to meet him at the airport; his reward comes from a deeper personal feeling of knowing that he did his part. He is a real man in every sense."

Over the years, COL Hughes has given away over 8,580 corncob pipes. He uses them as calling cards and rewards. "I like to give them to my soldiers who really show me something," the 12th Aviation Group commander remarked.

The monogrammed pipes are kept in an elephant's foot that a Montagnard tribe gave him during his first tour in Vietnam. The original owner of the foot was a rogue elephant that terrorized the tribe. COL Hughes, hearing of the problem, sent an Army chopper to the scene and ended the animal's reign of terror. The appreciative tribe presented the colonel with the now treasured foot.

"A dear friend of mine, George Buescher, owns a corncob pipe factory in Washington, Mo. Every month or so he sends me a gross just to be sure that I haven't run out."

Some might say there are very few Americans like COL Hughes left today.

"There were six of us kids in the family, and we

COL Hughes offers soldier a corncob pipe.



Photo by CPT Barry Hughes

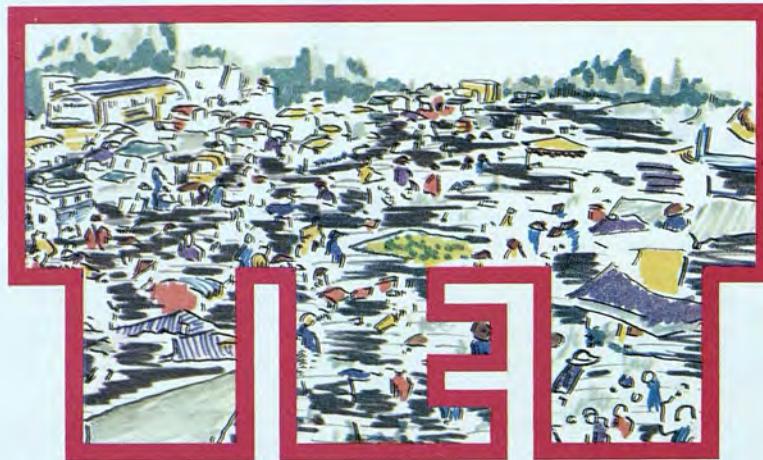
raised three more, for a total of nine. It made little things really count."

Perhaps it was the sharing and closeness that go with large family life that taught COL Hughes the value of human life. "The first time that I lost one of my men in combat, it was a deep personal loss. When a man dies, he leaves behind at least a girlfriend, fiance or wife; and this in itself is a tremendous loss. He also leaves behind parents, and brothers and sisters. There's just no way to describe the hardships involved in all of this. I know... I lost my son over here in April of 1967."

COL Hughes has been in the Army 27 years. He started out as a Signal Corps private in October 1942. He saw action as an infantry officer in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Several years ago, COL Hughes realized the importance of the helicopter. In May 1961, he received his aviator wings after completing flight school at Ft. Rucker, Ala. "With helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft used in the environment of the ground soldier, you can multiply your operational effectiveness threefold in both peacetime and war."

COL Hughes has been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross on two occasions, the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Commendation Medal and the Air Medal with 11 Oak Leaf Clusters. He wears five Purple Hearts, along with the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Parachutist Badge. He also holds a masters degree in Business Administration from George Washington University.

During his career as an Army officer, he has met many leaders. "The man I respect most is the one who can take care of the men and the mission, both with equal priority," he says. COL John C. Hughes, 12th Aviation Group commander, is certainly that kind of man.



FESTIVAL OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR

BY PHAM GIA THINH

In a time of peace TET used to last for three months, filling the gap between the end of the harvest season in the eleventh month and the beginning of rice planting in the third month. During that time, the farmer had little work and much time for celebrating. At the present time, however, in most of Vietnam TET lasts for only three days.

Preparations For TET

Although TET does not officially begin until the first day of the first month of the lunar year, preparations for it begin as early as the 23rd of the last month of the year with a ceremony to bid farewell to "Ong Tao" or the kitchen gods. According to legends, these gods are to report what happened in each family during the past year to the Jade Emperor. The gods will not return until the new year. Thus, the ceremony marks the closing of the preceding year and leaves the rest of the time for the preparations for the new year.

