



# VIETNAM REVISITED

By  
**Brigadier General  
WILLIAM J. MADDOX, JR.**  
Director of Army Aviation,  
OACSFOR, D/A

"... I saw the same empty view at dozens of airstrips up and down the countryside where the whine of the helicopter turbine used to be the standard fare around the clock ..."

**A**T first glance, Vietnam looks the same. The people are the same—the Americans and Vietnamese alike—and the war looks the same. But there are marked differences in each when you examine things closely.

As my big Pan Am 747 banked to the left over Papa Tango beacon at Phan Thiet, the green jungle looked as it had when I first flew into Vietnam in 1955. The broad sweep of sand running from the beach inland a mile or so, which was caused by a South China Sea typhoon boiling inland, also looked the same.

From the cockpit of the 747, I noted the first changes as we let down across Bear Cat and Long Thanh North. Long Thanh is thinning out. Bear Cat was a shambles and appeared to be completely evacuated. The Thais are gone and so are the helicopters. The broad black ramps, studded with rets-nets, are empty.

In the next two weeks I saw the same empty view at dozens of air strips up and down the countryside where the whine of the helicopter turbine used to be standard fare around the clock. Some airfields, including the old camp at Phu Loi, are forsaken. On other fields, lone Vietnamese units occupy small segments of what had been large military establishments.

The American soldiers were dressed the same. Their dedication is the same, despite the rash of newspaper articles about grumbling and a desire to be gone. I found no group that was not highly motivated but somewhat discouraged about the attitude of the war critics in the United States. Just as it was in 1965, the American soldiers shrug off the criticism and concentrate on the important tasks at hand.

Some of the language has changed. Almost everyone now differentiates jet fighters from other

types of aircraft. The jet is a "fast mover." You understand that the helicopter is among the "slow movers" but you do not hear that term.

There were only two brigades of U.S. infantry in Vietnam. One was airmobile infantry of the 3d Brigade, 1st Cav Division, under the command of veteran aviator, BG James F. Hamlet. The other is the 196th Light Infantry Brigade at Da Nang under the command of BG Joseph C. McDonough. Both units took their tasks most seriously and recognized that, although their days in Vietnam might be numbered, they had to live up to the fine record of their predecessors.

## Gunships in forefront

The gunship guys come on strong, as they always have. Particularly noteworthy is F Battery of the 79th Aerial Field Artillery commanded by MAJ Laurence McKay. This unit is expert in aerial rocketry. Its Cobras have bolstered the defenders of An Loc on several occasions.

You can sense the pride of the unit despite the fact that it has lost several of its aircraft in combat since the assault on Loc Ninh and An Loc on 12 April in a battle where the "Blue Max" battery destroyed six tanks and forced the remainder to withdraw into nearby rubber plantations.

F Troop, 4th Cavalry, flies out of Hue Phu Bai and protects the northern approaches to Hue. It is commanded by MAJ John Spencer. Scouts and guns reconnoiter southern Quang Tri province. It, too, has killed tanks, one of which was destroyed by aerial scouts CPT Ron Radcliffe and SP4 William LaBore. They dropped a white phosphorus grenade from their OH-6 into the turret of an attacking tank.

I had lunch with CPT Radcliffe some days later. Unfortunately, he was hit in the shoulder on 24 May during a low level reconnaissance for an airmobile assault. I was told that he was the local hero having flown as a scout in OH-6s for more than three years in combat.

The 361st Aerial Weapons Company is the last gun outfit in Vietnam. Its guns patrol the Kontum perimeter.

## No lack of resolve

The Vietnamese units, despite a bad press, are going about their jobs with determination. It is noteworthy that the refugee flow has been from enemy occupied areas into friendly perimeters. I should point out that it is more difficult to maintain a system of widely separated independent outposts and fortifications than it is to concentrate around them individually and pick them off one by one.

I visited at length with LTG Nguyen Van Minh, CG of III Corps who was my counterpart in Bac Lieu. He commanded the 21st Infantry Division from 1965-1968. The 5th ARVN Division commander who did not leave An Loc during the entire siege was BG Le Van Hung, formerly commander

## Reserve Components



FT. MEADE — Shown following the transfer of the first CH-47 Chinook to a USAR unit in the First Army Area are, l-r, LTG C.E. Hutchin, Jr., CG, FUSA; BG I.A. Reitz, CG, 97th USAR Command; CPT Michael Brock, OpnsO, 195th Avn Co (ASH), USAR; and MG K.L. Johnson, DCG, Reserve Forces, FUSA. Sixteen aircraft are involved in the transfer.

of the 31st Infantry Regiment at Vi Thanh during my days with the 21st Division.

