



HAWK



1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

HAWK

DECEMBER 1968

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Dustoffp. 7



Christmasp. 10



17th CAGp. 17

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DEPUTY BRIGADE COMMANDER FOR ADMINISTRATION

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COMMANDER 16th CAG
COMMANDER 17th CAG
COMMANDER 164th CAG
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Feature stories, photographs and art work of general interest to 1st Aviation Brigade personnel are invited. Write HAWK Magazine, Information Office, 1st Aviation Brigade, APO 96384.



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December 1968



TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

Christmas is a time of remembering, giving and sharing.

In Vietnam, American servicemen, mindful of their country's struggle for independence, are giving hope to a freedom-speaking nation and are sharing in its quest for peace.

Although we celebrate Christmas in a hostile atmosphere far from home and our loved ones, our consolation is in the knowledge that we are securing freedom for the Vietnamese people and are further protecting the security and freedom of America by our personal sacrifices.

Your Christmas presence in Vietnam this year may mean the difference between subjugation and freedom.

May the spirit of the Christmas season fill you with hope and strength.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL

Robert R. Williams
ROBERT R. WILLIAMS
Major General, USA
Commanding



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chaplain (LTC) Paul J. McAfee

1st Aviation Brigade

Signs in store windows back home will soon be advising us to DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EARLY! Avoid the Crush! Buy now, at the lowest prices! Why not do our Christmas thinking early? Being away from home should help instead of hinder. We can incorporate into our thoughts about what Christmas really means to mankind.

Christmas means love. This love is personified by a man and a woman experiencing that oldest of adventures, of becoming parents. A baby was born. The parents, unable to find a room, lodge for the night in a stable. There the woman gave birth to her first child. Her love was as warm, real and basic as that of all mothers in history. It was deep and meaningful—it was love.

Christmas means brotherhood. Unfortunately the warm feeling of oneness with fellowmen does not carry beyond the Christmas season. But for a short while the feeling is there and we are richer and better for it. Communities rise upon the base of brotherhood. Through it, people are appreciated for their real worth. If this feeling could be held by all, wars would be forgotten, men would live by higher standards of conduct and blessings would be beyond counting.

Christmas means worship. Hearts are freer, attitudes warmer, minds more open to understanding and compassion. There is less selfishness. Man comes closer to the wellspring of his existence, nearer to God.

Love, brotherhood, worship. Christmas is all these. Finding ourselves away from the scurry and bustle of a commercial Christmas, we may here perhaps come closer to God, to the true Christmas spirit. Especially if we do our Christmas thinking early!

HIGH FLIERS

Awards of Silver Star and above awarded September 21 to October 15, 1968 listed in order by date awarded.

SILVER STAR

SGT Victor M. Macias, 7/17 ACS
WO David L. Blattel, 176th AHC
(Posthumous)

CPT Richard A. Bell II, 7/17 ACS
WO William Fernan, 240th AHC
MAJ Gary A. Miller, 80th TD

MAJ Richard H. Hummel, 195th AHC

CPT Fred C. Hankinson, 183rd RAC
CPT Stuart K. Purks, 176th AHC
WO David L. Eagleton, 176th AHC
CPT Kenneth A. Gibbins, 7/17 ACS
1LT Stephen J. Krug, 240th AHC

MAJ Hershell B. Murray, 118th AHC
MAJ Richard S. Daum, 68th AHC

CPT John W. Clapper, 170th AHC
CWO Peter G. Hull, 116th AHC
CPT Veryl G. Meyer, 92nd AHC
(Posthumous)

1LT Fred O. Pratt, 155th AHC
(Posthumous)

WO Charles M. Peters, 176th AHC
CWO Larry G. Miller, 191st AHC
WO Curtis L. Anderson, 7/17 ACS
MAJ John B. Jones, 191st AHC
CWO Eric J. Rebstock, 191st AHC

from the

CAREER COUNSELOR

Reenlistment options carry numerous fringe benefits with them. One of the most attractive of these is the privilege to choose your next duty station.

It is a chance to be on a post where your friends or family are close by, or where you have special interest in the area. For example, there are many posts you can choose from where the hunting and fishing are excellent. Perhaps the bright lights and excitement of city life are for you. There are plenty of posts in or near large metropolitan areas. If family housing, general living conditions, and recreation areas are your prime concern a wide choice of posts offer the best of these things too. Few men realize the many fine opportunities a second term can provide to the person who is looking for a better way of life and a better place to live it in.

This reenlistment option lets you choose the Conus duty station you want, or overseas area, anywhere in the world where there is a vacancy and requirement for your grade and MOS. This option is limited only by the post's need for your grade and MOS and the overseas area's requirement.

If you qualify for an opening ...you'll get it! And when you decide on another term and pick a specific duty station, a telephone call or message by your Career Counselor can determine the availability of an opening on the post or overseas area you've selected. See your Career Counselor today.

NEWSLETTER

Within a one week period, the 1st Aviation Brigade welcomed both its new Deputy Brigade Commander for Administration, Colonel William C. Boehm, and Chief of Staff, Colonel Jay B. Williams.

Colonel Boehm comes to the Brigade from his last position as Chief, Management Systems Group, Force Planning Analysis Directorate, Office, Chief of Staff at Department of the Army in Washington, D.C.. Commissioned in 1941, he served in both the World War II Pacific campaign and in the Korean Conflict.



Just one of his outstanding achievements was the important role he played in the formation of the NATO Mobile Land Forces. Colonel Boehm carried out the creation of and commanded the first overseas divisional aviation battalion. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland. He is qualified to fly the O-1, U-6, T-41, U-8, OH-13, OH-23, and UH-1. His family presently resides in Alexandria, Virginia.