Businessmen make their balance sheet and complete their transactions. It is not customary to begin any important project or start any new business during the last days of the year. This is the time to

Families shop for good luck blossoms.



pay debts and settle all problems so that the way is clear for a clean new start after TET.

Much time is spent adorning and shining the family altar, for that is the sacred place that the ancestors will be invited to share with the rest of the family. For the holidays, it is believed that all ancestors are allowed to leave the world below and come to earth during these three and a half days which include the afternoon of New Year's Eve and the first three days of TET.

Flowers of the season are narcissus, chrysanthemum, peach and apricot blossoms. To have flowers in the house on TET is just as important to the Vietnamese as it is for the American to have a Christmas tree on Christmas. They give the house an air of festivity and abundance. The favorite flowers for TET are the delicate white narcissus, or Thuy Tien, which are considered the symbol of purity and beauty. The tending of a narcissus plant requires much experience for trimming the plant bulb in such a way as to have the flowers half open on New Year's Eve.

In the country-side and often in pagodas, a tall bamboo pole is seen in the front yard. Perched on top of the pole is a symbol representing Buddha, and a lantern, lighting the way for the ancestors to come. At the foot of the pole a large chess board and a bow and arrow are drawn in white lime. The pole is aimed at keeping evil spirits away from the area.

Among other preparations, there should be a good supply of cooked food so that members of the family are free to celebrate the holiday. The early preparation is also necessary because markets are closed during the first three days of TET. The family will be fed on Banh Chung (glutinous rice cakes), onion pickles, salted meat, fish, and preserved fruits.

TET's Eve

Then comes the solemn moment of the year: TET's Eve. The evening includes copious feasts: one is offered on the altar to invite ancestral spirits to spend the holiday with the family. The other is for the family, their chance to say goodbye to the old year and to welcome in the new one. After the initial prayer, the man of the house will set off firecrackers to celebrate the beginning of the new year at twelve o'clock and also frighten off bad spirits. During the first three days, firecrackers are exploded on several occasions: to signal such events as the first visitor, important visitors and the first trip of the family. The wealthier the family, the more firecrackers they explode.

Much importance is placed upon the first visitor of the new year, for which everyone is dressed in new clothes. In many families, arrangements are made with a trusted and honorable friend, usually a male, to come and be the first visitor.

The lady of the house usually answers the door, and the guest gives her his best wishes to the family for the coming year. Other families are more daring . . . they leave the matter of the first visitor to chance. The quality of this visitor will act as an indication of the good or bad fortune which will be with the family for the year.

No matter who the visitor is, however, he is expected to give the customary greetings: wishes for larger income, expansion of business, more children, happiness and health. He is also expected to give the children of the house a small sum of one piaster notes.

When the first visitor has left, the children gather before their parents and grand parents to wish them longevity, health and happiness. The elders congratulate their descendants for being a year older and give them some money wrapped in red envelopes. Though the gift is token, it comes from old people who are loved and respected, so the money is kept very preciously because it is believed that it will bring good luck and prosperity. When children can earn their own living, they, in turn, present their parents with a gift of money, but in this case the sum should not be token, but substantial.

Visiting or Visited

The members of the family then make arrangements so that some stay home to receive visitors while others go out. The first trip is also very important. Prior consultations should be made as to the direction that will bring the most benevolent consequences for the new year.

Generally people go to the pagoda or to church to pray for luck, grace and for an oracle. Then comes the round of visits to parents, employers and friends.

The wishes are those that meet the intimate longings of a person: a girl is wished a speedy marriage, a married couple is wished a son (but never a daughter), and an elder is wished more grandchildren.

It is also a customary practice to write something on the first day of TET . . . a poem or a letter . . . for a piece written in this good mood is believed to set the pattern for the whole year.

It is in the countryside that the real setting and the special flavor can be observed, not only because the peasants still keep with the old traditions but they still believe deeply in the renewal of things with the coming of TET and spring.