The battalions that fought in An Loc were down to platoon size before the siege was lifted. There was no lack of resolve on the part of the defenders to hold the town.

I had tea with COL Ly Tong Ba, Commander of the 23rd Division in Kontum. He also remained at his post despite heavy enemy shelling. He was confident that the enemy had been substantially more hurt than his own forces. Several days after I left, COL Ba was presented his first star by President Nguyen Van Thieu, following the defeat of a strong enemy armor thrust on the east side of Kontum.

I also visited MG Pham Van Phu, Commanding General 1st ARVN Division. General Phu pointed out that his troops had been in constant contact with the NVA since 9 March when the enemy first welled out of the Ashau Valley and tackled fire base Veghel. His troops stand on the western approaches to Hue, astride a natural approach to the old capital from the west.

I found LTG Trong, commander of I Corps, to be well aware of the threat to Hue from the west as well as down the Highway 1 access from Quang Tri. However, he was looking beyond the defense at Hue to the day when he would have to recover the areas now in NVA hands. He expressed great appreciation for the Army Aviation support being provided by the 11th Combat Aviation Group under COL Jim Leslie. Incidentally, Jim replaced COL Bob Holloman who was wounded in the foot and evacuated during the Quang Tri operation.

One measure of the intensity of fighting and the dedication of the Vietnamese was provided by



## VIETNAM/ Continued from P. 9

COL Ross Franklin, Senior Advisor of the 21st Division. By 17 May the division in its attempts to open the road from Lai Khe to An Loc had lost seven of its nine Maneuver Battalion commanders, either wounded or killed.

The North Vietnamese attack across the DMZ has brought about some changes in equipment. Infantrymen now carry the Law (Light Antitank Weapon) shoulder-fired antitank weapon. The U.S. Army has dispatched two types of helicopter-fired missiles and a new dual purpose warhead for the 2.75" aerial rocket.

Both the TOW and the SS-11 wire guided missiles are in use against enemy armor and other point targets. The SS-11 has been the only operational aerial antitank weapon since the late 1950s. It requires a high degree of gunner skill because it must be flown to the target through the use of a joystick.

On the other hand, the TOW is a new missile with greatly increased reliability and accuracy. It has existed only in aerial R&D applications but is in the hands of ground troops now. Results against enemy tanks have been spectacular.

### 80% hit ratio

When I arrived in Saigon, LTG William J. McCaffrey, Deputy CG of USARV, told me, "You don't have to worry about the TOW. It has user acceptance." We employed the TOW initially in the Kontum area, mounted on UH-1B aircraft. At this writing, it has scored 65 hits out of a total of 81 combat launches. The misses and malfunctions which make up the difference are attributed to exceeding the capabilities of the missile or the aircraft.

The TOW delivery element primarily came from Combat Developments Command Experimental



HUE — Shown with a captured 14.5 mm machine gun are SP5 Richard L. Dyer (left) and 1LT James L. Hogg. (USA photo)

Center (CDEC) at Fort Ord. It is commanded by LTC Patrick L. Feore who had been working with the TOW-equipped Hueys at Hunter Liggett Military Reservation and Fort Lewis on helicopter survivability testing. None of the crew members had fired an actual TOW before arrival in Vietnam.

Gunners who have killed North Vietnamese tanks are CWOs Danny G. Rowe, Lester M. Whiteis, Jr., and Carroll W. Lain; pilots are Edmond C. Smith, Douglas R. Hixon, Jr., and Scott E. Fenwick. All are considered to be "tank aces."

Major General George Putnam, as commander of the 1st Aviation Brigade in 1970, told me that the Air Cavalry organization was the best TO&E in the U.S. Army since the triangular division of WW II. You can see the utility of the Cav every day.

In fact, there is a great dependence on the scouts and the guns in all areas of Vietnam. These teams are employed around the tight ARVN perimeter to gain independence and provide some elbow room for the friendly troops. Their input is utilized in B-52 targeting. They scout the landing zones for airmobile and amphibious operations. They do the pick and shovel work which brings in friendly artillery. They are credited with detecting enemy attacks before the hostiles could cross the line of departure. On a number of occasions, cavalry intelligence has pre-empted coordinated attacks on friendly positions.

