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HAWK

NOVEMBER 1967





1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

HAWK

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DEPUTY BRIGADE COMMANDER

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COMMANDER, 12TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP

COL Nicholas G. Psaki Jr.

COMMANDER, 17TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP

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NEWSLETTER



HUEYCOBRA UNDERGOES FINAL TESTING—

The sleek and speedy new AH-1G HUEYCOBRA is taking its final examinations prior to joining the Army aviation team in Vietnam.

Several of the new ships are in Vietnam for testing presently, and evaluation continues at the U.S. Army Aviation Test Board, Ft. Rucker, Ala. When the time comes for the HUEYCOBRA to go into combat in larger numbers, the Test Board wants to be sure the helicopter is absolutely ready.

The object of the testing program is to submit the AH-1G to even more rigorous schedules than other helicopters are now flying in Vietnam. For example, at Yuma, Ariz., where the Test Board examined the HUEYCOBRA'S weapons systems, the HUEYCOBRA fired 2 million rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition and 15,000 2.75 inch rockets.

The new ship should prove to be an effective addition to the Army inventory of aircraft in Vietnam. It has greater range, speed, and firepower than previous Army helicopters. Since it has been developed from other models of the HUEY series, incorporating the same transmission, engine and rotor system as the UH-1B, no special training will be necessary for pilots.

The HUEYCOBRA is built by the Bell Helicopter Company of Fort Worth, Texas.

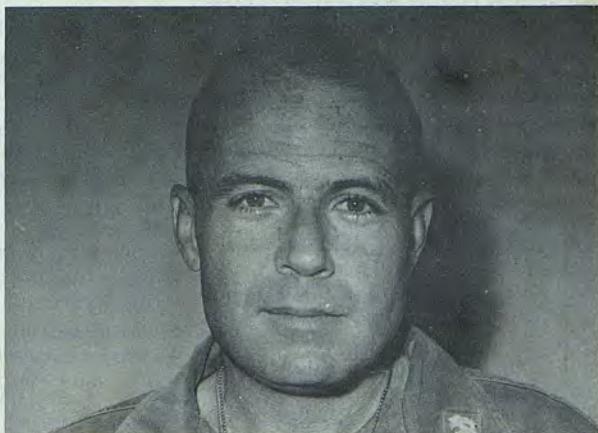
THE 175TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY has been presented the Defense Transportation Award by the National Transportation Association.

The award was presented by Association President Kenneth L. Vore and Major General James C. Sherrill, USAF, chairman, Joint Transportation Board of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during the 22nd Annual Transportation and Logistics Forum of NDTA in Los Angeles Oct. 4.

The 175th was one of four military units assigned to Vietnam—one from each service—cited for “unusual and outstanding service in the field of military transportation and logistics.”

Nominations for the Defense Transportation Award were submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff by Commander in Chief, Pacific, Admiral U.S.G. Sharp. The Joint Transportation Board of JCS made the final selections.

CWO DALY AVIATOR OF YEAR—Chief Warrant Officer Jerome Daly, the Army's most decorated Warrant Officer aviator (see HAWK, Oct. issue), has been selected Army Aviator of the Year in an annual competition sponsored by the Army Aviation Association of America. CWO Daly, of the 121st Assault Helicopter Company, holds the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars for valor, sixty-eight Air Medals, three for valor, two Purple Hearts and two Vietnamese decorations for gallantry, making him one of the most decorated soldiers in the Vietnamese war.



CWO Jerome Daly

BRIGADE PERSPECTIVE



MG George P. Seneff Jr., former brigade Commander received the award for the First Aviation Brigade.

Unique among Army aviation units as the first of its kind, yet little more than a year old, the 1st Aviation Brigade has established an amazing record of achievement, gained the respect and admiration of senior commanders throughout Vietnam, and fully earned the honor to be nominated for selection as AAAA Aviation Unit of the Year.

First organized on March 1, 1966, the brigade headquarters was given the mission of command and administration of most of the non-divisional aviation units scattered the entire length of the Republic of Vietnam. Included on the brigade's troop list initially were two group headquarters with six battalion headquarters and 31 aviation companies. By March 31, 1967 the roster had expanded to 11 battalions and 46 aviation companies.

