



Vol. 3, No. 43

1st Air Cavalry Division

October 22, 1969

Blackhorse Welcome . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Vic Fitzwater)
Colonel E.C. Meyers is welcomed to the Cav's Blackhorse Brigade and receives the 2nd Brigade crests from Command Sergeant Major Vern Peters (left) and Chief of Staff, Colonel Joseph Kingston, during change of command ceremonies.

Downed Cobra

Sergeant Rescues Pilot

By SP5 George Vindedzis

LAI KHE — After helping two pilots from a downed Cobra safely aboard his Huey, Sergeant Frank Rickman, Jr. hung from the skids of his chopper until reaching a second downed Cobra and rescued yet another pilot.

Sergeant Rickman, a crew chief with Company B, 227th Aviation Battalion, was awarded the Silver Star.

The Cobras were flying cover for a convoy. Enemy mortars had ignited several trucks filled with helicopter fuel, and when

the Cobras rolled hot on the enemy positions, they met .51 caliber fire. Both birds were hit and downed; one caught fire as it crashed.

"We were only 15 miles away when the 'mayday' came over the radio," said Sergeant Rickman. "In minutes we were hovering over the first bird."

But the rescue ship couldn't land. The jungle was too thick.

Sergeant Rickman jumped out, then helped both wounded crew members aboard. "Apparently my pilot thought I was aboard too, because he lifted off, so I just grabbed the skids and

hung on for the short ride to the other ship."

The Cobra was in flames; one of the pilots had been killed in the crash. The other pilot had found cover near the downed bird. When he saw Sergeant Rickman he stumbled out.

Sergeant Rickman then helped the wounded pilot aboard, climbed on himself, and finally, the bird flew out of the area, heading for the aid station at Quan Loi.

Three other NVA soldiers made the fatal mistake of firing on another LOH helicopter. After the observer saw the flashes of fire from the enemy guns, he opened up with his machine gun, killing the three enemy troopers.

Another LOH was fired upon

about 20 miles northeast of Tay Ninh (Sept. 29), while flying at tree-top level on a scout mission.

Crewed by two men, the helicopter engaged the area with mini and machine gun fire, but because of the thick jungle was

unable to determine the number of enemy killed until later.

The Blues, the infantry platoon of the squadron, were air-assaulted into the area, killing five enemy and finding seven others killed earlier by the scout helicopter.

In other ground actions, Company A, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, awoke Oct. 1 to incoming 60mm mortar rounds pounding their night defensive position.

After pumping more than 30 rounds into the company's position, the enemy broke contact. Alpha Company fought back with tube artillery, then called in Cobra gunship support. The Skytroopers found 10 enemy dead and a .30 caliber machine gun in an early morning sweep of the area.

MH Winners Attend Texas Convention

Medal of Honor winners Captain Walter Joe Marm and First Sergeant David H. Mc너너 have returned from the Medal of Honor Society's annual convention in Houston, Texas. They were invited by the society to be honored guests with other Medal of Honor winners at the meeting.

CPT Marm received his Medal of Honor for leading his platoon through enemy fire in the Ia Drang Valley in November, 1965.

Sergeant Mc너너, first sergeant for Company B, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, was awarded the Medal of Honor while with the 4th Infantry Division in 1967. He is serving his third Vietnam tour.

Helping Hand . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by PFC Robert Sharp)
Two Skytroopers from Company A, 1st Battalion of the 5th Cav, give a buddy a boost up a stream bank while on operations near Quan Loi.

Squad Leader Takes Command of Platoon

By SGT Ronald Miller

TAY NINH—Mortar rounds and B-40 rockets crashed into the third platoon's sector of the overnight perimeter. Neither radio or voice contact could be made with the observation post (OP) that was 50 meters in front of the platoon's position.

Sergeant Basil Clark of Company D, 1st Battalion of the 12th Cav, called for his squad to cease fire. Then under heavy NVA small arms fire, he carefully made his way out to the OP and brought his men back to the safety of the perimeter.

As the mortar barrage continued, both the platoon leader and platoon sergeant received injuries, leaving the platoon in the hands of Sergeant Clark. He moved about checking wounded and restoring order during the battle.

"My platoon leader told me that if anything ever happened to him and the platoon sergeant, I would be the one to take over," said the sergeant. "But I never expected it to happen."

What is the reaction of a squad leader, suddenly thrust into the position of platoon leader?

"At first I found it hard to gain the platoon's respect as platoon leader because I had been just one of the guys before," he said. "I feel close to them, and it would upset me if someone were to be hurt through my decisions or actions."

In his new job for several weeks, Clark has earned the praise of his commanding officer, Captain Paul Reaume. Captain Reaume said of his new platoon sergeant, "Spirit, drive, initiative and self determination are found only in leaders like Sergeant Clark."

The Long Wait...



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Tom Benic)

Specialist Four James Johnson keeps his M-79 grenade launcher at the ready during a recon mission by Company E, 5th Bn of the 7th Cav, near Song Be.

1st Cav Association

Life Membership Fee Reduced

The 1st Air Cavalry Division Association is composed of Cav veterans who are proud that they served with the FIRST TEAM during their overseas duty. The Association is proud of the FIRST TEAM'S esprit, traditions and record in battle.

To become a member of the Association and receive all the benefits of membership, Skytroopers need only fill out a membership form and enclose a one time \$10 membership fee to become a life member of the Association.