For all people, TET is the only time of the year when everything should be taken in abundance. There should be plenty to eat and drink. This is an important feature. So much so that Vietnamese people speak of eating TET instead of enjoying TET. Entertainment is provided everywhere, both in public and private. There are banquets, chess matches, gambling games, cock fights, unicorn and dragon dances and many other contests.

In the city, TET generally ends on the fourth day, but in some families it may go on until the seventh day. There is a ceremony offered at the altar to bid farewell to the ancestral spirit. Shops begin to open and people go back to their daily routine.

The bamboo pole is taken down on the seventh day and this officially marks the end of TET. But for a number of people in the countryside where they observe virtually no other holidays, TET may last for several more weeks.

TET's Meaning

TET is a religious feast in which people express their prayers and worship for their saints, gods and ancestors.

TET is a social occasion because it offers the opportunities for a number of public and private gatherings. There are friends who for years have been seeing each other only on the occasion of TET.

TET also is the birthday for everyone, because old or young, no matter when they were born, all age one year at TET. The tone of the season is embellished by this latter fact since age always deserves respect and admiration from the youth.

Finally, because of the Vietnamese belief in astrology, the life of each individual is governed by stars which change every year. TET brings hope for everybody that the change will work for the better: the ill hope for a better state of health, the poor hope to become richer, and the wealthy hope to become more powerful. Everybody tries to be kind and generous to everybody. It is not surprising, therefore, that it is an eagerly anticipated holiday celebrated with heartfelt joy.

IT was just over a year ago that COL Frank Borman sat in the command module near the top of Appolo 8 as it thundered with 7.5 million pounds of thrust against the surface of the earth. COL Borman and his crew embarked on a mission which, among other firsts, saw them orbit the moon ten times, eight of which were within 70 miles of that sphere. The total distance traveled by the Apollo 8 on her mission was 590,000 miles.

Since that historic journey, COL Borman has been assigned the position of Field Director of the NASA Space Station Task Group. The job requires much traveling, but one of his longest trips since his moon flight was to visit American troops in the Republic of South Vietnam.

He shook hands and talked informally with the members of the 1st Aviation Brigade and other soldiers throughout Vietnam. "I came over here to thank all of you for the contribution you are making to world stability and to America," he said.

He visited with three units of the 222nd Aviation Battalion (Combat): the 195th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter), the 117th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter), and the 273d Aviation Company (Heavy Helicopter).

The space veteran explained how his trip to Vietnam came about. "I was describing the thrust power of the engines and this sort of thing to President Nixon during a recent launch at Cape Kennedy. Suddenly he turned to me and said, 'Frank, have you ever been to Vietnam?' And here I am today."

It was Christmas time, 1968, when astronauts Frank Borman, James Lovell and William Anders began their six-day voyage into outer space. It was the first time that men had been launched into space by the Saturn V, America's most powerful machine. It was also the first time that men had sped at nearly 25,000 miles an hour, as Apollo 8 hurled itself from orbit of the Earth into flight toward the moon.

The recent moon landings were made possible because of the successful Apollo 8 mission. Command pilot Borman and his crew proved that the spacecraft and its rocket vehicle could someday land man on another planet.

Everywhere COL Borman went during his ten-day December stay in Vietnam, he had the same sincere message, "This is one of the greatest experiences of my life. There are a lot of people who are behind you in the States. You are doing an outstanding job and you should all be very proud of yourselves."



Astronaut Visits 1st Avn Bde





WING TIPS...

Noting the feverish pace with which most aviation safety officers conduct themselves, one would imagine it was with some fear of job security that they performed their duties. Actually the opposite is true, safety officers would like nothing better than to have the demand for their services cease completely. Although this event is some distance in the future, progress is being made. Our accident rates are going steadily down. Methods of analysis and investigation have improved and we are able to pinpoint accident causes with an accuracy never before equalled. Corrective measures are being applied quicker and with a surer touch than in the past.