The total achievements of the 1st Aviation Brigade defy recounting in a narrative as concise as this because each of the brigade's more than 15,000 officers and men and each of its more than 1,000 aircraft could contribute at least a paragraph to this nomination.

AS AN ADDED HIGHLIGHT IN ITS BRIEF BUT REMARKABLE HISTORY, THE 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE WITH ALL ASSIGNED AND ATTACHED UNITS WAS SELECTED AS ARMY AVIATION UNIT OF THE YEAR IN AN ANNUAL COMPETITION SPONSORED BY THE ARMY AVIATION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA.

MAJOR GENERAL G. P. SENEFF, JR., FORMER COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE BRIGADE, AND SERGEANT MAJOR DOUGLAS W. SIMS BRIGADE SERGEANT MAJOR, ATTENDED THE AWARDS CEREMONY HELD 10 OCTOBER IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NOMINATION FOR THE AWARD IS REPRINTED HERE FOR ALL TO SEE. IT TELLS THE STORY OF THE 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE—YOUR BRIGADE.

However, part of the recounting of these achievements demands a statistical summarization of the performance of these men and machines. During the twelve month period on which this nomination is based, more than three-quarters of a million hours were logged on the brigade's aircraft. In the early months of the brigade's growth, insufficient aircraft and aviators to meet the demands of ground commanders as they learned the advantages of the third dimension in ground combat, required as much as 150% of DA flying hour programs to be flown by available ships. At the same time, it was not uncommon for individual aviators to log as many as 160 hours per month. This eventually led to the establishment of a limitation of 140 hours per consecutive thirty day period for each brigade aviator—a flying hour total considered by many to be impossible by the 90-hour pre-Vietnam standards.

Despite the rigors of flying these many hours in an active combat environment, brigade aviators consistently produced accident rates lower

than those for all of US Army, Vietnam. For the rated period the brigade's cumulative rate was 29.4 accidents per 100,000 flying hours as opposed to the USARV rate of 33.5 for the same period. Although these figures are higher than world-wide rates, many of the accidents included in these totals were combat induced, resulting from a combination of hazardous weather conditions, dust-obscured and confined landing zones and the ever-present threat of enemy ground fire.

This enemy ground fire, becoming increasingly effective with time, produced more than 1,000 aircraft hits during the year. Despite the increase in fire, resultant monthly combat loss rates have remained as low as they have been before. This can be attributed only to refinements in tactical procedures and skillful flying.

Sixty percent of the aircraft downed by enemy ground fire were recovered, repaired and returned to flying duty—often within a matter of hours. Ground crews and organizational maintenance personnel provided out-

standing support. They maintained EDP and availability rates that would turn any Stateside unit commander green with envy. These rates were always within a few percentage points of DA standards in spite of the fact that monthly flying hour totals for most of the brigade's fleet exceeded DA standards by as much as 150%.

Results of the brigade's countless hours in the sky were nothing short of phenomenal. More than three and a half million troops were lifted by brigade aircraft in nearly 1.8 million sorties. The vast majority of these troops were combat infantry inserted into tactical landing zones in the three corps areas. Helicopter gunships and the troop-carrying "slick" door gunners providing direct fire support during these insertions, subsequent extractions and a myriad of other special missions, accounted for 8,400 Viet Cong killed, nearly 4,000 enemy sampans sunk and more than 4,300 enemy structures and fortifications destroyed. In addition, nearly 800 more sampans and more than 2,000 enemy structures were severely damaged.

Participating in all but a very few of the major ground operations in the II, III and IV Corps areas to include such well known ones as Attleboro, Cedar Falls, and Junction City and providing sizeable aviation support in the US Marine Corps zone in the I Corps area, brigade re-supply aircraft managed to airlift a staggering 258,000 tons of cargo. These loads ranged from artillery pieces and ammunition to pigs and rice for displaced Vietnamese refugees.