During October, the usual membership fee of

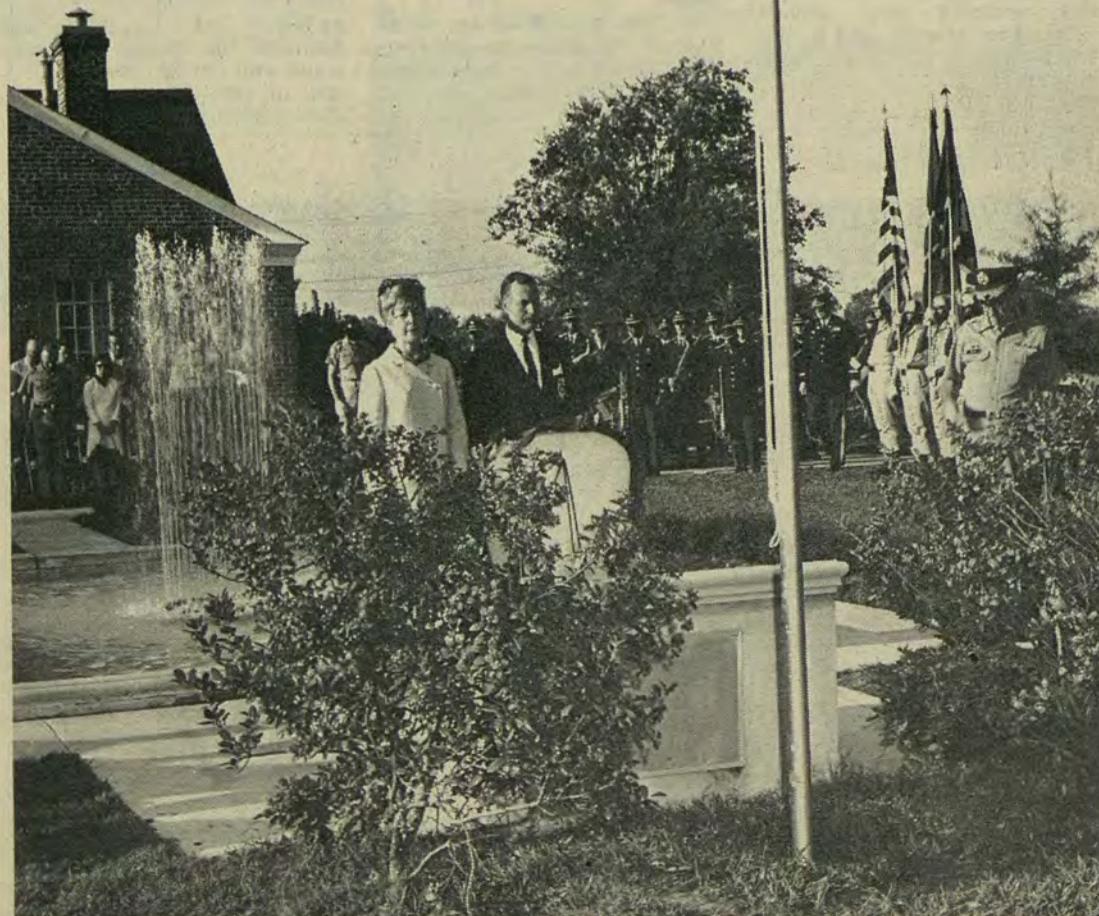
\$11 was reduced to \$10 to help offer every Skytrooper an opportunity to join his Association.

For only \$2 you can become an associate member for a one year period.

All members receive a membership card, issues of the Association's Saber News, division history and all the privileges of membership, which includes attendance of the Association's annual convention in the states.

The Association desires members who want to maintain friendships they acquired during their military service, and who want to support the division.

Cav Memorial...



(U.S. Army Photo)
Mrs. Donald Radcliffe (center) and Sherman Haight, 1st Cav Association president, place a wreath on the 1st Cav's memorial at the Georgia Welcome Center at Ft. Benning, Ga. Mrs. Radcliffe is the widow of Major Donald Radcliffe, the division's first casualty in Vietnam.

Simple Precautions Keep Skytroopers Malaria Safe

"It will never happen to me." This seems to be the way many of us think when warned about serious accidents or diseases such as malaria in Vietnam. We never seem to wake up to the fact that it can happen to us, until it is too late.

Malaria is one of the most common and disabling diseases encountered by Skytroopers in Vietnam. It is caused by a microscopic parasite carried by the female Anopheles mosquito. The malarial parasite attacks the red blood cells of the body, causing chills, fever, headache, nausea and weakness.

After the victim is bitten by the mosquito, he feels no reaction for 10 to 16 days, but then suddenly develops a high fever accompanied by severe chills.

Heavy sweating occurs as the fever breaks 12 to 14 hours later. Diarrhea and backache are also common during this period. Finally, the individual experiences extreme drowsiness and usually falls into a deep coma.

The cycle lasts one or two days and then repeats itself until body defenses or drugs arrest the parasitic condition. In many cases, without proper treatment, the patient may die.

The only sure way to prevent malaria is by strict adherence to the following "Malaria Prevention Measures:

All personnel should use mosquito nets at night.

Sleeves should be rolled down at dusk (6:30 p.m.).

Insect repellent should be applied whenever there is a risk of mosquito bites.

Aerosol insecticide should be used in billets and in bunkers.

All personnel should take Chloroquine-Primaquine pills (orange) on a weekly basis (usually Monday), and Dapsone pills (white) on a daily basis, "without fail!"

Personnel departing for R & R, leave, etc., should have sufficient pills to cover the period of absence.

Malaria can be prevented by good malaria discipline. Taking the pill is not something the commanders in the 1st Cav feel would be "nice" for all Skytroopers. USARV Regulation 40-4 states that commanders "will insure that persons in their command take the prescribed malaria medications."

Take the malaria tablets and practice malaria discipline and avoid a lifetime of chills, fever and enemia. Don't take malaria home with you.

...For God And Country

EDITOR'S NOTE: Four years ago this month, the 1st Air Cavalry Division engaged in its first combat action since arriving in Vietnam. Operation Shiny Bayonet sent three battalions into a VC infested valley east of the division's new base at An Khe. Writing a column for the Cavalair at that time was Chaplain (Major) Edwin R. Andrews. A powerful writer, Chaplain Andrews always told his story for "God and Country" in a unique manner, as this column so eloquently testifies.

"Lord, help me."

The voice, shrill with pain and panic, broke the peaceful silence of the moonlit midnight. Chaplain Weldon Wright, the 1st Air Cavalry's staff chaplain, hurried to the door of the medical clearing station tent as the litter was carried in.

"Help me, help me, God."

The desperate cry came from lips bright with blood from a gaping wound of throat and chin; the moving redness glittered under the surgical light as doctors and medics clustered around to staunch the flow. And again the plea went up for a higher power than they.

"When are you going to help me, Lord?"

Chaplain Wright, waiting in the background while the doctors worked, was almost unheard as he asked the medic: "What is this man's religious faith?"

"None," answered the medic.

Unable to believe his ears, the chaplain turned to the register where the soldier had been logged into the clearing station, and read opposite his name—"Unit: 1st Bn, 12th Cavalry; Reason for admission: GSW, face and throat; Religious faith: no preference." The chaplain shrugged; when a man gets in trouble, he thought, he may have no religious preference—but he still calls for help.

A space opened in the wall of bodies around the table and Chaplain Wright stepped into it. His right hand was stained red as he slipped it gently under the trooper's head. Before he spoke, the chaplain turned the soldier's dogtag to the light and read, again, "Religion—No Pref." And again the hysterical call went up.

"When are you coming, Lord?"