Technically improving the methods of accident prevention is part of the answer but not a universal panacea. In many cases, the technical steps have been made but the human factor lags behind; a few examples are worth citing. The nomex flight suit time and time again has proven to be effective protection against the burns caused by post accident fires. Still, we have aviators seriously injured because the nomex was worn by a hanger in a wall locker instead of a crew member in a helicopter. The SPH4 helmet is the champion of cranial security but loses value drastically if it flies off at the moment of impact. The moral of the story—have the SPH4 fitted properly by your Fight Surgeon.

There is another and less complex tool we possess that in recent months seems to have declined in effectiveness. This particular appendage is called the cervical vertebrae or more commonly—Neck. Beside holding the head securely in place, it can be used to effect the visual reconnaissance of a 360 degree circle in a remarkably short period of time. Not only is it beneficial if used by the aircraft commander and pilot, but doubles in effectiveness if practiced by the crew chief and gunner also. Keeping this in mind, we may be able to avoid the "lack of airspace" problems being experienced around POL's. Remember Sciaroni's first law of motion: **A MAIN ROTOR BLADE MEETING AN EQUAL AND SIMILARLY INCLINED ROTOR BLADE BUT IN AN OPPOSING DIRECTION CAUSES AN OPPOSITE, EQUAL AND AWFUL REACTION.**

From a hot humid rice paddy in the delta to the sophisticated teardown and analysis equipment at Corpus Christi Bay, aircraft accidents are analyzed, results catalogued, and human factors charted and reviewed. All this is in the interest of preventing aircraft mishaps. But in the end, the burden of proof rests with each individual aviator—his skill, his judgment, and ability to adapt to the many varied situations encountered by flying in the Republic of Vietnam.



In the Quiet of the Jungle, Stalk...

the "TOP TIGERS"

The quiet of a jungle clearing in III Corps is disturbed by the thumping of rotor blades as a flight of Huey slicks flare out and begin to lower toward the high grass. The peacefulness is shattered by the miniguns and exploding rockets

from Charlie-model gunships providing the slicks with air cover. What was a few minutes before a scene interrupted only by the calls of birds is now a bustling landing zone (LZ). ARVN troops are rapidly moving toward cover. The

gunships buzz low as another element of troops is approaching the zone in a second lift of slicks. If Charlie is in the area, he knows all too well that he is about to be made an unwilling host to the formidable 68th "Top Tiger" Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter).

The 68th AHC supports the 18th and 199th ARVN units. Usually this support is in the form of flying combat assault (CA) missions. Beside supporting these ARVN units, the 68th also keeps busy flying III Corps general support missions.

Whether flying CAs or general support missions, the day begins early for the men of the 68th. Run-up time is at 0530. The crew chief, gunner and pilot check the helicopter and armament one last time before taking off. Then breakfast and take off time at 0730.

*Story by
1LT Peter B. Howson*



**Photos by,
SP5 Chas' Boots**

Areas of operation include everyplace from the northern Mekong Delta region of Tan An to the rugged mountains and dense jungles of Song Be. Landing zones for the CAs vary from minute openings in the jungle, where only one chopper can hover, to large clearings that are able to accommodate the entire assault element. Ships from the "Mustang" gun platoon, commanded by CPT Albert V. Cite, Jr., "prep" the area for the ships from the first lift platoon "Super Heroes," commanded by CPT Tom Walker, and the second lift, the "Feline Fokkers," under the command of CPT Charles H. McKeen. The Mustangs pour in fire from miniguns, M-60 machine guns, and side mounted 2.75 rockets. As the ships from the two lift platoons enter the LZ they also lay down a heavy barrage of M-60 fire. One of the objectives of the 68th during combat assaults is to attain and maintain superior fire power, thereby giving the infantry a chance to establish itself. As the former commanding officer of the 68th, MAJ Thomas G. Moody put it, "We put the enemy's head



Top Tiger slicks give ARVN's a lift to work.

down before he has a chance to return fire."

After the ships touch down in the LZ, it is a matter of seconds before the troops (each helicopter carries 7 to 10 ARVN's with full pack), are out and on the ground, and the helicopters are on the way out of the LZ. Many of the LZs are dangerously treacherous, but

the crews of the 68th, through training and combat experience, are able to adapt to even the most difficult situations with confidence and maturity.