Provision of this massive support and troop lift was not without its toll, however. Eighty-two of the brigade's gallant aviators, crew men and others gave their lives defending the principles of freedom and the honor of the "Golden Hawk" brigade. Not to go unheralded, these men and others have been recognized for their gallantry by the award of nearly 2,500 US decorations for valor, to include seven Distinguished Service Crosses. Units too have received recognition for conspicuous contributions to the struggle in Vietnam. Four Meritorious Unit Commendations, two Valorous Unit Awards and one Presidential Unit Citation have been presented to brigade companies and battalions. In addition, many aviation units have been officially commended by ground

commanders they have supported.

Although complete, the statistical narration given above does not provide recognition of the many innovations conceived, tested and proven during actual operations of brigade units. Operating over some of the most diverse terrain in the world in support of troops from several nations, one of the first tasks facing the new brigade was the development of standard tactics and techniques. Initial efforts in this direction soon led to the publication of an operations manual designed for both ground and aviation unit commanders. This pamphlet, the first and only one of its kind led to the establishment of standard planning procedures, common nomenclature and a set of standard flying formations and techniques which have contributed immeasurably to the outstanding successes enjoyed by all units in Vietnam. This same standardization greatly simplified the training problems of inbound aviation and ground commanders during the massive buildup of 1966 and 1967.

As practical experience revealed more and better possibilities, a revised manual was published capitalizing on the lessons learned through actual combat application. This revision process continues today.

As an outgrowth of the same inquisitiveness and interest in doing more than "just a job", the brigade's ingenious aviators and crewmen designed, tested and used many improvised items of equipment and weapons in efforts to further enhance their effectiveness. Some of these experiments have fallen from use as quickly as they were conceived. Many of them have been refined and are now, or will soon be, standard equipment.

An example of one such experiment, the FIREFLY, began as a crude cluster of landing lights designed to provide night illumination for helicopter gunships seeking targets. The light system is soon to be standardized as a light weight, more powerfully beamed light with added infrared capability. Hand in hand with the development of the lighting system came an entirely new concept of night interdiction capability for Army aviation.

Another example, probably first conceived when a crewman threw a smoke grenade from a helicopter, has resulted in a standardized smoke producing device attached to the exhaust system of the UH-1. This im-

provement too has resulted in dramatic changes in the tactical employment and delivery of heli-borne forces.

Following the creed of "You ask-we deliver", brigade units have developed and perfected techniques for night combat assaults which have proven very successful in the central highlands of Vietnam. Living up to the same creed, brigade units have demonstrated complete airmobility to include organizational and support maintenance, thereby providing a firm and realistic basis for modification to existing tables of organization and equipment as newer type units are planned.

Through close and constant liaison with such agencies as ACTIV (Army Concept Team in Vietnam), Natick Laboratories and AMC (Army Material Command), lead time on development of new items of equipment was significantly reduced by combining research, troop testing and evaluation of experimental items under brigade auspices. Such actions have lead to the adoption of the NOMEX fire-retardant flight suits, individual and built-in protective armor for aviators and crewmen, new and improved navigational aids, avionics gear and airfield control equipment, to mention just a few.

Brigade interest in developing and testing of survival equipment and survival/escape and evasion training is aimed at establishment of a single manager Life Support System at DA level to monitor and coordinate all aspects of this important phase of combat aviation.

The results of these innovations and improvements in techniques and equipment are not enjoyed solely by brigade units. Nearly all of them have had and will have a tremendous impact on future planning for all of Army aviation.

The challenge is obvious. The response is unanimous. Every man in the 1st Aviation Brigade continually strives for complete recognition of the contributions and capabilities of Army aviation--not as a support arm but as a combat arm of decision.

It is therefore with great pride that I enter the 1st Aviation Brigade into the competition for AAAA designation as Army Aviation Unit of the year.

BRUCE PALMER JR.

Lieutenant General, USA

Deputy Commanding General

HQ, US Army Vietnam

Editorial:

LET US GIVE THANKS

More than 200 years ago the Pilgrims gathered to celebrate what is now known as the first "Thanksgiving". These people had endured severe weather, threat of attack from hostile natives, and the loneliness that is a part of being separated from all that is familiar. Their celebration was an expression of thanks for being alive, and a proclamation of their good faith in continued success in the future.