When you talk to the cavalry people they are very matter of fact about their business. Major John Spencer's "F" of the 4th Cav policed up a large quantity of enemy weapons from destroyed tanks north of Hue. The accompanying photograph, furnished by MAJ Spencer, shows two members of that troop with a captured 14.5 mm machine gun from an armored carrier.

### Survivability factor

The scout pilots are very attached to their birds, and universally feel that the OH-6 is an outstanding scout. Major John P. Kennedy, commander of "F" Troop, 8th Cav at Hue Phu Bai, and CPT Daniel Lott, his scout platoon leader, point out that in four LOH losses in the preceding 60 days only one man was injured. They list maneuverability and survivability as the prime characteristics they like in the Hughes OH-6.

Major Marion "Marty" Davis of the 131st Mohawk Company at Marble Mountain has an entirely different view of the war. He, too, gathers intelligence but he sees it on film. Since the NVA are congregating around specific geographic objectives, he is using less SLAR and more infrared sensors as he gathers data on the enemy.

Not all of the great work is being done in the air. The mechanics of all organizations are bending their efforts to keep the aircraft flying. Those in F Battery of the 79th Artillery at Long Thanh are putting up 10 or 11 of their 12 Cobras every day. This is a supreme effort that has been going on for nearly two months.



When I visited Kontum Airfield I found three air traffic controllers who were living in a bunker and manning a tower on a 24-hour basis. *Specialist Gary Davis* and *David J. McDowell* regulated all air traffic in the area; *Specialist Rick Vycitak* operated the GCA.

Normally they worked with *Chinooks*, *Hueys*, and *Cobras* during the daytime when fixed wing aircraft could not land at Kontum without being shelled. At night they brought in cargo airplanes until portions of their airfield were overrun by the NVA. One of their associates had been wounded in the tower during a shelling attack.

Concerning tactics, the new sophistication in the war requires some different approaches than have been used in the past. In the Kontum area everyone shoots at the *Cobras* whereas in the old days the enemy would hold his fire when the *Cobras* arrived. This is true whether the *Cobras* are alone or escorting *Chinooks*.

*Cobras* are given high grades by Advisors on the ground in all areas because they are able to shift fires during their target attacks and engage weapons firing at them. This is a capability not enjoyed by fixed wing aircraft.

Because of heavy volumes of ground fire, the *Cobras* at An Loc made their target runs much higher than in the past. With the advent of surface-to-air heat-seeking missiles, aircraft operating around An Loc and Hue now fly low level. They seldom climb higher than 300 ft and find they have little aircraft damage due to small arms. Cavalry teams operate with the *Cobras* running low level behind the scouts in much the same fashion as the teams operate in mid-intensity warfare testing in California.

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## The record is clear

In other words, our helicopters have adjusted to the threat and continue to operate effectively. The new tactics validate our long-held concepts for operation in high threat antiaircraft environments. To those critics who feel that "*helicopters just can't survive*," the record of the current offensive is clear. While losses have climbed, so has the intensity of combat. Where highly responsive discriminating fires have been required, *Cobra* gunships have provided them and often have saved the day. This much has not changed in Vietnam. The Vietnamese soldier still depends on helicopter-delivered fires.

I left Vietnam with a strong feeling that the situation is substantially better than during Tet 1968. While there have been losses, and further important tests will occur, the situation has stabilized. Time and firepower is now on the side of the South Vietnamese. They also possess the mobility differential in the form of VNAF helicopters.

Upon returning to Washington, I was asked to set some trip notes to paper for use in an OSD press conference. These notes are printed on page 2. Their substance also has been provided to staff

## Reassignment

On June 30, the Department of the Army announced that Brigadier General William J. Maddox, Jr., the Director of Army Aviation, Office, Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, would become the Commanding General, Combat Systems Group, U.S. Army Combat Developments Command, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan., effective August 7.

On the same day, Brigadier General Jack W. Hemingway who preceded General Maddox as the Aviation Director, retired from the Army in formal ceremonies held at Ft. Hood, Tex. General Hemingway was serving as Chief of Staff, Project MASSTER, at the time of his retirement.

members of several Congressional Committees that are principally concerned with Army airmobility matters.

Colonel William Miller, who recently returned from An Loc, also has been in Washington describing his experiences as Senior Advisor to the 5th ARVN Division<sup>1</sup> at An Loc during the siege. At this time the city underwent almost constant shelling. During one twenty-four hour period, over 7,000 artillery rounds hit within the 1 x 2 kilometer size city. He utilized *Cobra* gunships of "F" Battery, 79th Artillery, extensively for point target fires in and around the city.