Colonel Williams, who holds a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Omaha, left his position as Deputy Director Department of Division Operation, United States Army Command General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas to come to Brigade. Rated on the O-1, U-6, T-41, U-8, H13, H23, and UH-1 aircraft, Colonel Williams has held such positions as Post and Division Aviation Officer of the 101st Airborne Infantry



Division, Fort Campbell, Kentucky and as Acting Aviation Officer, Headquarters, 7th Army, USAREUR. Fort Leavenworth is presently Colonel Williams' hometown.

TWO MORE VIETNAM CAMPAIGNS HAVE been designated by the Department of the Army. The sixth campaign, from Jan. 30, 1968, through April 1, 1968, will be called the "Tet Counteroffensive." A seventh campaign has been designated beginning April 2, 1968. Its name and termination date have not as yet been announced.

Army personnel having served in Vietnam during the periods noted above are authorized to wear battle stars on their Vietnamese Service Ribbon, one for each campaign, in accordance with Army Regulation 672-5-1.

ANY UNIT IN VIETNAM WOULD BE EXTREMELY proud to receive a Meritorious Unit Commendation. The "Cowboys" of the 335th Assault Helicopter Company were honored not only with one, but two Commendations within a 12 day period.

In recent ceremonies at Phu Hiep, Deputy Brigade Commander Colonel James C. Smith presented the second award to Major Carl L. Cramer, commander of the 335th. The previous award had been for the unit's outstanding support of the 173rd Airborne Brigade during combat operations in II Corps Tactical Zone. The second award was for prior achievements in direct close support of units in III Corps. The Cowboys had been transferred from 12th to 17th Combat Aviation Group recently.



IT WAS FATHER AND SON DAY IN PHU LOI recently, as Colonel Earl L. Russell, Jr., Chief of Operations, Plans and Training, USARV Aviation Section decorated his son 1st Lieutenant Earl L. Russell, III for heroism.

Lieutenant Russell was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his heroic actions while a section leader of the 1st platoon, 74th Reconnaissance Airplane Company based at Lam Son.

While supporting a reconnaissance in force in Binh Duong Province, Lieutenant Russell made contact with the Viet Cong. Adjusting supporting fires from Cu Chi and Phu Loi, he also proceeded to make a number of low level passes in the face of intense enemy fire, and in so doing, uncovered numerous enemy caches and positions. Remaining over the area for nearly seven hours, he directed artillery, gunships and heliborne extractions.

Colonel Russell expressed great pride, not only for the actions of his son, but for the entire 74th as well.

Hunting Charlie by Night:

FIRE FLY

Story by CWO Jay G. Goldsberry

Several years ago, rumor (and fact) had it that the nights in Vietnam belonged to the enemy. This was his time for roaming the countryside, ambushing allied units and resupplying his own.

To counter this in 1965 the 334th Assault Helicopter Company, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion, was given the mission of developing the armed helicopter for combat operation at night.

The result was called "Fire Fly."

It started out with the usual trial and error experiments and today is honed to a fine edge of deadliness to deny the enemy use of the multitentacled waterways of the III and IV Corps Tactical Zones.

Since the summer of 1967, "Fire Fly" has been a nightly mission throughout III Corps. It has been very successful.

The team, consisting of a "high" ship, armed with a .50 caliber machine gun, a "light" ship and a "low" gunship, is directed by the mission commander.

In the high ship, the mission commander plots the navigation and "covers" the other two ships with his machine gun.

Somewhat lower, the light ship, mounting a cluster of seven C-130 landing lights, maneuvers the searchlight over the specified area looking for likely targets. The 500,000 candlepower radiated by the cluster can illuminate an area several hundred meters across with a "halo" still larger. This varies according to the altitude of the ship.

Charlie's major nemesis, however, is neither of the first two ships. It is the "invisible" gunship. Ranging from the deck to several hundred feet, this ship mounts an



The cluster of C-130 landing lights reveal Charlie's sampan convoys.

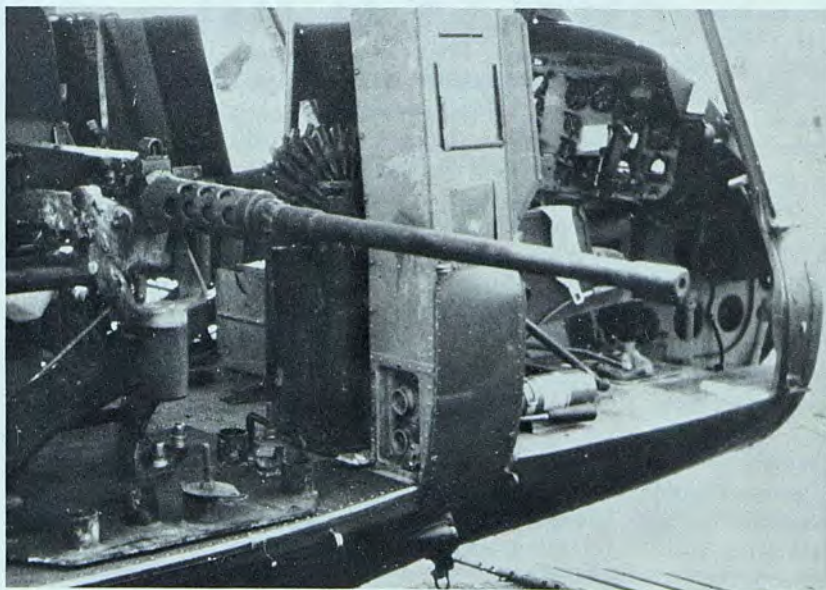
awesome combination of miniguns and rockets. The low gunship flies without marking lights and circles the target area, being careful to avoid the beam of the light ship.