To the soldier serving in Vietnam, this Thanksgiving Day may lack some of the luster of past celebrations. But he is actually in a *better* position to understand the true meaning of this holiday than many of his fellow Americans at home. The soldier in Vietnam, like the pilgrims, is in a strange land, and experiences many of the same conditions that plagued his ancestors. He is sometimes lonely, but he is never alone. He can also remember home and know that soon he will return to the life and the people he loves.

When he gets home, he will probably look with a new respect at the things he might once have taken for granted. The same things the people in Vietnam are now fighting for.

This Thanksgiving Day, the American soldier in Vietnam has every reason to give sincere thanks—if not for what he has here, then for what he has at home. We do have much to be thankful for.



Chaplain's Corner

Chaplin (Maj) Alfred T. Forrest

A high-wire walker had his wire stretched across the very brink of Niagara Falls. A large crowd was watching him perform breathtaking acrobatics on the almost invisible strand.

The performer turned on his platform and asked the audience, "Do you believe that I can push a man across the river in a wheelbarrow?" A murmur of assent came from the throng. "Which of you may I wheel across?" He asked. There was a long silence. Finally a man stepped forward. He sat down in the wheelbarrow and the performer pushed him across the river on the thin wire. That man had faith, and acted on it.

In St. Matthew we read that Peter bade Christ to let him walk on the water, and the Lord gave him a gracious invitation saying, "Come". The door was open for Peter to prove his faith. Peter was invited to walk where none but the feet of faith dared to go. "And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus."

The seemingly impossible can be accomplished through simple faith in the Word of Christ. There was a momentary failure on the part of Peter, when he saw the wind boisterous. He was afraid, and beginning to sink cried, "Lord, save me!". I am sure that Peter realized that apart from the Lord's continual help he could do nothing but tremble and sink, for "immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him."

Peter had trusted and acted on his faith, and God upheld him. He will do the same for you when you walk with the Lord.

from the

Career Counselor

"If birds fly over the rainbow, why, then, oh why can't I?"

These words from the popular song "Over the Rainbow" might reflect man's age-old dream of being able to fly. Through the Army's Warrant Officer Flight Training Program, a lot of young men are realizing this dream.

You too can fly. The Flight Training Program is open to personnel who have a high school education or equivalent and can meet the physical requirements. Personnel who qualify may specify a preference for fixed or rotary wing training.

Rotary wing training is divided into two parts. The first, pre-flight and primary flight is conducted at Ft. Wolters, Tex. This phase lasts 12 weeks, and the WO Candidate receives instruction in aerodynamics, communications, and meteorology among other subjects.

After completion of this first phase, the WO Candidate goes to Ft. Rucker, Ala., for 21 weeks of advanced training. Fixed wing training is conducted entirely at Ft. Rucker.

Upon graduation from Ft. Rucker, the former candidate receives his wings and becomes a Warrant Officer Aviator, highly respected for his technical ability and training as a specialist. In rank and precedence, he is accorded the military courtesies and enjoys the privileges of a commissioned officer.

If you really want to be a pilot, and you think you have what it takes, see your unit career counselor soon!

VIETNAM: PROFILE OF AN ERA

II: French Rule To Present

A walk down the streets of Saigon or any other large city in the Republic of Vietnam will provide graphic evidence of the extent of French influence on the Vietnamese way of life. Many restaurants specialize in French foods, road signs use the European kilometer system and French is more widely spoken and understood than English.

This influence, the result of nearly a century of French occupation, began in 1858 when a French naval squadron seized the port of Tourane (now Da Nang). French interest in the country was motivated by commercial, military and religious considerations.

It took the French until 1884 to gain control of Vietnam, and even when conquered, the Vietnamese people were as rebellious as they had been under Chinese rule. There were frequent revolts, and a large number of extremist organizations sprang up, the most noteworthy being one in 1925 led by a young Moscow-trained Communist name Nguyen Ai Quoc—later known under the alias of "Ho Chi Minh".

In spite of Vietnamese unrest, however, the French made many significant contributions to the small nation during the next 50 years. France initiated exten-

sive programs of public works, public health and sanitation. A network of roads was built to connect separated parts of the country, and many new crops were fostered and vast areas of land were irrigated.