The 68th Top Tigers, commanded by MAJ Luther French and based in Bien Hoa, are from the 145th Aviation Battalion (Combat), "First in Vietnam."

"Offerings" are made of VC rice caches.



ARVN's rapidly deploy in landing zone.



The company's tour began when it arrived in Vung Tau on November 28, 1965, as a part of the first aviation battalion in the country. During June and July 1966, the company moved from Vung Tau to the present location at Bien Hoa.

During a rocket and mortar attack on Bien Hoa Air Base in the 1968 Tet offensive, a breach in the east perimeter of the base was found in the early morning hours. The Mustangs of the 68th were called into action, and due to the quick response by the gunship crews, the enemy action was eliminated within minutes. When the

Like new shoes, new rotor blades must fit right



initial rocket attack ceased, the 68th lift platoons began flying medevac missions to the 93d Medical Evacuation Hospital in Long Binh.

On June 20, 1969, the 68th conducted a combat assault mission in direct support of the 5th ARVN Infantry Division near Song Be City. The mission called for nine slicks and four gunships on five insertions in the morning and five extractions in the afternoon. The flight inserted the ARVN elements in an area suspected to be a Viet Cong stronghold and received light automatic weapons fire. On each of the five extractions, the flight came under intense fire and rocket propelled grenades. Throughout the operation, the crews maintained a calm efficiency in flying and clearing the aircraft through 150 foot trees and large bushes and stumps two to three feet high. Throughout the operation, the gunships delivered accurate and effective fire in and around the landing and pick-up zone areas. On this operation, the Top Tigers displayed their well deserved reputation of professionalism.

A large amount of the success attained in the missions of the 68th

is due to the outstanding effort put forth by the company's operations section and maintenance platoon. CPT Donald E. Stout, Jr. supervises the operations section, which is responsible for preparation and coordination of missions and briefing all crew members prior to take off time. At the end of each day's mission, operations also analyzes all pertinent information relating to that mission.

The Top Tiger maintenance platoon is under the direction of CPT Larry R. Uzzel. The work required of all maintenance personnel never ends as their effort continues 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Despite the heavy work load placed on the maintenance personnel, the platoon keeps at least 80 percent of the company's aircraft flying every day.

The combat assault has become an essential action in today's war in Vietnam. The men of the 68th AHC are professionals at this type of operation and have added much to the concept of teamwork and more, the quick strike operation is being utilized, and as this happens, helicopter companies such as the 68th can only increase in tactical value.

Going home after a day spent chasing Charlie.



Republic of Korea's "Tiger" Division keeps the peace in Binh-Dinh Province of II Corps.

"Courageous, promoter of peace, cunning, tactically one of the most efficient armies in the world;" descriptions of an armed force that has continued to incur a great deal of respect and reputation in the few years of its existence.

Set deep in the heavily vegetated valleys of the Annun Mountain Range, abundant in rice paddies and harsh terrain, is found the area of operation of a Republic of Korea (ROK) Division.

The Capital Division, one of the two Korean Divisions assigned to the Republic of Vietnam, was activated June 20, 1949, in Seoul, Korea; the other being the 9th White Horse Division.

The Capital formerly provided the security for the "Capital City." Thus originated a military entity that would promptly earn its proud nickname, "Tiger Division;" an appropriate designation characterizing its fierce nature.

Engaging in distinguished combat operations from Seoul's Capital Hill to the Kum-Wha area in the Korean War, Tiger Division soon proved its fighting prowess to the world and the communist forces of Red China.

A Tiger emblem is proudly displayed at headquarters.



ROKs

After the signing of the Korean Armistice, the Capital Division continued constant combat readiness to meet any future oppressive action by the communists. August 20, 1965, upon approval of the Republic of Korea, the division once again was designated to halt communist aggression: the location, the Republic of Vietnam.