Because of the heavier utilization of our aircraft, the USARV requested that the Army's *Floating Aviation Maintenance Facility (FAMF)*, the USNS "*Corpus Christi Bay*," be returned to Vietnam to back up the maintenance units in country. The ship is in harness again along the South Vietnamese coast.

If there was any doubt that the *Corpus Christi Bay* should be retained in the force structure, it was dispelled by the rapid reaction of the ship to intensified wartime duties. Such a facility provides a quick reaction maintenance capability for just such short notice contingencies in most areas of the world.

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## Thailand

Thailand is absorbing a large influx of units supporting the increased activity in Vietnam. I made a short side trip to Thailand and visited COL Ralph Benefield, CO of the 70th Aviation Detachment, a subordinate unit of the U.S. Army SUPTHAI. The Detachment operates aircraft among the major U.S. facilities in Thailand. Colonel Benefield has since departed Thailand and the 70th Detachment is now commanded by MAJ Stephen Smith.

Moving up country, I visited BG Jack Vessey, the Deputy Chief of the Military Assistance Command

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<sup>1</sup>Colonel Miller has since moved to his next assignment as a Brigade Commander in the 101st Air-

## VIETNAM/Continued from Page 13

Thailand. Together we traveled to Vientiane, Laos and to Long Tieng, the headquarters of *General Vang Pau's* Irregular Force. I ran into *MAJ Millard Burke* and *MAJ Robert Moberg*, both aviators who serve as Assistant Army Attaches at Vientiane.

As I left Southeast Asia, or the "Orient Extreme", as it was known to the French, I felt a strong twinge of regret. It was difficult to leave an area where modern history is being written by the courage and ingenuity of so many fine Americans. I realized again that while Vietnam had changed since my last assignment in 1970, the true nature of the war was still the same.

The North Vietnamese still coveted South Vietnam, which they renounced in the 1954 Geneva accords. I thought of *John Paul Vann*, who had hosted me at dinner a few days before. He had stayed with the war from the early '60s and had the patience to endure the difficult because he also sensed that the cause was just. Unfortunately, when I said goodbye to him in Pleiku, he had only a few days to live. He died in Vietnam and he died in a helicopter, which is most typical of the way he worked and lived.

### Promotions

Congratulations to the nine aviators who were selected for Brigadier General on a list of 62 names (See Box). Aviator colonels make up about 10% of the total colonel strength in the Army. The selection rate was 14.5%.

### Proficiency flying

By now you have received a "by position" listing of all positions considered to be truly Prefix 6. These are individuals who are performing aviation duties outside of cockpits who have a continuing need to maintain flight proficiency. We in the Aviation Directorate conducted a very detailed analysis of all commanders' requests for Prefix 6 positions.

degree of individual readiness, we favor retention of personnel on proficiency flying rolls.

However, in the interests of monetary savings, we were forced to trim those with inadequate justification. These individuals will be granted a Prefix X, which means they are in aviation related assignments but are not required to maintain an immediate level of flying proficiency. All those who are considered Prefix X, or whose proficiency flying has been waived because of being in non-aviation related jobs, or being students for periods of over 90 days, can expect to meet certain minimum non-flying requirements in order to remain on flight status.

In addition to the requirement to pass an annual physical examination, the excused aviator will be required to take the annual written aviation examination and to perform certain flight simulator work. In return for this effort, he will be continued on flight pay. Exact provisions will be printed in a revision to Army Regulation 96-1 early in the new fiscal year.

### Sob!

The ridiculous accident of the month comes in a *small* package this month. The less said about it the better, as long as someone heeds the lesson: After normal touchdown, pilot inadvertently raised gear instead of flaps. Aircraft settled to runway as all three wheels retracted fully.

If you like your ridiculous flight of the month in a *bigger* package, try this one: Pilot and two passengers entered aircraft during reconnaissance mission with intent for flight. Pilot went through checklist, called "Clear!" and started aircraft. N1 reached 60-62 percent; TOT went to 880 and then dropped to 840 for 8 seconds. Pilot and passengers noticed blades not turning, aborted start. TOT dropped to approximately 200. Motored starter for approximately 3 seconds. Check of aircraft revealed main rotor blade tie-down had not been removed. Aircraft was recovered by lowboy.