The chaplain spoke, calmly and firmly, as he assisted medical personnel to tie off the bandages.

"The Lord is here," he said. The soldier's eyes, shiny and bulging with fear in a face now covered with running sweat, sought the chaplain's face and steadied there; his struggle gradually ceased.

"I want you to trust in Him, believe in Him," Chaplain Wright's challenge pierced the veil of terror. He asked, "Can you believe that?"

"Yes—yes, I know that... I believe it." The response came eagerly, almost breathlessly.

There was time for only a few more words. The now-quiet soldier was moved on the litter to a waiting helicopter; it lifted-off in the early morning darkness toward more extensive medical attention.

As they raced through the lovely night sky toward the dawn, the young soldier died.



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PZ Huey Hop . . .

(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Bill Ahrbeck)
Specialist Four Eugene Mitchel (center) directs pick-up bird into clearing while CIDG troopers on a recon mission with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry's recon platoon run through the rotor wash to the ship. The pick-up climaxed a combined U.S.-CIDG mission.

Pink Teams, Blues Battle NVA in Ambush Attempt

QUAN LOI—What started as a small ambush by a reconnaissance patrol in the 1st Air Cav's 3rd Brigade turned out to be a bad day for Charlie.

A Long Range Recon Patrol (LRRP) killed one NVA in an ambush about three miles northeast of Fire Support Base Wescott. They suspected there was a larger NVA force in the area and called for the Quick Reaction Force (Blues) of Troop B, 1st Squadron of the 9th Cav. The Blues were inserted and pursued the enemy to the north.

"I was walking behind the point man when I spotted an NVA, lying on the side of the trail with a .30 caliber machine gun," said Staff Sergeant Richard B. Herron. "I shot him and then Staff Sergeant Perry Glover bumped into another NVA, knocked him down and shot him."

By this time the Blues were pinned down by

fire from the three-sided ambush attempt. The lead element threw smoke grenades to cover their positions, and the Cobra helicopters overhead easily spotted the smoke.

"We took fire on every pass we made," said Warrant Officer Mark Somerville, pilot of one of the Cobras. "We were taking so much fire that the LOHs were covering us when we broke."

The door gunner on one of the Light Observation Helicopters (LOH), which was covering the escape route from the ambush site, killed five NVA.

"We spotted them huddled together," said First Lieutenant William H. Barnhorst, the LOH pilot. "It looked like the enemy was trying to decide what to do when he got all of them."

The final toll in the hard fought battle included eight NVA killed by helicopters and six other killed in action with the Blues.

Skytroopers Help Train RFs

FSB BUTTONS — Five men quietly maneuvered outside the night perimeter to set up listening posts (LPs) on a company sized operation deep in the jungle near Fire Support Base Don. Three of these men had never set up an LP before, but they were learning.

They were members of an 86-man Vietnamese Regional Forces (RF) company being taught the normal operational techniques of a company patrol

by the Cav's Blackhorse Brigade during a one-month long period.

Their instructors were seasoned Cavalrymen from Company D, 2nd Battalion of the 12th Cavalry's first platoon.

"We showed them how to recon by fire, how to secure a trail and how to set out night security," said Second Lieutenant Thomas Trow, platoon leader for the first platoon. "The first night, the RFs were cooking over bamboo fires. We showed

them how to cut down on the light with the use of heat tabs. Light and noise discipline was one of a few small problems we encountered and solved."

Bee Swarm Assaults FSB

FSB BUTTONS — Why pop smoke when you are neither calling in a helicopter nor marking your position?

On Fire Support Base Buttons, home of the 1st Cav's 2nd Brigade you do it to chase away swarms of bees.

At least twice a week a cloud of buzzing insects combat assaults onto the fire base. Their progress around the base can be traced by the explosions of brightly-colored smoke canisters, as the men of the 2nd Brigade Headquarters and headquarters of the 5th Battalion, 7th Cav, grab whatever smoke grenade is near at hand.

The bees are apparently not interested in any one location and any color smoke will discourage their landing. Half an hour after the attack begins, the black swarm heads back into the sky — apparently looking for an LZ which is not so "hot".

The units have not yet named a "Bee Control Officer" and, at last report, the periodic "assaults" were continuing.

Sproings, Reds Bug Truck Riding Troops

FSB BUTTONS—Reds? Long legs? Sproings? Riding on three-quarter-ton trucks?

Sproings, reds, long legs all travel with Troop D, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav as it patrols the area around Fire Support Base Buttons, home of the 1st Air Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade.

Sproings are spiders—and they jump; hence the name. Reds are the red ants which almost all Skytroopers have learned to avoid after their first meeting.

As the trucks of Delta Troop turn off the road in the Song Be area and begin to plow through the thick undergrowth along the sides of the road, the men riding in back of the trucks receive a constant shower of small bugs.

"Busting forest" brings the heaviest barrage of minute animal life onto the troopers.

Jumping contest between sproings provide some entertainment during breaks in patrolling. So does tossing reds at the truck driver, otherwise protected from the bombardment.

After the entertainment is finished, the bugs are returned to the jungle to await the next troop.



Buses Speed Travel

A new bus service has been added at Bien Hoa Army Base for the convenience of 1st Cav Skytroopers doing business on the post.

Four buses are now connecting the Division Support Command Headquarters, local processing facilities and the Bien Hoa Air Base passenger terminal. A regular bus schedule is in the process of being distributed to all unit orderly rooms.

According to Major Robert Bently, division transportation officer, the basic purpose of this new bus service is to allow Skytroopers processing through Bien Hoa to do so with speed and ease.



(U.S. Army Photo)
Specialist Four Randolph Tipten (left), assistant truckmaster, and Specialist Four Elbert Jacobs, DISCOM S & T Company dispatcher, add a Cavalry touch to one of the four DISCOM buses serving Bien Hoa Army Base.

Ellis Tops Contest

Sergeant Bill Ellis, the "Cav Balladier," won first place in the III Corps finals of the 1969 Vietnam Entertainment Contest.

The contest, staged for all units operating in III Corps, attracted 30 entries at Bien Hoa Army Base.

SGT Ellis walked off with top honors in the individual speciality class. The Skytrooper sang "Grunt" for his feature number. "Grunt" is one of the songs he wrote and recorded on the FIRST TEAM album which has been distributed to cavalrymen throughout the division.

Winners in each of the six classes advanced to the Saigon-based, Vietnam-wide competition and won a berth on a USO show which will tour U.S. bases throughout Vietnam later this year.

SGT Ellis, who makes frequent appearances at landing zones and basecamps for the Cav, is already scheduled to perform on the USO tour.