The landing of troops was completed at Qui Nhon, November 1, 1965. November 15, 1965, the Capital Division accepted their tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) in Binh-Dinh Province, II Corps Tactical Zone, an area occupying more than 1,400 square kilometers. Their mission: to assist the Republic of Vietnam in its pacification program by destroying Viet Cong organization within the area; to protect highways, military installations and facilities; and to

conduct reserve actions as deemed necessary in support of allied operations.

Conducting many successful operations, the total combat result of the Tiger Division since their arrival in RVN reads as follows: enemy killed, 13,100; enemy detained, 3,040; ralliers, 5,250; weapons captured, 7,100; and existing TAOR, 3,600 square kilometers.

A very impressive record indeed. But to understand the success of their many operations, a familiarization of the coordination involved is necessary.

Tiger Division incorporates a very demanding execution of American capabilities in reference to their war effort in Vietnam. Because the division has no warrant officers nor helicopters in their inventory, an extensive amount of support is required from the



Republic of Korea "grunts" patrol their sector.

United States Armed Forces.

In relation to the U.S. Army, Tiger Division receives general aviation support from the 268th Aviation Battalion (Combat).

With the exception of a very few roads in II Corps, the only mode of transportation is by helicopter. The 268th furnishes the rapid reaction and resupply required to support the many operations of the Capital Division and have aptly defended their motto, "NOS STATIM AGIMUS," "We do it immediately."

In accordance with their military operations, the Tiger Division emphasizes a very effective Psyops and Civic Action program. Their mission is to "Foster the Vietnamese minds spiritually rather than materially, display a sincere attitude towards the Vietnamese people and plan and work together with the Vietnamese to promote a spirit of independence and the ability to be self-supporting."

The Division's Civic Action program performs medical treatment and relief for the war refugees and the needy. This includes construction and repair of Vietnamese

facilities and donations of daily necessities: grain, rice, and clothing. To date the Division has constructed 1,165 facilities, consisting of social welfare, religious, educational, industrial and residential buildings. They have treated medically more than 165,000 Vietnamese and delivered well over a million kegs of cereals.

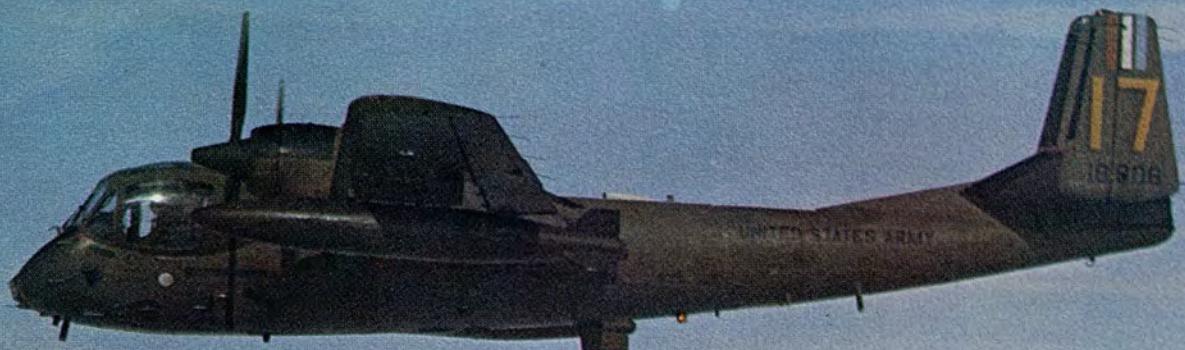
Established at each of the three regiments of the Tiger Division are Vietnamese Popular Forces Train-

ing Centers. Their objective is to promote mutual understanding and cooperation between the Korean instructors and Vietnamese students. The training offered consists of one week of tutoring in courses of individual combat training, immediate action, hamlet defense, ambush, reconnaissance and map reading. During this training, the Vietnamese student receives food, housing and the necessary logistical support. Results have shown that after the duration of one week of training both instructor and student feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in knowing a stronger bond of friendship and knowledge has developed between Korean and Vietnamese.