The mission commander may or may not have an intelligence report of enemy activity, but he has flown the areas enough that his "educated guesses" usually are productive.

He directs the team above a labyrinth of canals, streams and rivers. Suddenly, the wash created by sampan propellers in the murky water gives off the eerie glow of phosphorescence—Charlie is on the move!

The commander calls for the light and the enemy heads for the protective cover of the brush along the bank. The flash has revealed numerous sampans. The low ship darts into action, raking the boats with its minigun. A particularly large sampan, low in the water from its cargo of war supplies, is silhouetted in the blinding light. Several rockets streak into the craft, producing secondary explosions and reducing the sampan to splinters.

Turning along the shore, several crewmen are spotted trying to evade the team. The miniguns find their mark and the enemy has lost not only replaceable war materiel but a harder-to-replace-than-ever sampan crew. The word has gotten

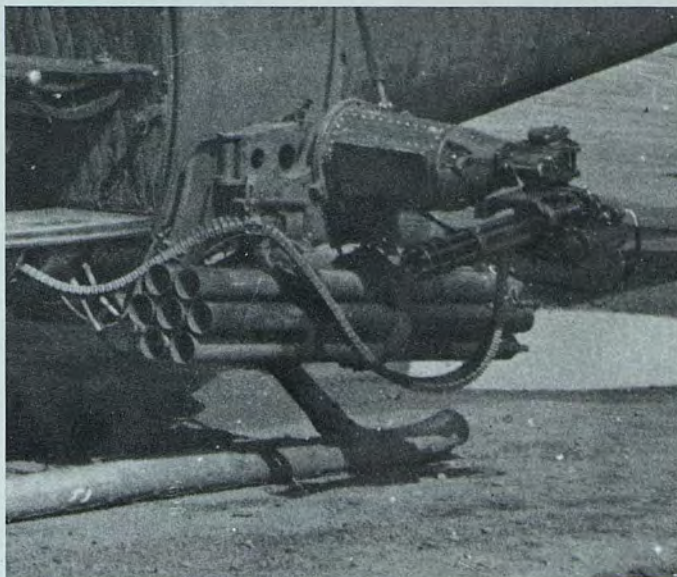


The high ship's .50 caliber machine gun provides 'cover' for both the light ship and the low gunship.

around. Fire Fly may be hazardous to your health. explosions have resulted and 47 sampans will make the trip from Cambodia no more.

Some 15 minutes after it began, the staccato from the Fire Fly team is over, there are no more targets. The sampan convoy has been reduced to burning wreckage and the supplies lost either through sinking into the heavy silt of the river bottom or through explosion. The crews that were fortunate enough to have found safety along the bank have evaded the fire and started their trek back to enemy lines.