Gorvad Coordinator

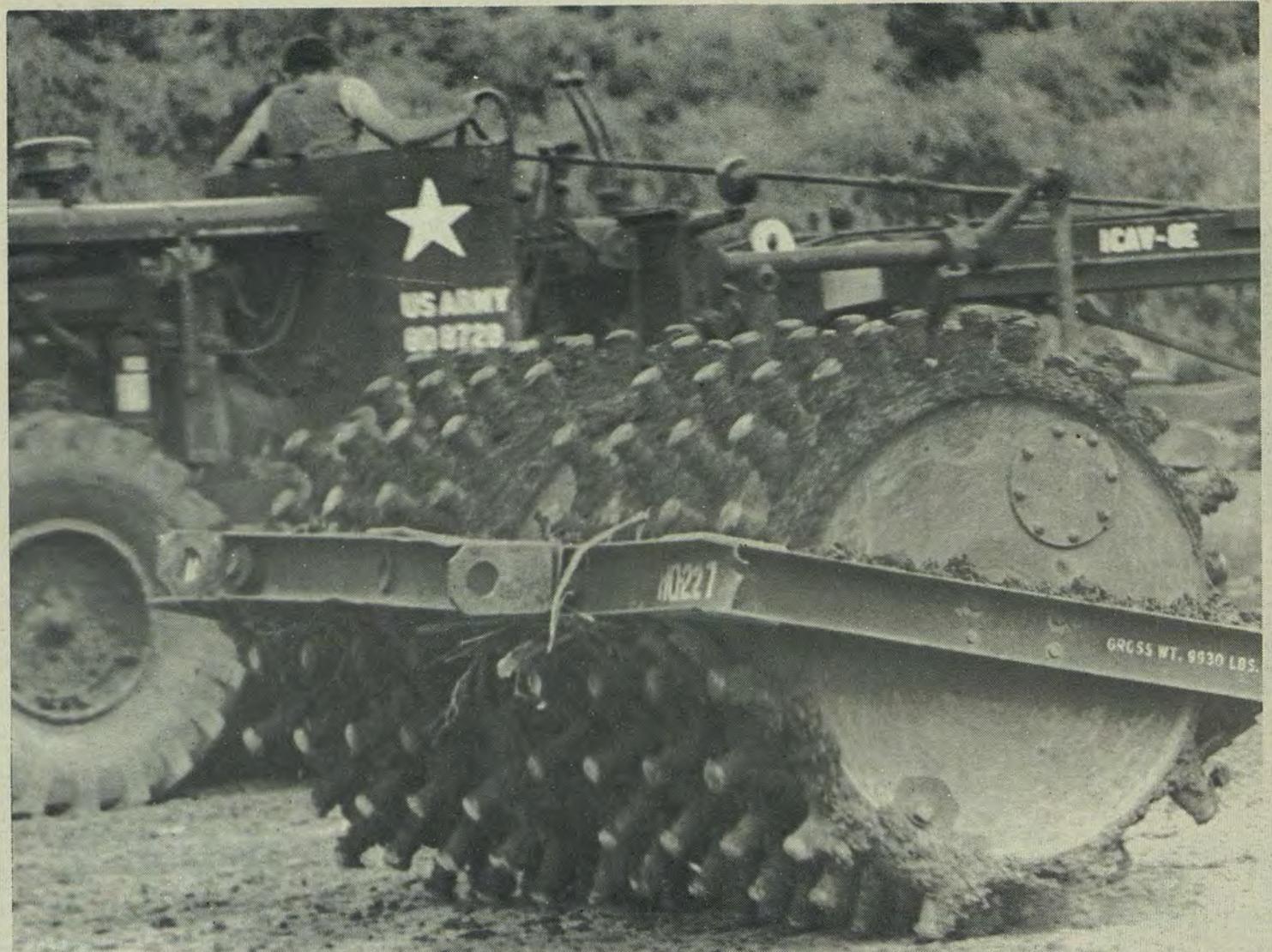
Lieutenant Colonel James C. Morgan is the new Deputy Installation Coordinator for Camp Gorvad and Division Headquarters. LTC Morgan comes to the Cav from an assignment as Chief of Supply and Material and Airborne advisor to the Republic of Korea's Army.

He calls Clarksville, Tenn, home. His wife, Jeane, lives there with their three children.