**FLY SMART!**

## Army Aviation



### Eagle-Eyed Reader Picks Up Cover Discrepancies

General Maddox, Art Kesten, et al:

Come on now, gang! If you have to take an air brush to a Huey picture, DON'T erase the stabilizer bar — it makes for a very unsafe aircraft!

I know that it's a very old picture that you used (Note the blocked fatigue caps) but even then Hueys flew with a bar on each side, not with just the one you have pictured on your front and back March 1972 covers.

CPT Patrick D. Richardson  
USAAVNS Fort Rucker, Ala.

P.S. Don't get too upset; I really enjoy the magazine, especially the "Directorate" section where it's obvious you're trying to get the news to us fast. Just thought I'd put in a word for safety.

(Ed. Note: Pat, you win one and you lose one. The stabilizer bar was airbrushed; you have a sharp eye! ... However, the photo is not an old one and the blocked hats are worn by non-U.S. (Red Cross) personnel.)





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types of aircraft. The jet is a "fast mover." You understand that the helicopter is among the "slow movers" but you do not hear that term.

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## Gunships in forefront

The gunship guys come on strong, as they always have. Particularly noteworthy is *F Battery* of the *79th Aerial Field Artillery* commanded by *MAJ Laurence McKay*. This unit is expert in aerial rocketry. Its *Cobras* have bolstered the defenders of An Loc on several occasions.

You can sense the pride of the unit despite the fact that it has lost several of its aircraft in combat since the assault on Loc Ninh and An Loc on 12 April in a battle where the "Blue Max" battery destroyed six tanks and forced the remainder to withdraw into nearby rubber plantations.

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## No lack of resolve

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## Reserve Components



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### 80% hit ratio

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## The record is clear

In other words, our helicopters have adjusted to the threat and continue to operate effectively. The new tactics validate our long-held concepts for operation in high threat antiaircraft environments. To those critics who feel that "*helicopters just can't survive*," the record of the current offensive is clear. While losses have climbed, so has the intensity of combat. Where highly responsive discriminating fires have been required, *Cobra* gunships have provided them and often have saved the day. This much has not changed in Vietnam. The Vietnamese soldier still depends on helicopter-delivered fires.

I left Vietnam with a strong feeling that the situation is substantially better than during Tet 1968. While there have been losses, and further important tests will occur, the situation has stabilized. Time and firepower is now on the side of the South Vietnamese. They also possess the mobility differential in the form of VNAF helicopters.

Upon returning to Washington, I was asked to set some trip notes to paper for use in an OSD press conference. These notes are printed on page 2. Their substance also has been provided to staff

## Reassignment

On June 30, the Department of the Army announced that Brigadier General William J. Maddox, Jr., the Director of Army Aviation, Office, Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, would become the Commanding General, Combat Systems Group, U.S. Army Combat Developments Command, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan., effective August 7.

On the same day, Brigadier General Jack W. Hemingway who preceded General Maddox as the Aviation Director, retired from the Army in formal ceremonies held at Ft. Hood, Tex. General Hemingway was serving as Chief of Staff, Project MASSTER, at the time of his retirement.

members of several Congressional Committees that are principally concerned with Army airmobility matters.

Colonel William Miller, who recently returned from An Loc, also has been in Washington describing his experiences as Senior Advisor to the 5th ARVN Division<sup>1</sup> at An Loc during the siege. At this time the city underwent almost constant shelling. During one twenty-four hour period, over 7,000 artillery rounds hit within the 1 x 2 kilometer size city. He utilized *Cobra* gunships of "F" Battery, 79th Artillery, extensively for point target fires in and around the city.

Because of the heavier utilization of our aircraft, the USARV requested that the Army's *Floating Aviation Maintenance Facility (FAMF)*, the USNS "*Corpus Christi Bay*," be returned to Vietnam to back up the maintenance units in country. The ship is in harness again along the South Vietnamese coast.

If there was any doubt that the *Corpus Christi Bay* should be retained in the force structure, it was dispelled by the rapid reaction of the ship to intensified wartime duties. Such a facility provides a quick reaction maintenance capability for just such short notice contingencies in most areas of the world.

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## Thailand

Thailand is absorbing a large influx of units supporting the increased activity in Vietnam. I made a short side trip to Thailand and visited COL Ralph Benefield, CO of the 70th Aviation Detachment, a subordinate unit of the U.S. Army SUPTHAI. The Detachment operates aircraft among the major U.S. facilities in Thailand. Colonel Benefield has since departed Thailand and the 70th Detachment is now commanded by MAJ Stephen Smith.