On this particular mission, 20 secondary

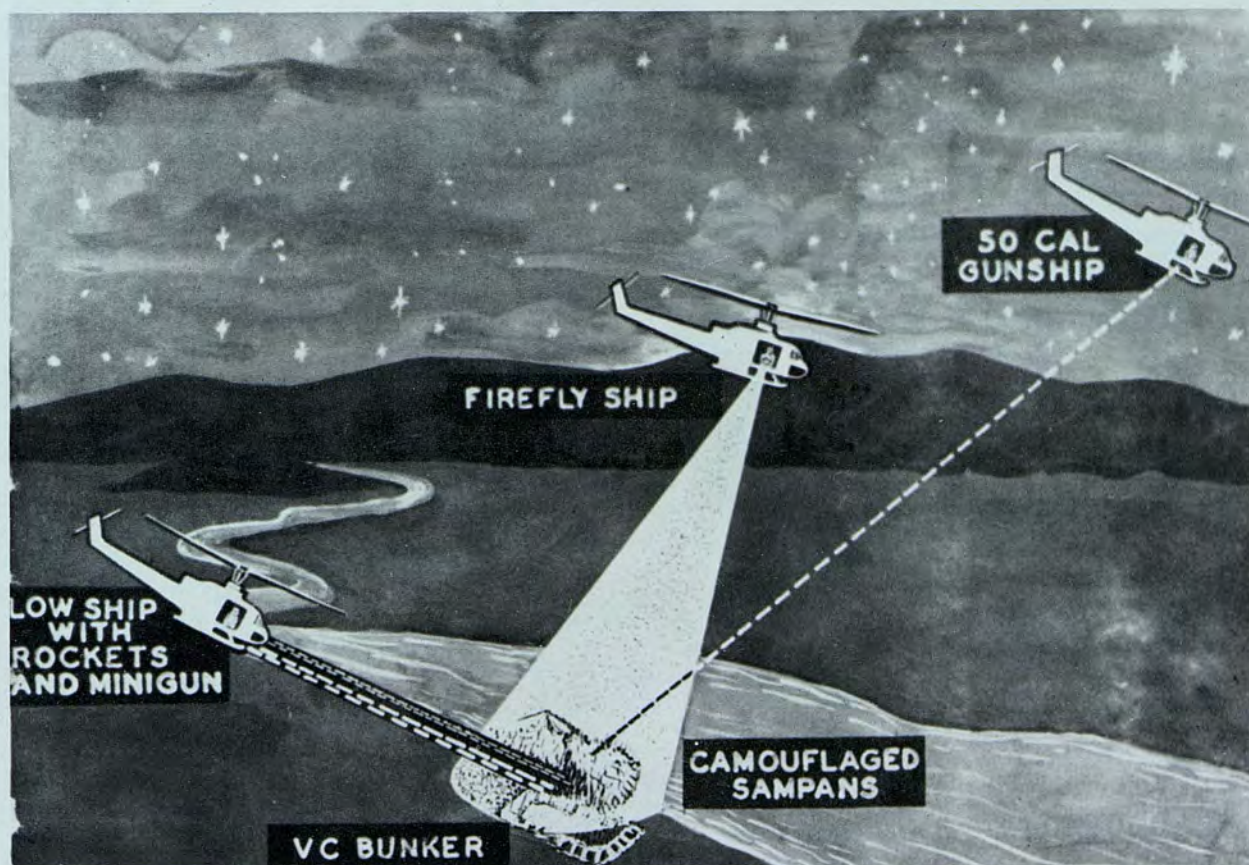


The low ship places a wall of steel between the enemy and his unit support.

Maj. Charles A. Edwards, CO of the 334th, says, "The men who fly these missions feel a deep sense

of accomplishment when they see Charlie's men and supplies being stopped short of their final destination. Each man volunteers for these hazardous missions."

As a result of Fire Fly, movement at night has become increasingly difficult for the Viet Cong. Fire Fly's inherent ability for quick reaction and overwhelming firepower have led to its designation as the mobile night ambush of Army Aviation.



Courtesy of USARVIO

HAWK
HONEY



Barbara Keith

*Photo by
CWO Jay Goldsberry*

Always in a Hurry: *DUSTOFF!!!*

Story and Photos by CWO Jay G. Goldsberry

At the standby shack we received word that there were more wounded troops out there waiting to be evacuated. Aware of the tactical situation and the dangers involved, our aircraft commander decided to return to Alpha 6's location. He used his best judgement and navigational skill to maneuver our ship around the building rain of artillery. Nearing the pickup zone, we began to hear the steady crackle of the enemy's automatic weapons.

He must have asked himself, yet again, if this was the point we must turn away, if we were to be forced to leave the area and the wounded men it hid. We held our course toward the victims as Dustoff ships had so many times in the past and would so many times in the future.

The call for this "urgent" mission might have come to Dustoff operations from any of the commands or organizations in the Corps area. It could have come from a remote Regional Forces camp or from a hospital staff requesting transfer of critical medical supplies. But this call came from the field requesting pick-up of wounded US troops, a top priority call that initiates immediate action. The mission data was routed to the ship since it was the nearest Dustoff stand by location. Few spots in Vietnam are more than 20 minutes away from a hovering red-crossed Huey.

"Getting these wounded men into the air will be better than half of our job of saving them," said the aircraft commander. "Each of these missions is a struggle to reach the injured men, get them aboard, keep them alive enroute, and land with them at a waiting hospital pad." This balance must not be

tripped by misjudgement.

One error in connecting this chain of events causes not just an embarrassing situation, but human death. All of the crew shares this responsibility but finally it rests upon the aircraft commander. His only justification for approaching the field pick-up site will be some hope of leaving it with the wounded men aboard.

He must keep the larger view in mind. If he loses his ship and crew to the concentrated fire of the enemy here, many more troops will suffer for want of medevacs elsewhere. This is the hardest decision any man will ever face. But it is the essence of the whole Dustoff operation.

Taking off alone into all types of conditions, a crew never knows

Painting by SP4 Rod J. Norman





"In Vietnam, less than one per cent of the wounded die after reaching medical stations."

what it will encounter. As much as one quarter of their operations occur at night or under actual instrument conditions. They must, therefore, place special faith in their aircraft and fellow crewmen.

There is other faith too. Faith in a group of strangers. The radio operators, operations specialists, mechanics, and ground aidmen are all members of a one time ad hoc team to save lives. Those covering gunships, an unknown call sign in unfamiliar craft, yet they trust them too. This is the tension of Dustoff.

Dustoff ships never get to choose their PZ's. This one will be rough. We've made radio contact with our covering gunships. Our mission is buried deep in difficult jungle terrain. Colored smoke drifts listlessly up through the foliage identifying our PZ. A hole has been blasted in the jungle canopy which will allow room for us to lower the "forest penetrator" rescue seat. No enemy contact has been reported here in the last 30 minutes. This is the most hazardous type of mission any chopper crew will ever tackle.

Dustoff men say it is worth the danger and concern to be on the team that makes the most welcome sight in the world to the man that is down. Seeing their injured buddies lifted to medical aid and safety has a powerful effect upon the ground troops also. There is little

doubt that they fight longer and harder knowing that support like Dustoff stands behind them. This is the heart of Dustoff.

Dustoff operations owe their success today to the body of experience and advanced equipment accumulated by the Medical Service over the years. In World War I the majority of deaths took place from otherwise unfatal wounds behind the lines or in forgotten trenches. Even when the wounded could reach forward aid stations, the lack of transportation would cause a deadly delay in reaching hospital care. The auto-ambulance had finally replaced the horse drawn wagon, which had served for centuries. Still everything depended upon secure roads to the rear.

Through World War II the medics and their facilities made only slight evacuation improvements. Even into the first part of the Korean war, our forces could be evacuated only by a wheeled vehicle rolling over primitive trails in battlefield conditions.