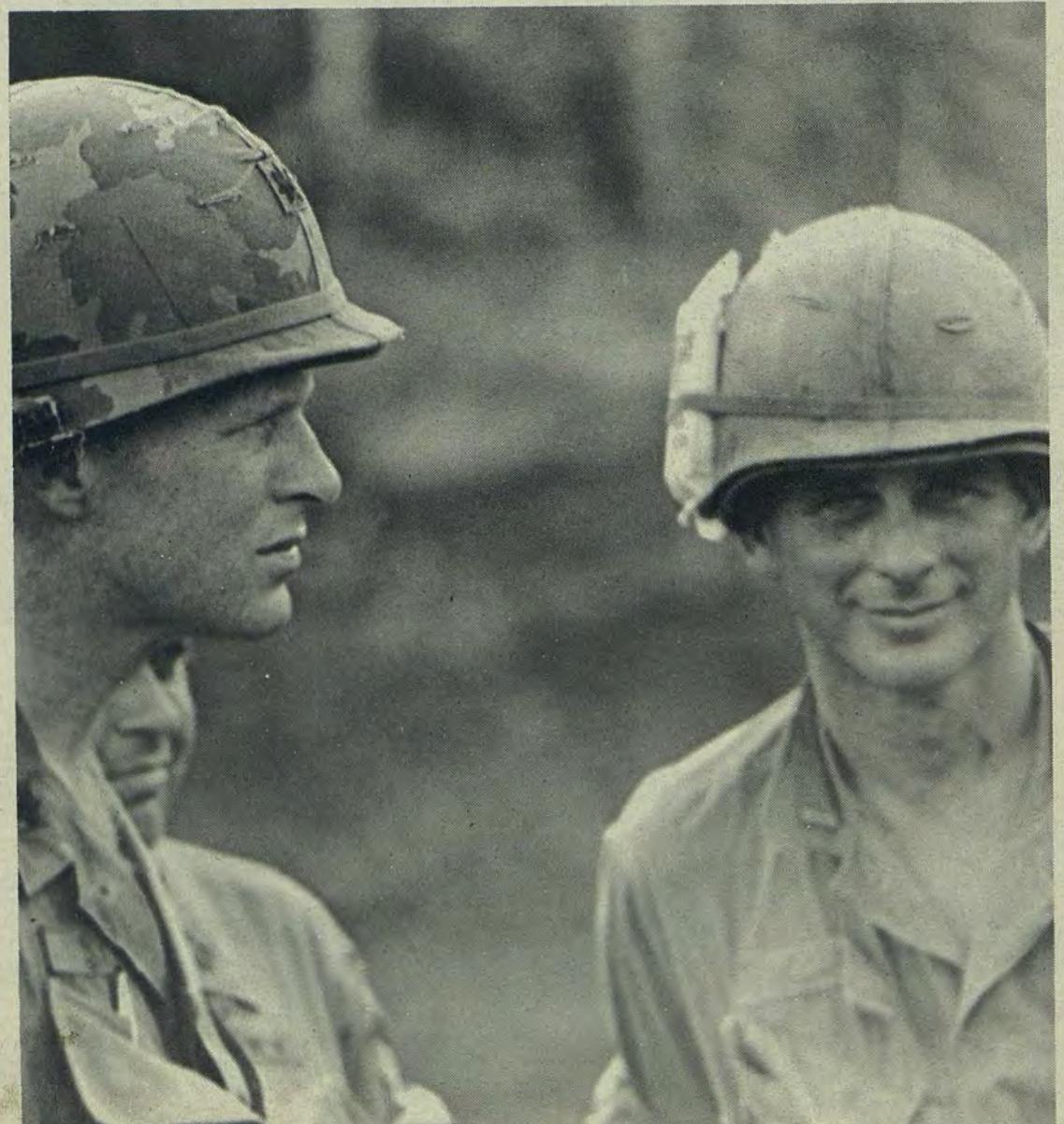


(U.S. Army Photo)
Lieutenant Colonel James Morgan

Skybeavers Battle Rain, Mortars at Bu Dop



Grading and hardening the soft soil on the runway extension at Bu Dop's air strip is no problem for 8th Engineer personnel with the use of heavy equipment brought into the area for the two month operation.



Lieutenant Colonel Scott B. Smith, 8th Engineer Battalion Commander, (left) makes a first-hand inspection of construction progress at the Bu Dop airstrip with project officer First Lieutenant Thurston McDaniels.

BU DOP — Skybeavers of the 8th Engineer Battalion fought and won a different kind of battle — one with monsoon season rain and mud — when they set to work resurfacing and expanding the vital Bu Dop airstrip.

The platoon of heavy equipment operators had to cope with "rain that would make any engineering company throw up its hands and quit," said Command Sergeant Major Henry Salazar of the Engineers. "But we worked with what we had and rain was something we had plenty of."

The other problem that hampered construction of the airstrip was enemy mortar fire. Not only would the engineers have to run for cover when the rounds

crashed into the runway, but would also have to repair the craters that began pot-marking the strip.

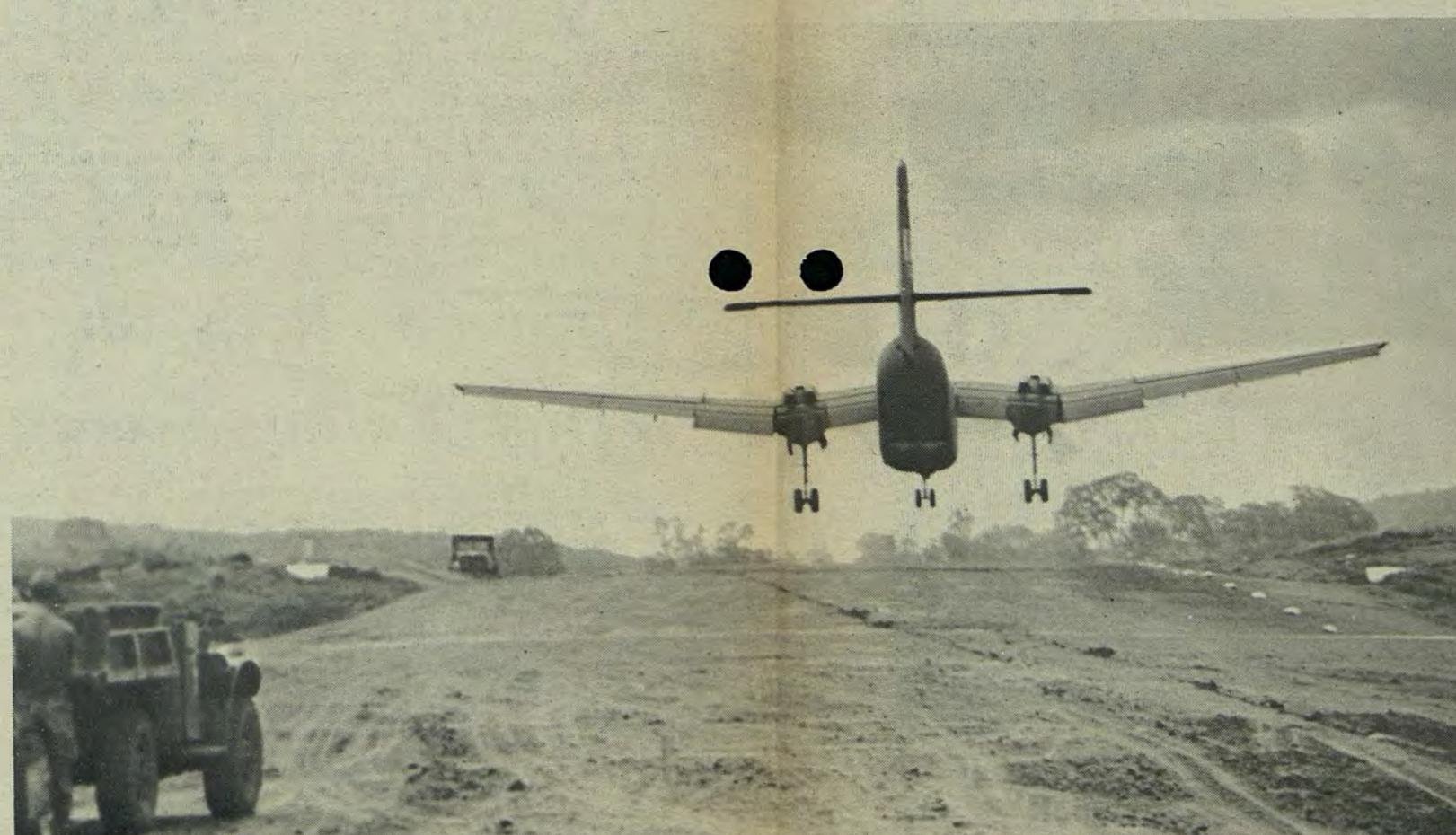
"It took my men three days to fill some of these craters because most of the work had to be done by hand," said First Lieutenant Thurston McDaniels, officer in charge of the project.