With the fall of France to Germany in 1940, Vietnam became occupied by Japan, an ally of Germany. The Japanese stayed until the end of the war in 1945. When they evacuated they left Vietnam in a military and political vacuum.

Ho Chi Minh, now leader of the Communist Viet Minh, was quick to move and take advantage of the chaos, seizing Hanoi and establishing the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" with himself as president.

In 1946 France entered into negotiations with the Viet Minh to determine the new status of Vietnam. The negotiations were unsuccessful, and war between the two broke out.

The war lasted seven and a half years, culminating with the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. At the Geneva conference which followed, an agreement was reached in which the Communists were to occupy the area north of the 17th Parallel, with the non-Communists south of the 17th.

The Communists seemed content to abide by the Geneva Agreement until 1957, when the Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communist) stepped up their guerrilla activities immensely. This Communist threat became so great that in 1961 President Ngo Dinh Diem wrote President Kennedy asking for help.

President Kennedy responded by sending military advisors and equipment. The Viet Cong, supplied by North Vietnam, attacked in ever-increasing strength throughout 1963 and 1964. The growing Communist activity soon became more than South Vietnam could effectively cope with, and in 1965 the U.S. became actively committed to the war effort.

Limited aerial warfare against North Vietnamese infiltration routes was begun in February of 1965 by the U.S. and South Vietnam. It was felt in Saigon and Washington that North Vietnam would not agree to a negotiated settlement until it saw victory was impossible. Air strikes against North Vietnam were suspended twice as evidence of a continuing desire for negotiations, but Hanoi ignored these gestures.

But South Vietnam's desire for liberty is strong, and the small nation is determined to fight Communist aggression until the freedom it has repeatedly fought for during its 2,000 year history is attained.

THE BRIGADE CHANGES HANDS

A new commanding general took the reins of the Army's largest operational aviation command in charge of command ceremonies at Long Binh in September.

Major General Robert R. Williams received the 1st Aviation Brigade colors and traditional green tabs of leadership from Major General G. P. Seneff, Jr., the first commanding general of the year-old brigade.

During the ceremony General W. C. Westmoreland, Commanding General, United States Army, Vietnam, presented General Seneff the Dis-

tinguished Service Medal, the nation's second highest award for meritorious service. Also making a presentation was Lieutenant General Chae, Commanding General, Republic of Korea Forces Vietnam, who presented General Seneff with the Order of Military Merit Chung Mu, Korea's second highest award for merit. Other guests included Lieutenant General Bruce Palmer, Jr., Deputy Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, and other senior commanders in Vietnam.

The change of command cere-

mony marked the third time that General Williams has replaced General Seneff during their military careers. The first was in 1955, when he replaced then Colonel Seneff as Chief of the Air-mobility Division, Office of the Chief of Research and Development, Washington, D.C. The second was in 1966, when he replaced Brigadier General Seneff as Director of Army Aviation upon General Seneff's assignment to Vietnam.

A 1940 Graduate of West Point, General Williams has been with Army aviation since its inception. He was the first Army aviator to receive the Master Aviator's Badge, and one of the first instructors of Army pilots from 1942-1944 in the Army Aviation Section of the Artillery School at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. His previous flight training had been through civilian contractors, making him a graduate of what is now known as "The Class Before One".

Providing a colorful background for the ceremony were the command and control helicopters of the brigade's 15 combat aviation battalions and two combat aviation groups, aligned with each unit's colors displayed in front of the ships. Music was provided by the 266th Army Band, Headquarters, United States Army Vietnam, under the direction of Chief Warrant Officer Walter R. Kinney.

General William C. Westmoreland and LG Bruce Palmer Jr. pin the green tabs of leadership on MG Robert R. Williams.





DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96384

To the Officers and Men of the 1st Aviation Brigade

As most of you know by now, I have departed for a new assignment in Germany. It is normal and expected of a departing commander that he say how sorry he is to leave his command. I too must say, "I'm sorry to leave you", and I assure you that I mean that most sincerely.