While we hover above these treacherous tree tops, the crew chief works the control handle to lower the rescue seat to the waiting aidmen and injured below. Hanging here at an ideal angle for the enemy's fire, Dustoff is defenseless. With the "hook" away in the jungle bush we are caught as surely as the fisherman who is pulled into the sea. Watchful gunships circle above searching for signs of the enemy, awaiting our call for their deadly fire.

Below they are folding the seat's Spade like arms into position and strapping on a wounded man. These are the most dangerous few moments in our mission. While he is attached to the end of our thin cable, we must remain. We hover for these few seconds required to reel in the wounded man. The crew chief and medic labor to haul him aboard. Concentration and strain from this maneuver tells on our crew. After each lift we break free of the trap and nose over to safe airspeed. Climbing toward the monsoon, clouds, we circle back for



Crewchief and medic offload wounded at Tan Son Nhut.

the one last casualty. We'll fish him out too, out of the mottled green and whipping sea.

The first organized medevac operations were flown in Korea by men and machines of the Air Force's 3rd Air Rescue Squadron. Their success prompted a series of tests by the Eighth US Army in 1950. Those tests proved the need and procedures for the employment of Army helicopters in the aero-medical evacuation role.

In January 1951 the 2nd Helicopter Detachment began employing their OH-13 "Souix" helicopters as air ambulances over the mountains of Korea. From then to armistice on July 27, 1953, the Eighth Army Surgeon reported more than 19,000 United Nations casualties were transported by helicopters from the battle area to surgical hospitals. Today Dustoff lifts as many as 22,000 evacuees a month in Vietnam.

Now the medic's hands begin their task. Guided by his training, they look for wounds. Shrapnel. That man, he's doing well. Check all their bandages. Shock is the big enemy now, "Charlie" is miles away, dextran solution will help. The golden six hours since he was wounded are ticking along. If a man can reach medical aid in these golden hours his chances are enormously improved for life. The hands are returning to the medical



A race against time—every second saved means life.

kit seeking bandages, breath, life—this is Dustoff business.

The speed offered by helicopter evacuation means life to the victims. "In World War I, 7 per cent of all casualties admitted for treatment died. The percentage in World War II was 4.5; in Korea, 2.2. In Vietnam, less than 1 per cent of the wounded die after reaching medical stations," said Lieutenant General Heaton, a former Army Surgeon General. The majority of this improvement is attributable to faster evacuation.

"The Originals" of the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) were the first medevac unit in Vietnam. They arrived in April of 1962. After being assigned to several different commands, all

Dustoff units were finally placed under the command of the 44th Medical Brigade in 1966. This combination has formed a team of medically oriented specialists whose most important job is their only job, saving lives. In the nearly seven years since their arrival, Dustoff units have evacuated thousands of thankful casualties.

Now we race again, back to help, doctors, medicine, life giving machines. The call goes through describing the number and type of injuries. The Medical Regulating Office will designate the hospital with the space and specialists for our patients. Then we call the hospital telling them the exchange will be three litters and two blankets. We also have two that are ambulatory, all with shrapnel and small arms wounds. Have oxygen ready.

They are ready. When we touch down, their hands lift the litters, lead the walking inside. Those men have a real chance to live now. We'll call operations while refueling for the next mission. Copying the instructions and checking the ship, no one has time to reflect on their accomplishment.

How many lives saved this week? This month? The crew never keeps track. They're always in too much of a hurry.



Few spots in Vietnam are more than 20 minutes away from a red-crossed Huey.



Christmas masses are held at the Cathedrale de Saigon.

Christmas is just around the corner. The air has changed at military bases throughout the Republic of Vietnam. Colored lights, cardboard Santas and imitation Christmas trees are beginning to appear here and there.

Talent scouts roam the company area looking for the most likely Saint Nick type...the mail clerk gains even greater leverage since he is the *real* Mr. Kringle this year...minds and hearts turn to memories of holidays past. But even last year's celebrations seem very distant from the reality of mud and dust, toil and tension, Christmas, Vietnam, 1968.

There are numerous ways to spend the holiday season. Plans have long been made for the world's biggest Christmas party.

Hosts for the gala will be the many special Army units and service organizations.

Guests will be servicemen from around the world with the heaviest concentrations right here in Vietnam.

Christmastime traditionally has been a time for sharing. This year, as in previous years, the people back home will use their organized opportunity to turn feelings carried all year long into gifts and greetings.

Many individuals and commands within the Army are working to give a most enjoyable holiday season. Three new service clubs will be open for the holidays bringing the total to 19. The clubs will be offering many activities centered around the celebrating of the holidays.

round the celebrating of the holidays.

Caroling, decorating and relaxing are all part of the Special Services Christmas activities. Special programs will be produced by many clubs. Division bands will provide holiday music concerts. Christmas Card contests will be staged at many clubs.

Service clubs will also invite orphans to holiday parties. Variety shows and little theater productions demonstrate the diversity of programming.

Army Special Services will be distributors of Christmas decoration kits to all company size and larger units in Vietnam. They contain Santas, trees, garlands, tinsel, lights and all of the traditional paraphernalia associated with

Water color by PFC Mel Ehlert

Christmas in Vietnam: 1968

Christmas decorating.

Americans have established over the years the tradition of gorging themselves with food at major holiday celebrations, be it the Fourth of July picnics, Thanksgiving or particularly, Christmas.

The American serviceman will not be denied the traditional heartburn on the 26th of December, simply because he is 10,000 miles from home.

Food Service Supply Division of the 1st Logistical Command plans to provide in excess of 397,000 pounds of turkey, along with shrimp, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie, hors d'ouevres and selected vegetables for a traditional Christmas meal for all the Free World fighting men in Vietnam.