"We could have gotten the job done in a couple of weeks if it hadn't been for the bad weather and enemy mortar fire," he added.

During the runway lengthening, rubber trees had to be blown down tree by tree. Now that there is 400 more feet of runway and clear view for take-offs and landings, pilots will find Bu Dop a little easier to use for flights into the region.



Specialist Five Steve Caldwell (right) uses his Cat to chew out a hillside for fill soil to cover the runway extension. During construction, 8th Engineer crews were often forced from the runway by daily air traffic (below) and enemy mortar barrages.



An Air Force C-123 unloads an ARVN Ranger unit on part of the Bu Dop runway kept open for air traffic during runway improvements added by the 8th Engineers.

Photos &
Story by
SP4
Ron Merrill



An 8th Engineer grader operator takes a break to watch a Chinook deliver its load at the Bu Dop facility.

Skytrooper Football Contest

Win a 3-Day Cape St. Jacques Vacation!

CONTEST RULES: Using the entry blank below, select the winners of the ten major college athletic conferences listed below. Print the name of the school on the line opposite the conference name. The entry listing the most conference champions will be the winner. In the event of a tie, the entry most closely predicting the score of the Army-Navy game will be declared the winner.

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES: Entries must be in the hands of; Football Contest, The Cavalair, Information Office, 1st Air Cavalry Division, APO 96490, not later than October 31. Entries may be mailed (be sure to write "In-Country" on the envelope) or sent through distribution.

ELIGIBILITY: The contest is open to all officers and enlisted men of the 1st Air Cavalry Division and attached units. Not eligible are members of the Cavalair staff, the Information Officer or any of its subsidiaries, and their families.

PRIZE—An all expense-paid vacation (including transportation, rations and quarters) to the Vung Tau R&R Center.

TO: Football Contest Editor
The Cavalair
Information Office
1st Air Cavalry Division
APO 96490

CHAMPION PREDICTIONS

Big Ten _____	Missouri Valley _____
Mid American _____	Southwest _____
Ivy League _____	Southeastern _____
Atlantic Coast _____	Western Athletic _____
Big Eight _____	Pacific Eight _____

Tie-breaker score: Army _____ Navy _____

Name _____ Rank _____ SSAN _____
Unit _____ DEROS _____

BIG EIGHT

Colorado
Iowa State
Kansas
Kansas State
Missouri
Nebraska
Oklahoma
Oklahoma State

MID-AMERICAN

Bowling Green
Kent State
Marshall
Miami (Ohio)
Ohio U.
Toledo
Western Michigan

SOUTHWEST

Arkansas
Baylor
Rice
Southern Methodist
Texas
Texas A&M
Texas Christian
Texas Tech

IVY LEAGUE

Brown
Columbia
Cornell
Dartmouth
Harvard
Pennsylvania
Princeton
Yale

BIG TEN

Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Michigan
Michigan State
Minnesota
Northwestern
Ohio State
Purdue
Wisconsin

MISSOURI VALLEY

Cincinnati
Louisville
Memphis State
North Texas State
Tulsa
Wichita State

PACIFIC EIGHT

California
Oregon
Oregon State
Southern Cal
Stanford
UCLA
Washington
Washington State

ATLANTIC COAST

Clemson
Duke
Maryland
North Carolina
North Carolina State
South Carolina
Virginia
Wake Forest