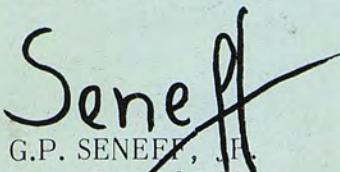
Most commanders must work long and hard to inspire their guys to produce for them. You men have reversed that requirement. I have found myself so inspired by your tremendous performance of duty that I have been hard put to measure up to the challenge of your standards.

Without exception, every man in the brigade has accomplished tasks considered impossible by normal standards. Crew chiefs and mechanics have done a fabulous job under next to impossible conditions. Aviators and gunners have extended themselves to the limit-far beyond the call of duty. NCO's, who are so scarce these days, are doing and have done an outstanding job teaching, training and leading our younger troops. Words simply cannot express my deep and sincere appreciation for the remarkable performance turned in by each one of you. You are superb.

For your country, the Army, and for Army Aviation, I thank you for what you are doing.

For myself, I thank you simply for the privilege of having served with you. I hope our paths may cross again.

Good Luck, Good Hunting and God Speed you safely home.


G.P. SENEFF, Jr.
Major General USA
Commanding



Among Vietnam's Best:

LANE ARMY

Lane Army Heliport, located at An Son, is rapidly gaining the reputation as "the ideal heliport in Vietnam".

The helicopter pilot who flies into Lane's Army Heliport for the first time has a favorable early impression. Approaching the backdrop of dark, shadowy mountains, the pilot begins his descent toward the airfield, which rises up from the valley floor to a steep knoll forming the center of the airfield. On the south approach are four "helipads" aligned and designed to park 116 aircraft at one time. To the north side—across the dividing hill—lies a parking ramp for the larger Chinooks.

Hovering taxiways run from the single landing pad with its big painted "H", and the pilot can hover his aircraft to any location on



HELIPORT

the parking ramp or to the refueling point. Across the hill again at the camp's center, large Chinooks can hover into a refueling area. Then pilots can move the tandem-rotor cargo and troop carrying ships to parkings talls, which are sheltered by sand filled barrel revetments for protection against mortar attack on the aircraft.

The main mission of the units located at Lane is to fly aircraft in support of forces from the Republic of Korea and the Free World. To do this properly, top-notch performance from pilots and maintenance personnel in key positions is needed. By having such a nice place to work and fly from, efficiency has increased, and in many cases, tours in Vietnam are being extended.





RUFUS, THE CRIMINAL MASCOT



Rufus the dog, the mascot of the 200th Assault Support Helicopter Company at Bear Cat, has a criminal record.

Rufus was the first member of the 200th to get a Delinquency Report in Vietnam.

It started back in the States at Ft. Benning, Ga., when the 200th found Rufus while on a field maneuver. The dog was immediately adopted by Specialist 5 Phillip Roscoe, flight engineer, and became a permanent part of the unit.

So when it came time for the 200th to move to the West Coast for deployment to Vietnam, a deal was made with the Air Force to fly Rufus to California. The Navy took over at the Coast and the dog was put aboard the aircraft carrier "Kula Gulf". After 18 days at sea, the ship reached Vung Tau, where Rufus was met by a Chinook helicopter and carried to Bear Cat. And the first thing that Rufus did after joining the unit was to go into Bien Hoa and get picked up and impounded

by the MP's, becoming the subject of the first DR the commanding officer of the 214th Combat Aviation Battalion received on his new company, the 200th.

A letter from the battalion commander freed Rufus and made the dog an authorized member of the 200th Assault Support Helicopter Company.

And now Rufus is going to have to settle down and stay in the compound at Bear Cat.

Rufus is pregnant.



Door Gunner

Remember your drill sergeant in basic training? One of his favorite themes went something like this: "That weapon is your sweetheart, wife, and lover. TAKE CARE OF IT!!! You treat it right, and someday it might return the favor by saving your life."

At the time the lecture probably didn't have much effect. But many troops serving in Vietnam today have just cause to thank that drill sergeant for his words of advice. And one of the most outstanding of these is the helicopter door gunner. Because he works with his weapon every day, he knows the importance of keeping it in top operating condition.

The gunner's role on an aircraft is an important one. He is responsible for protecting his ship on a mission. If trouble should occur and the ship is forced down, he is responsible for setting up a defense and guarding it until help arrives.