Tiger Division has stymied the enemy's war effort in Bing-Dinh Province. The Viet Cong know well the Korean's ability to eliminate communist build-up and organization. The Viet Cong are also aware of the professionalism of the Korean soldier and the American aviation and artillery support which is always available to him at a moments notice. Combining these characteristics with Tiger Division's Psyops and Civic Action program, the allied forces have hailed the Capital Division's monumental contribution to the war in Vietnam.

Uphill or down, backpacks do not get any lighter.





I Fly Nights

by CWO Robert L. Jensen

A Phantom Hawk begins low-level run.

Gear in wells, engine gages normal, system power on...the checklist is read off item by item until finally "Mohawk 815" is cleared to depart the 225th Aviation Company (Surveillance Airplane) at Phu Hiep for its mission deep in the Central Highlands of II Corps.

First fuzzy static and then the electrofied voice of a "Phantom Hawk" pilot comes over the radio, "Pigeon, this is Mohawk 815, over."

The pilot is acknowledged, "Mohawk 815, this is Pigeon, go ahead."

Again the pilot's voice, "Pigeon, we are approximately 75 miles



southwest, 8,500 feet, enroute mission area northwest your station, request artillery firing and flight following, over."

Pigeon, the Air Force radar control installation for northern II Corps, answers, "Mohawk 815, we have you on radar contact 73 miles southeast of Pleiku. Negative reported arty enroute of flight."

"Mohawk 815, roger."

Mohawk 815 flies on through the night toward its target area, a small area of land which will be thoroughly checked for enemy activity by the sensing devices carried aboard the Mohawk.

By now one of the many 225th data terminal stations located throughout II Corps has established contact with Mohawk 815 and is prepared to receive the telemetry data transmitted from the Mohawk's sensory systems. The station has the capability of instantaneous readout of the sensings.

The terminals work closely with the aircraft and know its exact location at all times that the sys-



Banking right, a 225th Mohawk heads to photo target area.

tem is on. One variety of mission utilizes infrared sensing devices and is usually flown very low. Because of the low-level techniques, ordinary radar cannot always follow the Mohawks on an infrared mission. But the data terminal stations, by knowing the route their plane is flying, and the length of time it has been flying that direction, can keep track of the Mohawk for emergency needs.

The hazards of flying the 225th's missions are easily understood when the rugged, mountainous terrain of II Corps and the motto, "I Fly Nights," are put together.

Low altitude night flying in mountainous terrain calls for the utmost in pilot ability, procedures and alertness.

Despite the dangers involved with the 225th's type of flying, the unit has one of the best safety records in Vietnam, attaining more than 24 months and 20,000 hours of accident-free flying. The safety record speaks well for the caliber of the flight crews and maintenance personnel at the 225th. It also reflects on the airplane involved. The OV-1 Mohawk is one of the safest aircraft currently in the military inventory. It has all weather capability, all the emergency and back-up systems a pilot could want, and if all else fails, ejection seats....

In addition to the infrared missions, the 225th flies Side Looking Airborne Radar (SLAR), Visual-Photo and Visual-Reconnaissance missions.

After the aircraft lands at Phu Hiep upon the completion of a mission, the crew is debriefed in the Imagery Interpretation Section while the photos are being processed in the photo lab. The Imagery Interpreters are all highly



Ground crew prepares a Mohawk for a pre-flight "run-up."





Nosed into hangar, a Mohawk is overhauled.

trained in examining the photos for bunkers, huts, paths and other possible enemy staging areas or infiltration routes.

After the Imagery Interpreters "read out" the data, the results are transmitted to I Field Force Vietnam (IFFV) Headquarters which has the operational control of the 225th.

