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"We help where possible. However, for surgery and serious illnesses, she must refer the patients to the provincial hospital," Merkle said. "We have tried to avoid giving them the idea that we will always take care of them. It is best for them to become independent and learn to do it on their own."

Most of the inhabitants of the hamlet, located 15 miles east of Camp Frenzell-Jones, are refugees from the North and widows of ARVN soldiers killed in the war. During past TET offensives, the hamlet has been subjected to considerable Viet Cong harassment.

"The VC used to go in there very frequently," Merkle said. "But they haven't been there for the past few months. This is a good sign."

Merkle hopes to install a hamlet-wide immunization program, bringing those who have suspected tuberculosis to a hospital for chest X-rays, and placing more emphasis on dental hygiene and treatment.

Unit repairs vital radar 'sets'

CHU LAI — Blades swirling and body swaying, a chopper briefly touches earth, deposits two men and quickly lifts off a remote mountain top in southern I Corps.

This isn't a ground assault by American soldiers, but the importance attached to the mission of these men may be of even greater scope.

The two "intrepid" soldiers are skilled radar technicians sent out by the 547th Signal Det., 1st Log Commando, to repair a vital component in a radar set that helps defend a large area from mortar and rocket attack.

The unit, attached to the 80th General Support Group's 57th Transportation Bn., provides direct support to the entire counter mortar defense network in southern I Corps.

The radar sites, located in strategic positions from Da Nang to Sa Huynh, feature highly-sensitive and finely-tuned equipment with a unique purpose.

Fantastic as it may seem, these sites can locate an enemy rocket or mortar round in flight, plot its launching position and direct artillery against the enemy.

To perform its mission, the delicate equipment must be maintained in top condition.

One of the few radar repair contact teams to provide direct support in Vietnam, the unit works on Americal Division radar sites. The six-man detachment is commanded by CWO Joseph N. Bernadino.

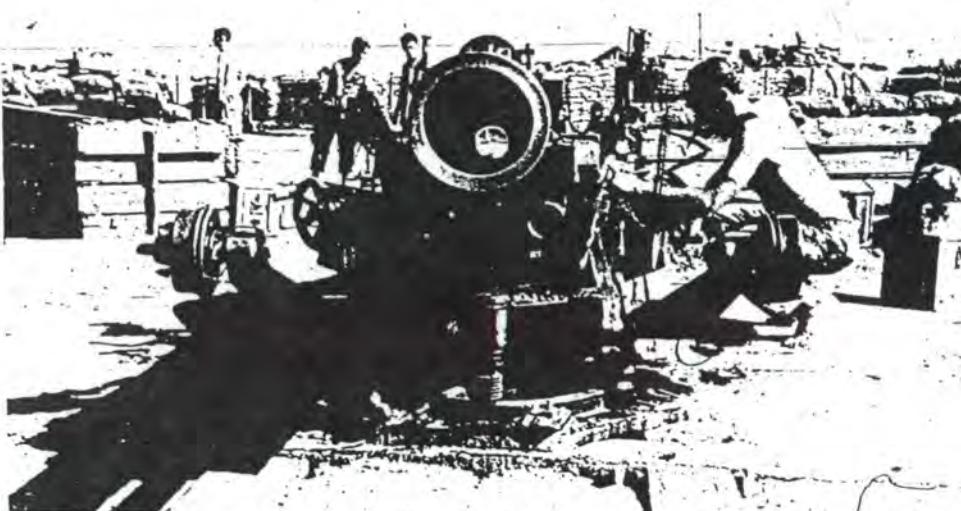
Remarking that his team runs the gamut from climbing mountains to replacing delicate instruments, Bernadino notes that "just reaching some of the sites is a big job." He adds that his men, who make some 20 "housecalls" monthly, "can reach certain sites only by chopper."

The unit maintains its own shop supply and most of the necessary parts, but if an occasion arises where a vital component is in need, there isn't much of a wait.

Almost any needed item can easily be "red-balled" through Da Nang Support Command supply channels and, a short time later, be functioning in a radar set high atop a mountain.

The radar can almost guarantee that rockets or mortars cannot enter its sector without being detected.

In fact, the system is so thorough that radar technicians have picked up everything from raindrops to rain-soaked birds. In other words, soldiers have a modified "Big Brother" looking out for them.



LINING UP his gun's sighting apparatus on aiming stakes, this soldier from the 25th Infantry Division adjusts the howitzer's sights. His unit, Btry. A, 77th Arty., is located at FB Kotrc, two miles east of the Cambodian border.



Search uncovers enemy

Cordon collars occult VC

CHU LAI — American Division soldiers swept silently and quickly into the village. They didn't want to alarm the dwellers, nor did they want anyone to leave.

It was an operation to cordon and search one of the many villages which are suspected of hiding Viet Cong in the 198th Bde. area of operation. Co. C, 5th Bn., 46th Inf., had been combat assaulted into the area 20 miles south of here before dawn.

The infantrymen had many villages to check and they set about their work with rapid efficiency knowing that soon the driving sun would halt them for a mid-day break.

The villagers had to be gathered together in a central meeting point where they could be questioned by members of the South Vietnamese National Police.

The questioning in the first hamlet didn't take long before turning up five suspected VC sympathizers. Among them were three females who admitted that their husbands were supporting the Communists with food and supplies. Two men of military age were caught in the swiftness of cording and unable to escape.

Capt. Reed J. Purcell, a com-

pany commander, explained the cording mission. "We enter the village as quickly as possible and gather the people up. It will depend on how many there are as to whether we separate them, or make one large group."

"The village is under constant security while the questioning is going on," Staff Sgt. Jimmie L. Parker, a platoon sergeant, said. "We send out squad-sized elements to keep the area secure and scatter men along the trails to keep alert of what is happening."

An ARVN civic affairs officer distributes pamphlets, newspapers and posters around the village to warn the VC that allied forces are protecting the people and if they want to be safe they should rally to the government.

"Sometimes when entering a hamlet the people appear unfriendly, and not responsive," stated Purcell, "but more often than not they are met with friendly greetings and smiles. That alone makes the job of searching a little easier."

Hamlet receives aid in self-help program

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AP BAU CA — The Buddhist hamlet here in Bien Hoa Province is receiving assistance to fight disease and malnutrition through a comprehensive program designed to leave the agrarian hamlet medically self-sufficient.

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"The majority of the children, for example, had skin disorders of all sorts and many suffered from various diseases, including malnourishment," Bergsten continued.

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Dr. Merkle is further training the nurse to diagnose other diseases and provide medical treatment herself.

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