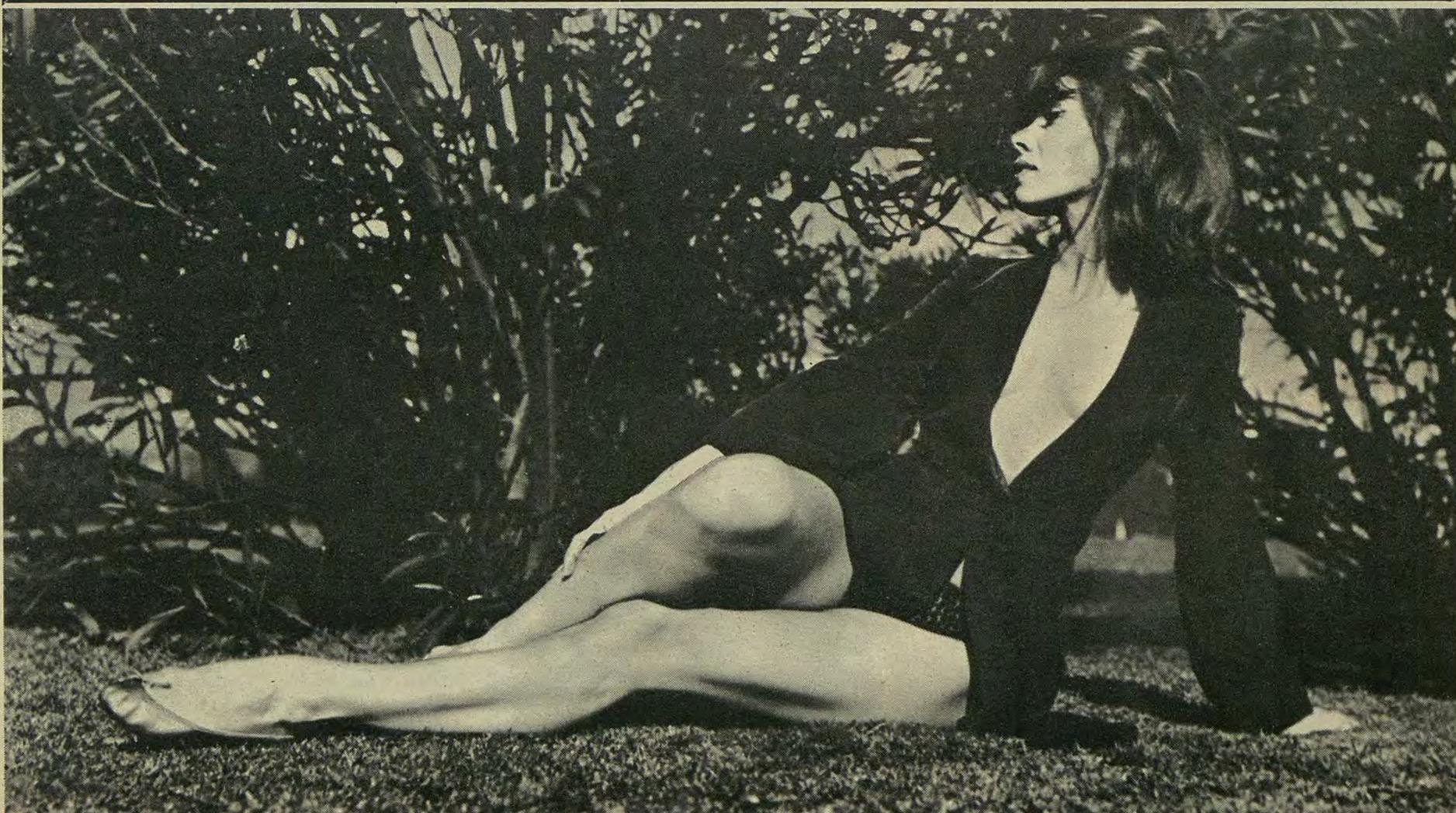
SOUTHEASTERN

Alabama
Auburn
Florida
Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana State
Mississippi
Mississippi State
Tennessee
Vanderbilt

WESTERN ATHLETIC

Arizona
Arizona State
Brigham Young
Colorado State*
New Mexico
Texas at El Paso
Utah
Wyoming
* Ineligible for title

Who's Number One?



Janine Reynaud takes a break during the shooting of "Succubus," being put out by Trans American Films. Our info says Janine is an actress that gives it her all every second of every working day. How about it, Skytroopers?



Specialist Four Dennis Baker, a medic with Charlie Company, 1st Bn, 7th Cav, bandages a small injury for a fellow Skytrooper.



Mortarmen tote their hardware to a new defensive position while on patrol with Company C, 1st Bn of the 7th Cav, north of LZ Wescott.

Searching for Charlie

Skytroopers from Company C, 1st Battalion of the 7th Cav didn't have to ask why they were combat assaulting into the jungle north of Fire Support Base Wescott. The Blues from the 1st Squadron of the 9th Cav had been in the area the day before and had killed 11 enemy. The enemy was definitely operating in the area.

The company spent the first day humping through the dense undergrowth. The first night's ambush netted two NVA and acted as a barometer of enemy action.

Searching the area at first light, Charlie Company found newly dug NVA fighting holes and fresh troop tracks.

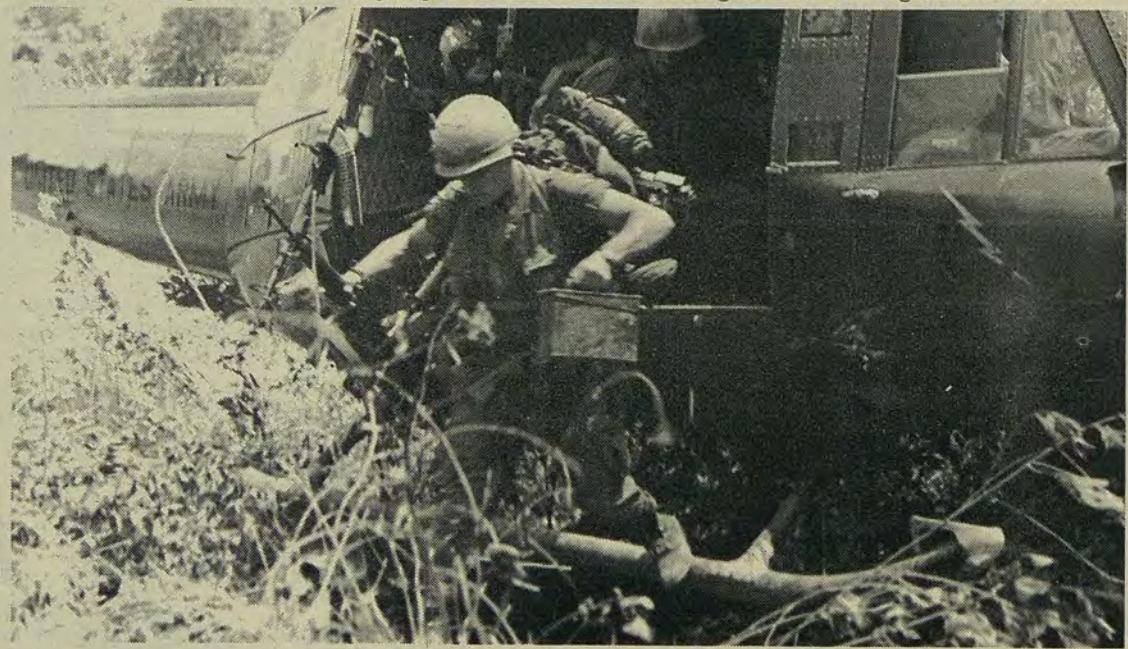
The second platoon hit the jackpot on the

third day. Checking out a narrow path just off the main trail, First Lieutenant Michael Crow uncovered a two-and-a-half-ton rice cache. His men found five more caches and the company spoiled Charlie's dinner — seven tons of it. One NVA was killed when he got hungry and wandered back to the hidden cache.

The fourth day was spent moving, looking for fresh signs of the enemy.

The fifth day out weary Skytroopers got fresh water and hot food from a log bird. Letters were delivered by the welcome bird, lifting spirits throughout the company.

But the breather didn't last long and Charlie Company went back to work, humping, looking — and waiting for the next log bird to arrive.



While their Huey hovers only inches above the landing zone, Charlie Company troopers hop off to begin their long search for the enemy.

Photos by SP4 B. Ahrbeck



On the prowl for enemy trails is a scout dog team assigned to the lead platoon in the company operation.



Viet Side of War

By SP4 Joe Kamalick

Because of his special ability — one which few Americans possess — Iver Peterson, reporter in Vietnam for The New York Times, is best suited for a particular kind of reporting.

When Peterson, 27, first came to Vietnam in October, 1967, he arrived with a thorough working knowledge of the Vietnamese language. At the time, he was working as a psychological operations specialist for the Joint United States Public Affairs Office in the Delta region. He returned to Washington, D.C., and a position with the Times, and in February of this year he began covering the war.

Like most daily newspapers which have correspondents in Vietnam, the Times concentrates on perceptive, in-depth reporting by its own writers, while using the "hard news" supplied by its own and other wire services.

Because of its heavy coverage and large staff, the Times reports not only the progress of the war itself, but also gives the story behind the war.

Because of his language talent, Peterson specializes in telling the Vietnamese side of the war, writing about the effect of the war on those who live with it day after day.