Turkey in II, III and IV Corps

area will be supplied by the 1st Log. In I Corps, the Naval Support Activity in Da Nang will provide the food.

Plans call for at least one whole garnished turkey for each mess hall in addition to all the boneless turkey you can eat.

Colorful menus are being provided by USARV for the dinner.

But Christmas is more than just singing and eating and getting cards and packages and remembering... It's a time to be with families and friends. A time when every family is brought closer together. That, naturally, will not happen for the serviceman in Vietnam. But communications facilities are being geared for a tremendous number of telephone calls to be placed to the United States over



the holiday period.

Military Affiliate Radio Stations will be working even harder than usual during the holidays. Stateside, "Ham" radio operators put out a special effort to try and reach your intended party. The added effort on both ends usually results in a significant increase in the number of completed calls.

Perhaps the busiest servicemen in uniform over the Christmas holidays will be members of the Army Chaplain's Corps. Programs are usually carried out at the unit chaplain's level rather than as an overall program.

Throughout Vietnam, this year however, services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will be held for both

Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths. Additional services of sacred music and special cantatas will be held where choirs are available.

Highlight of the Protestant services will be the Christmas Eve candlelight service. For Roman Catholics, Midnight Mass will be celebrated.

The Chaplain's Fund will provide manger scenes and Christmas trees. But a bulk of the chaplain activity will center on decorations, toys and other sorts of surprises for local orphanages and local civic action projects.

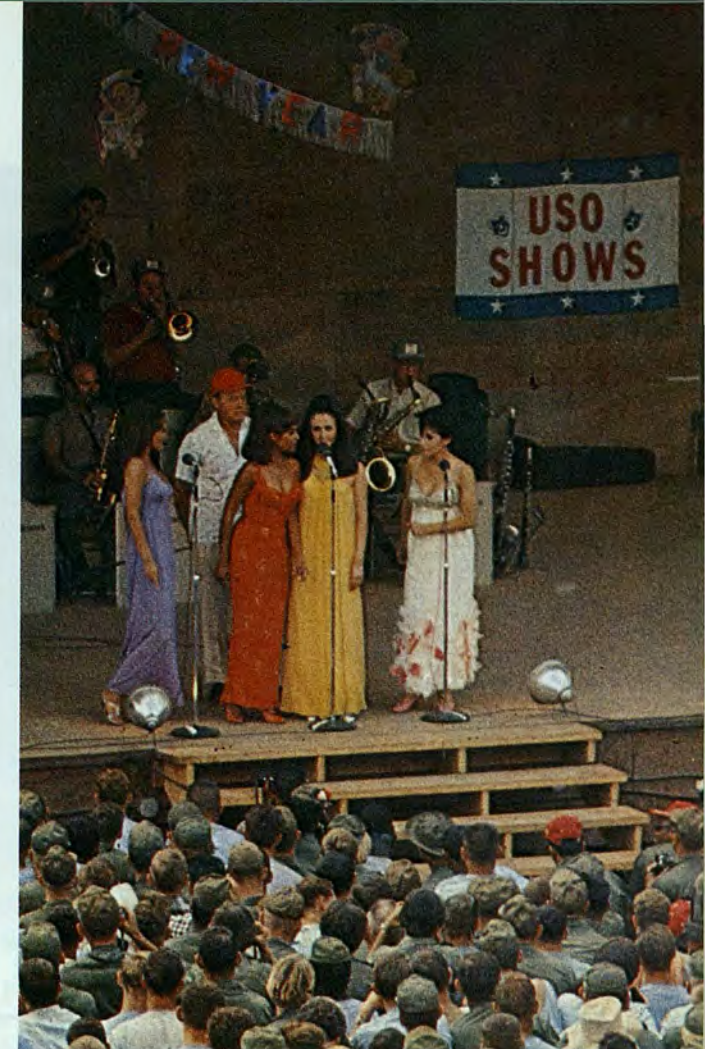
These parties are made possible not only by the year-long saving of the men but by the donations of numerous church, civic and business organizations back home. Last year these groups sent tons

of gifts for the servicemen to distribute.

The chaplains also serve as a clearing house for thousands of cards and gifts from well wishers at home. The chaplains handle an equitable distribution of all the letters and cards and gifts to units throughout the war zone.

Two private service organizations—the Red Cross and the United Service Organization—will provide a myriad of Christmas activities, all designed to bring the serviceman closer to home over the holiday season.

"Well, here I am at Cam Ranh Bay, the Sahara of Southeast Asia," this line, delivered by any of several dozen comedians, would draw a roar from soldiers at Cam Ranh. But it's jokes like these for service-



In Christmases past, the USO Bob Hope show has given the men in Vietnam a taste of seasonal cheer.

Photo by USARVIO.



Even the soldiers in the field are not forgotten by the Red Cross at 'gift time.'

Photo by Red Cross

men at Christmastime that have produced a living legend—Bob Hope.

He comes on like a whirlwind with a gaggle of beautiful girls, recording stars and the familiar strains of *Thanks for the Memories*, his theme played for soldiers everywhere by Les Brown and his "Band of Renown."

Since World War II, Bob Hope has entertained troops during the holiday season in every hot spot on the globe. In Vietnam he has performed for thousands of soldiers from the Mekong Delta to the DMZ, often getting his transportation from 1st Aviation Brigade aircraft.

Last year, the show was one of the major highlights of Christmas in Vietnam. His shows are sponsored by the USO.