Moving up country, I visited BG Jack Vessey, the Deputy Chief of the Military Assistance Command

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<sup>1</sup>Colonel Miller has since moved to his next assignment as a Brigade Commander in the 101st Air-

## VIETNAM/ Continued from Page 13

Thailand. Together we traveled to Vientiane, Laos and to Long Tieng, the headquarters of *General Vang Pau's* Irregular Force. I ran into *MAJ Millard Burke* and *MAJ Robert Moberg*, both aviators who serve as Assistant Army Attaches at Vientiane.

As I left Southeast Asia, or the "Orient Extreme", as it was known to the French, I felt a strong twinge of regret. It was difficult to leave an area where modern history is being written by the courage and ingenuity of so many fine Americans. I realized again that while Vietnam had changed since my last assignment in 1970, the true nature of the war was still the same.

The North Vietnamese still coveted South Vietnam, which they renounced in the 1954 Geneva accords. I thought of *John Paul Vann*, who had hosted me at dinner a few days before. He had stayed with the war from the early '60s and had the patience to endure the difficult because he also sensed that the cause was just. Unfortunately, when I said goodbye to him in Pleiku, he had only a few days to live. He died in Vietnam and he died in a helicopter, which is most typical of the way he worked and lived.

### Promotions

Congratulations to the nine aviators who were selected for Brigadier General on a list of 62 names (See Box). Aviator colonels make up about 10% of the total colonel strength in the Army. The selection rate was 14.5%.

### Proficiency flying

By now you have received a "by position" listing of all positions considered to be truly Prefix 6. These are individuals who are performing aviation duties outside of cockpits who have a continuing need to maintain flight proficiency. We in the Aviation Directorate conducted a very detailed analysis of all commanders' requests for Prefix 6 positions.

degree of individual readiness, we favor retention of personnel on proficiency flying rolls.

However, in the interests of monetary savings, we were forced to trim those with inadequate justification. These individuals will be granted a Prefix X, which means they are in aviation related assignments but are not required to maintain an immediate level of flying proficiency. All those who are considered Prefix X, or whose proficiency flying has been waived because of being in non-aviation related jobs, or being students for periods of over 90 days, can expect to meet certain minimum non-flying requirements in order to remain on flight status.

In addition to the requirement to pass an annual physical examination, the excused aviator will be required to take the annual written aviation examination and to perform certain flight simulator work. In return for this effort, he will be continued on flight pay. Exact provisions will be printed in a revision to Army Regulation 96-1 early in the new fiscal year.

### Sob!

The ridiculous accident of the month comes in a *small* package this month. The less said about it the better, as long as someone heeds the lesson: After normal touchdown, pilot inadvertently raised gear instead of flaps. Aircraft settled to runway as all three wheels retracted fully.

If you like your ridiculous flight of the month in a *bigger* package, try this one: Pilot and two passengers entered aircraft during reconnaissance mission with intent for flight. Pilot went through checklist, called "Clear!" and started aircraft. N1 reached 60-62 percent; TOT went to 880 and then dropped to 840 for 8 seconds. Pilot and passengers noticed blades not turning, aborted start. TOT dropped to approximately 200. Motored starter for approximately 3 seconds. Check of aircraft revealed main rotor blade tie-down had not been removed. Aircraft was recovered by lowboy.

**FLY SMART!**

## Army Aviation

March 31, 1972



### Eagle-Eyed Reader Picks Up Cover Discrepancies

General Maddox, Art Kesten, et al:

Come on now, gang! If you have to take an air brush to a Huey picture, DON'T erase the stabilizer bar — it makes for a very unsafe aircraft!

I know that it's a very old picture that you used (Note the blocked fatigue caps) but even then Hueys flew with a bar on each side, not with just the one you have pictured on your front and back March 1972 covers.

CPT Patrick D. Richardson  
USAAVNS Fort Rucker, Ala.

P.S. Don't get too upset; I really enjoy the magazine, especially the "Directorate" section where it's obvious you're trying to get the news to us fast. Just thought I'd put in a word for safety.

(Ed. Note: Pat, you win one and you lose one. The stabilizer bar was airbrushed; you have a sharp eye! ... However, the photo is not an old one and the blocked hats are worn by non-U.S. (Red Cross) personnel.)