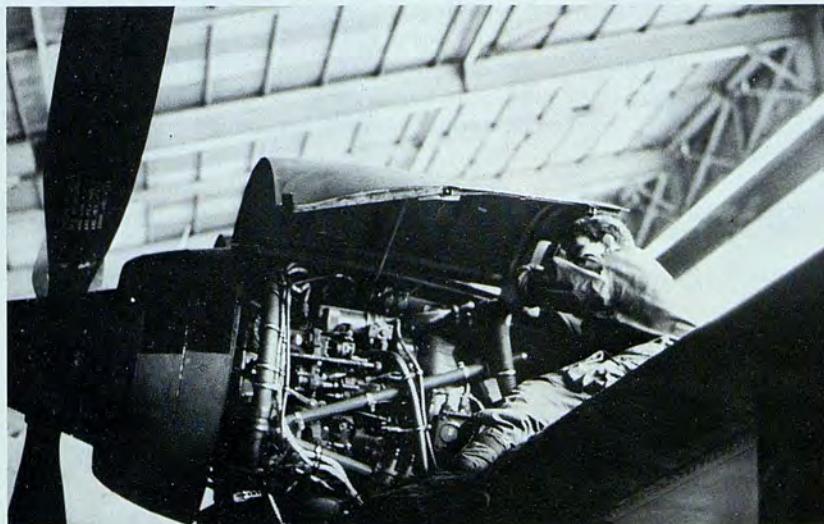
The G-2 Air at IFFV coordinates all supported unit's requests for targets and relays them to the operations officer at the 225th, who plans and schedules the missions.

The operations officer's job in a Mohawk outfit is one of great importance and responsibility. Close coordination must exist between friendly elements in the suspected

enemy areas and the operations officer. Otherwise, it would be quite easy to label friendly units as the enemy, a situation which could end disastrously. The operations officer must see to it that the mission is accomplished with the minimum interruption of friendly actions and maximum safety for the aircraft and crew.

The 225th "Phantom Hawks" have admirably performed a mission which provides the Free World Forces in Vietnam with a terrific advantage over the communist aggressors. They fly by night to detect an elusive enemy. To the troops of II Corps, the 225th's Mohawks flying overhead has become a reassuring symbol.

A complex OV-1 Mohawk engine receives TLC.



Two Mohawks rendezvous and proceed home.

Image Interpreters study negatives to locate enemy.



NEWSLETTER

“Super C” Arrives

The CH-47 Chinook, the Army's prime artillery mover, has been revamped to haul heavier loads longer distances. The first of the new C-model Chinooks arrived in-country October 19, 1969, and went to the "Shrimpboats" of the 179th Assault Support Helicopter Company. Since the initial shipment, nine more have arrived in Vietnam; and at present, four are located with the Shrimpboats at Pleiku, five are assigned to the 180th ASHC in Phu Hiep, and one is working with the 101st Airborne Division.

A bigger engine, wider rotor blades and an increased fuel capacity give the C-model the edge in performance over the previous A and B models.

273d Reaches 100,000 Mark

February 1970, marks the passing of the 100,000 ton mark for the 273d Aviation Company (Heavy Helicopter). This is a notable achievement for the men of the 273d "Superhooks." The company arrived in Vietnam on December 15, 1967, and in slightly over two years, has carried over 100,000 tons of cargo in the CH-54A Skycrane.

Two 1st Avn Bde Units Begin Ninth Year In RVN

The discussion as to who stepped ashore first continues, but the fact remains that both the 117th Aviation Company (As Hel) and the 120th Aviation Company (As Hel) are working on their ninth year in the Republic of Vietnam. On December 13, 1961, two aircraft carriers unloaded 40, CH-21 Chawnee helicopters at the foot of Tu Do Street in Saigon. Both companies were operational 10 days after arriving at Tan Son Nhut. The companies are now located at Long Binh.

High Flier Silver Stars 9 Nov - 21 Dec

WO1 Jerry W. Marshall, 195th Aviation Company (Ambl)
*SGT Francis M. Monroe, 361st Aviation Company (Escort)
1LT Raymond C. Dell, 57th Aviation Company (As Hel)
CPT John Sullivan, 116th Aviation Company (As Hel)
WO1 Keith S. Scudder, 121st Aviation Company (As Hel)
*SP4 Roy W. Hunter, 61st Aviation Company (As Hel)
*SGT Larry R. Brown, 361st Aviation Company (Escort)
CPT Kenneth R. Carlton, 191st Aviation Company (As Hel)
*posthumous

**HAWK
HONEY**