The USO will have events throughout the holiday season, with

On Christmas Day within a downtown Roman Catholic Cathedral whose Gothic architecture towers over surrounding sun baked office buildings, shops, restaurants and theaters, the congregation is praying aloud in English with the priest in white vestments standing at the foot of the marble altar.

Uniformly spaced within the softly illuminated church are alcoves within which are alters adorned with candelabra, flowers and statuary representing canonized saints.

Near the altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary is a crèche depicting the Nativity scene.

In the choir loft under the church's classic ribbed vaulting, the artful blending of voices weave a tonal tapestry.

This cathedral is neither Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago nor St. Patrick's in New York City. It is the Cathédrale de Saigon, Vietnam, located at 1 Cong Truong Hoa Binh.

During the Christmas season, Vietnamese and American Catholics unify in religious practices even though they are of diverse cultures.

According to a Catholic serviceman completing his second tour of duty in Vietnam, "Christmas here is the same as Christmas back home if you don't look for gaily decorated Christmas Trees and Santa Claus standing on every downtown street corner."

Some American Christmas customs have been adopted by the Vietnamese Catholics who have had extensive contact with western

culture. A few Vietnamese families have introduced the Christmas Tree and stockings filled with gifts or fruit on Christmas morning into their Christmas celebration. The exchange of greeting cards and presents is becoming socially acceptable primarily because it reflects the selfless spirit that is Christmas.

Christmas Day services at the Cathédrale de Saigon will be celebrated at noon. The celebrant of the Mass will be Father (LTC) John J. Graisy, staff chaplain of Headquarters Area Command. A solemn Pontifical Mass will be said Christmas Day in the Long Binh area by Archbishop Terence J. Cooke, military vicar, US Army and successor to the late Francis Cardinal Spellman.

decorating, music and special programs designed for the interest of any serviceman.

Overseas telephones will be in use constantly through the season and it is expected that more than 100,000 gifts will be sent to field units at more remote locales.

The organization also plans parties to link servicemen with children from local orphanages.

The Red Cross this year will distribute more than 700,000 of their now famous "Ditty Bags," filled with pens, paper, games, toiletries, books, recording tapes and sealed food.

Red Cross workers will visit every medical installation in the area, distributing greeting cards, gift wrappings, decorations and other niceties.

At the 18 recreation centers throughout Vietnam, Red Cross girls will be staging Christmas programs, dispensing refreshments and homestyle seasons greetings. Clubmobile girls will carry out much the same format at the more remote incountry bases.

All the activities listed above are scheduled throughout Vietnam. Locally, however, many units will stage decorating contests, distribute food and toys to children of all ages in Vietnam, and get together for caroling and Christmas cheer.

Cookies, candy and fruits from home will at once blend into a rich reservoir of unit community property and for at least once since being in Vietnam, soldiers won't really care what's new from home—there's so much that everyone can eat his fill and then some.

Cute Christmas cards will be passed around for all to see and the ones in a more serious vein will be treasured objects in the months to come.

It won't be like home, exactly, but it will be a Christmas that no one will ever forget.....
CHRISTMAS VIETNAM, 1968



The USO sponsors Christmas parties complete with decorations, gifts and food for Vietnam servicemen.

Photo by USO.

A Whole Team of Organizations Play Host to the Servicemen

FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

While Christians are in the midst of preparations for Christmas, members of the Jewish faith will be celebrating the eight-day festival of Chanuka, the Feast of Rededication, beginning December 15.

Most Christians are aware of the existence of the Chanukah festival, but few know that it commemorates the events which led to the cleansing and reconsecration of the Temple of Jerusalem in the year 165 B.C.

In the years preceding the reconsecration of the Temple, the Syrian King Antiochus tried to occidentalize the Orient, to obliterate all differences between the Jews and non-Jews and demolish the cultural wall that separated the population of Palestine from those of other countries.

King Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom that "all should be one people and everyone should leave his laws and adopt the commandments of the king." He directed that the Temple be paganized,

that the Sabbath and Jewish festivals be abolished, that the dietary laws be disregarded, that the rite of circumcision no longer be practised, "to the end that they might forget their laws."

Many Israelites consented to his religion, but some did not. A handful of gallant, faithful soldiers led by Judas Maccabeus overwhelmed the Syrian forces, reentered the desecrated Temple in Jerusalem and cleansed it of religious contamination.

The soldiers discovered only one small container of clean oil, sufficient for one day's burning. Using this oil, they proceeded to kindle the Temple's candelabra. Miraculously, the flames flickered for eight long days until a fresh supply of oil could be obtained. In testimony to this great miracle, Jews annually kindle Chanukah candles.

Chanukah, therefore, became the Jewish historic protest against assimilation, whether intentional or not.

Hospitality Plus:



AUSTRALIA

Story by CPT John Crossman

Photo by CPT John Crossman

For the man who prefers swinging night life to red alerts...who is more at home on a sheep ranch than a rice paddy...who is sick of cold C's and would prefer a sizzling steak...who would rather view a miniskirted miss than one clad in an *ao dai*...for the man who really yearns to return to Western culture, Australia is paradise re-

gained. A week-long stay in bustling but beautiful Sydney is just the ticket for anyone who wants to get away from it all...“down under.”

Greater Sydney offers the tourist a tremendous variety of activities. Water sports, whether swimming, water skiing, skin diving, or boating, are available nearly every-

where. In Sydney, beaches mean fun—all those roundeyes in bikinis! The many scheduled tours range from an around town jaunt to a full day 400 mile flight into Australia's “Outback.” For the winter sports fanatic, year-round ice skating and seasonal skiing can be found either in or around Sydney.