His primary job centers around his M-60 machine gun; cleaning, maintaining repairing, and sometimes shooting it. But the gunner's job, like many jobs in Army aviation, is an overlapping one. In addition to maintaining the ship's weapons, he also helps the crew chief maintain the helicopter, often working late hours to keep it in flying condition.

As any gunner will readily admit, the most enjoyable part of

his job involves flying. As one door gunner puts it: "That's where everything's happening!" And his experiences while flying are always interesting, often exciting, and sometimes dangerous.

Specialist 4 Larry Gibson, a gunner with the 128th Assault Helicopter Company at Phu Loi, had an encounter with one of the dangerous kind while on a mission in the central highlands recently.

The 128th was flying elements of the 173d Airborne Brigade into a hot landing zone in War Zone C. As Gibson's ship began to lift out of the LZ, heavy enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire raked the chopper, scoring 13 hits.

The pilot was cut about the face and hands as VC bullets shattered the plexiglass windshield. Gibson was knocked back against the firewall of the ship from a heavy blow to the head. "I thought it was shrapnel from a nearby exploding grenade, but didn't have time to think about it, or get scared," he said. "I just grabbed my machine gun and started firing back with everything I had."

On examining his flight helmet when he got back to base camp, Specialist Gibson discovered a large hole gouged through the right side by what appeared to have been a bullet. The entrance

hole went almost through the helmet, but neither the projectile nor an exit hole could be found. The object apparently spent itself on impact with the helmet and dropped out, leaving Gibson unmarked.

On seeing his helmet Gibson said, "I really started shaking then. I guess I'm about the luckiest guy around."

All of the gunner's contact is not made with the enemy, however. Specialist 4 Terry Garner of the 170th Assault Helicopter Company at Pleiku is gaining quite a reputation as a "big game hunter."

Garner's first trophy came when his ship set down in a clearing in the highlands and a deer wandered near. His second trophy came when three tigers ventured too close to his ship. He opened up on them with his M-60 and got one of the big cats.

The 170th now has a beautiful tiger rug added to the decorations in its operations building. When asked about future "safaris", Garner grins and says, "Would you believe an elephant?"

But whether he's shooting VC, tigers, or just performing maintenance on his guns and ship, it's agreed that the gunner is an indispensable member of the Army aviation team.

THE EARS OF VIETNAM

There's a tongue-in-cheek sign hanging on the wall of an office in the airfield tower at Can Tho that states: *we have done so much for so many for so long with so little that now we can do everything for everybody with nothing.*

The office is the base of operations for the platoon of men who run "Delta Center", the coordinating center for almost all flight following service in the Delta. The sign is an expression of tremendous pride in belonging to one of the most unique units in Vietnam—the 125th Air Traffic Company.

Never heard of it? If you're an aviator, you probably have, and don't know it. Every time you get behind the controls of an aircraft, you're in touch with the

125th Air Traffic Company.

This company, consisting of slightly more than 400 men, provides the majority of air traffic control in the Republic of Vietnam. Headquartered at Bien Hoa and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Theodore S. Ferry, the 125th has four Flight Regulating Platoons, scattered from Can Tho in the Delta to Pleiku in the central highlands.

Men of these platoons are on duty 24 hours a day, constantly keeping and "ear" on the ships flying in their areas, ready to react immediately in case of emergency.

Specialist 5 Jim Hill, Air Traffic Control Supervisor at the 4th Platoon's Delta Center, describes the air traffic controller's job thusly: "We keep in contact with

the aircraft at all times so we can relay messages to them, direct them away any from artillery or air strikes occurring along their line of flight, and, should one go down, we can have help on the way within minutes.

The men of the 125th perform these functions in a variety of places and circumstances. Some follow and direct air traffic from an airfield tower, as at Vinh Long. Others work out of the big vans of electronic equipment located at one of the flight coordinating centers, such as the ones at Can Tho, Tan Son Nhut and Pleiku. Still others work in small vans in more remote places such as Long Xuyen, Gia Mia, and Dong Tam, a site so remote that personnel are normally rotated every 30 days.

The aircraft controller works in anything from an air tower to a remotely located van





The aircraft controller is constantly keeping tabs on aircraft operating in his area.