The Vietnamese people take a resigned attitude toward the war, he said. "The Vietnamese people are used to being buffeted around, so much so that they have long ago learned to roll with the punches."

But since the war and the people are so closely bound, Peterson is also concerned with the conflict itself. Then he is looking "for the overall tactics, and whether those tactics are based on specific intelligence or are moves based on anticipated enemy action," he said.

For Peterson, however, the effects of war remain his chief interest, like the very human reactions found when two cultures meet in a war bred society.

"A lot of people worry about what the Vietnamese people think of the American soldiers. Of course, among the market sellers, cyclo and taxi drivers, you'll get an unfavorable opinion. But among people who do not have trade dealings with the GI — such as businessmen and government functionaries — the Americans are regarded as better behaved than any foreign military force. The market place is another matter."

The people, as Peterson said, are used to war, used to being shuffled about. It has become a way of life. "But their chief objection is the price level which has adjusted itself to the American pocket," he said.

The average Army sergeant makes more money in one month than most Vietnamese do in a year. When the sergeant spends his money liberally, prices will swell to meet his unknowing generosity and the Vietnamese soon find themselves faced with American price levels, but unable to afford them.

Naturally enough as an American reporter, Peterson is also an astute observer of Americans

at war, the citizen Army in an unpopular war.

"The American troops here are not as ideologically involved in the war as the U.S. command would have us believe," he said.

"For the GI the war doesn't mean anything. Some are vaguely, if at all, ideologically inspired. Their motivation is based more on team work."

The GI's esprit does not come from the changing flux of politics, he said. "But on the other hand," Peterson added, "I have always been surprised about the high level of morale, the GI's attitude in the field."

The Real Cav . . .



(U.S. Army Photo)

Bedecked in "Real Cav" hats, reminiscent of the good old days back on the Western Plains, officers of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cav take on the traditional pose. They are (first row left) CPT Andrew Hudson Jr., Squadron Commander LTC James Booth, MAJ Robert Tredway, MAJ Frank Stewart Jr., MAJ Robert Hardin, (second row) CPT Huey Scott, CPT Donald Fredrickson, CPT Charles Rice, CPT Charles Cook, MAJ Charles Jolley, (third row) 1LT James Fuqua and CPT Willie Stokes.

Caught in a Monsoon Storm

Bird 344's Milk Run Turns Sour

FSB BUTTONS — Rain, zero visibility and darkness combined to challenge the pilots of Huey 344 as it plowed through the storm on its normally easy "milk run" to the safety of its Lai Khe home pad.

The day's final commuter hop from the 2nd Brigade headquarters at Fire Support Base Buttons to Lai Khe started off as it usually does during the monsoon season — wet passengers and late flights. At 6:45 p.m., five birds landed at Buttons to take personnel who live in Lai Khe, but work at Buttons during the day, back home for the night. Among them was the 277th Helicopter Support Battalion's Bird 344.

After the wet passengers piled into the ship, the pilots began what was to be a 30-minute trip to Lai Khe — only to find it impossible to reach their destination because of bad weather.

An hour and 45 minutes after lift off, Bird 344 set down, not at Lai Khe, but at

Phuoc Vinh. In the interim, the chopper had had two near mid-air collisions, climbed to 6,800 feet in the midst of a storm, flown for 45 minutes in the direction of Cambodia and finally had to land at Phuoc Vinh with the use of instruments.

For the first 20 minutes, the Company A, 227th Bn pilots tried to work beneath the clouds — at treetop level along QL 14, which leads from Song Be to Phuoc Vinh. In front of 344 there was nothing more than a dim red blur — the reflection of the craft's blinking red light on sheets of rain.

After near misses as a result of the poor visibility, the five-helicopter formation broke up, following instructions that each ship would head off into a different direction to avoid the possibility of a collision.

Bird 344 headed north and climbed. The passengers, wet from their rain-soaked wait, started shivering as the air turned cold.

The pilots were lost, unable to see any-

thing through the dense clouds which held them at 6,800 feet. Outside the ship, the rain still poured down.

Switching on their homing devices, the pilots finally managed to head for Phuoc Vinh. Much later, the welcoming lights of the 1st Air Cavalry Division basecamp appeared in the distance.

When the bird touched down the pilots shook hands. And, the passengers, only partly aware of the pilots' problems, felt like doing the same.

An hour later when the rain had cleared, the chopper again started off to Lai Khe. Finally, at 10:30 p.m., the "milk run" commuter flight was home at the Blackhorse Brigade basecamp.

The semi-frozen passengers stumbled off the bird and another commuter run had been completed. The next morning, the pilots and commuters would be again ready to make the easy 30-minute flight to LZ Buttons.

N.Y. Times Reporter . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Joe Kamalick)
". . . I have always been surprised about the high level of morale, the GI's attitude in the field . . ." Iver Peterson

Message from Sky Inspires Troopers

LZ BUTTONS — A message from the sky recently inspired a number of Catholic Skytroopers from Company C, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, to attend Mass.

Chaplain (CPT) Robert T. Murphy, a Holy Cross Father providing Catholic coverage for the 5th Bn, 7th Cav, flew into the company area on the first log bird of the day, planning to leave on the last log ship, after Mass was completed.

As the log bird made its second trip into the landing zone (LZ) enemy mortar rounds followed it in. The 1st Air Cavalry Division chaplain and his waiting congregation dove for the nearest holes as the mortar rounds walked across the small company-size LZ.

"I had not been in-country long," said the chaplain, "but I left my altar set-up and tried as best I could to get under cover."

Only four to six rounds landed in the small jungle clearing outside Buttons. When the firing ceased, the Chaplain completed setting up his altar and his congregation returned.

"There was a noticeable increase in attendance between

the time before the mortar rounds and the time after," observed Chaplain Murphy astutely.

NVA Medic Loses Love

PHUOC VINH — Can love between an NVA medic and a North Vietnamese nurse survive in the jungles of South Vietnam? Can petty personal bourgeois thoughts be allowed in a time of war?

Dinh Cong Khuy realized that it was not to be. Thwarted in an attempt to run off with his girlfriend, a nurse with the NVA, Khuy deserted his medical support company and surrendered to the 1st Air Cavalry Division troopers at Fire Support Base Grant, 20 miles northeast of Tay Ninh.

The 25-year-old soldier told an interpreter that he had been drafted into the NVA five years ago, given several months of medical training, and sent south as a medic with a line company. Here he met his "Laura," but soon learned that one's personal life sometimes dies during time of war.