The terrain found in Vietnam is some of the most diverse in the world. This can be a hazard in operations involving landings of more than one aircraft. This opens another facet of the air traffic controller's job—mobility. He must be as mobile as the aircraft he services. When an airmobile operation is planned in an area where there are no airfield facilities, he takes the airfield facilities, to the operation. Carrying a portable radio, he goes into the often insecure area, sets up the staging field, and directs the air traffic in and out of the forward area.

All of these aspects of the air traffic controller's job require a special kind of dedication. The hours are often long and irregular, and he is sometimes located in a remote area, far removed from many of the conveniences available to most of the troops in Vietnam. His work is sometimes dangerous, sometimes busy, sometimes quiet, but it is never boring.

The men of the 125th Air Traffic Company enjoy their work, and are proud of the job they're doing,

because they know it's one of the most important jobs in aviation.

And to the man who flies, it's a good feeling to know that if he should be forced down, either

through mechanical failure or hostile fire, there will be help on the way within a matter of minutes. Because the 125th Air Traffic Company is there.

An air conditioned van serves as flight coordinating center in the Mekong Delta.



MEDCAP DOCTOR AIDS VILLAGERS

It has been generally acknowledged that the war in Vietnam is being fought on two fronts: in the battlefield, and in the villages, homes and hearts of the Vietnamese people.

One man who is making short work of his "enemy" in this second front is Captain Romuald T. Szymanowski, flight surgeon for the 12th Combat Aviation Group.

Dr. Szymanowski directs the unit's MEDCAP (Medical Civic Action Program) to the villagers of Tan Van 15 miles north of Saigon. He has been providing badly needed medical attention to the villagers during his weekly visits since the 12th Group started the MEDCAP Program several months ago.

The doctor says the initial struggle was overcoming the natural apprehension and reluctance of the villagers to accept medical attention. Using the Group's ARVN interpreter and a Vietnamese medical assistant, however, he was able to communicate with the local people and soon won their confidence.

"Bac Si" Szym, as he is respectfully referred to by the people of Tan Van, treats nearly 100 patients in a makeshift dispensary. During his weekly visit Doctor Szymanowski has set fractures, performed minor surgery, treated ulcerated infections, offered prenatal care and prescribed medications for arthritic disorders, head colds and dysentery.

The goal of the 12th Group's MEDCAP Program in Tan Van is not only to treat various maladies,

but also to prevent their recurrence. Through the weeks the doctor found that by giving each patient a brief lecture on sanitation the villagers' state of health improved, but more help was needed. The prevalence of skin infections indicated a need for more emphasis on personal cleanliness.

Doctor Szymanowski sought the aid of the Regional Office of Civil Operations (OCO). OCO's department of public health answered his call and provided a Korean preventive medicine team led by Mr. Hyong Tok Ko. Under Mr. Ko's guidance the team has administered over 2,000 cholera and plague shots and given scores of smallpox vaccinations while the other team members

have given preventive medicine classes to the Vietnamese.

To round out the program, "Doc" Szymanowski enlisted the aid of a friend, Captain Samuel Hair, dentist for the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion. During Doctor Hair's visits he treats an average of 50 patients, offers preventive dental care instruction and has given a toothbrush and toothpaste to each patient.

Through the efforts of Doctor Szymanowski and the 12th Aviation Group's MEDCAP Program, the villagers at Tan Van are healthier and happier than ever before. And by winning the war on the "second" front, "Bac Si Szym" could well be making a big step toward winning the war on the first front.

"Bac Si Szym" listens to the heartbeat of a young Vietnamese girl in the village of Tan Van.



THE GUNNER AINT AROUND
NOMORE - HE LET HIS FEET HANG
OUT THE DOOR !



NOW YOU GET BACK HERE -
THAT'S AN ORDER !!



A difficult task to be done; a powerful machine designed to do it. The Flying Crane—equally adept at operating in the flat lands of the delta or the sharp peaks of the central highlands. Whether lifting 67 troops or a 105mm howitzer, the big helicopter performs with a fascinating combination of grace, strength and precision to provide valuable and efficient support to combat troops on the ground.