Action on land or sea—ride the Hydrofoil.



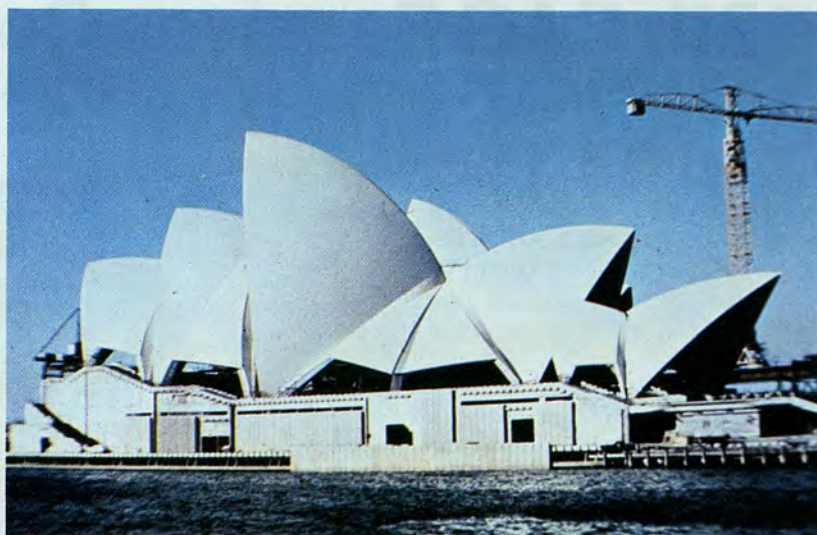
Sydney: a city of extensive beaches. Photo by CPT John Crossman.



Night life, centered in the King's Cross section of town, proceeds at fast and furious pace. First-class restaurants or "greasy-spoons"; fashionable ballrooms or noisy discotheques (all of which are loaded with miniskirts); all that are within a few minutes walking distance of most hotels.

Sydney and its many suburbs straddle Port Jackson, a beautiful harbor about the same size as the Port of New York. An international potpourri of cargo vessels ply the harbour along with a myriad of sailboats, runabouts and ferries. Majestic Harbour Bridge, a Sydney landmark since 1932, connects the city to its northern suburbs. Fort Denison, a bleak reminder of the penal colony days, is perched on a rough stoney outcrop in the middle of the harbor.

Downtown Sydney will seem like home to American city dwellers. Canyons of concrete and glass, interspersed with city parks and broad avenues are just another part of this pulsating, alive city. The center of culture, high-brow and low, Sydney has recently



Avant garde culture: the new Sydney Opera House.

Photo by SGT Jim Scott.

acquired a brand new and highly controversial opera house, a striking contribution to the city's skyline as well as to its artistic community.

Whatever the traveler desires, arrangements can be made through the Hospitality Committee of the Australian Association. This service is located at the R&R Center. Make use of it. They set up blind dates,

arrange trips, and even visits to friendly Aussie homes. And that is perhaps the best thing about Australia. The people just can't seem to do enough for Americans. They'll spoil you and you'll love it.

So, don't just sit there daydreaming about stateside living. Get a little. Try the "next best thing": an Australian R & R. You'll probably want to go back.

Australian hospitality at its best.

Photo by SGT Jim Scott.



Canyons of concrete and glass, bursting with color and life.

Photo by Bill Long, 17th CAG.



12th CAG Receives Commendation

Army Aviation excelled all previous records in superior performance on the battlegrounds of Vietnam during the year 1967. The 12th Combat Aviation Group in particular demonstrated just how effective Army Aviation can be in close support of the troops in the field. The offspring of three years of airmobility testing at the time it was created, the Group has since become one of the ablest veteran units of the war.

The Group was conceived and authorized during the rapid build-up between April and December 1965. With five battalions under its wing at that time, the 12th Group was responsible for the entire Army Aviation support in Vietnam.

For a job exceptionally well done in the succeeding period of January through December, 1967, the Group has been awarded a Meritorious Unit Commendation.

During that period, the Group, assigned to the newly created 1st Aviation Brigade, shared joint



Photo by SP4 Michael McIntosh.

responsibility with her younger sister group, the 17th Combat Aviation Group, which became responsible for the two northern Corps areas.

The 12th Group became primarily involved with support of the increased allied activity in III and IV Corps. During this period the Group's battalions and companies set new records in flying hours, troop lifts, and cargo carried. Units

constantly innovated, tested new techniques, and established new standards as necessary.

Particularly noteworthy was the Group's ability to carry out joint service and multi-national operations with maximum cooperation and efficiency. One of the 12th Combat Aviation Group's proudest achievements was the sponsorship of large-scale VNAF transitioning to UH-1 helicopters.

The presentation of the award was made by Brigade Commander Major General Robert R. Williams at 12th Group Headquarters on October 5th to Group Commander Colonel Robert O. Lambert. General Williams then proceeded to place the award streamer on each of the unit flags.

Among the numerous distinguished guests present at the ceremony were Brigadier General Charles Cantrell, Chief of Staff, II Field Forces, and Colonel Charles C. Walts, Commanding Officer of 58th Aviation Group (FFM), Provisional.

ONE SOLITARY LIFE

Author Unknown

Here was a man born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness.

He had no credentials but Himself. He had nothing to do with this world except the naked power of His divine manhood.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through a mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying—and that was His coat! When He was dead He was taken

down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched...and all the navies that ever were built...and all the parliaments that ever sat...and all the kings that ever reigned put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that...ONE SOLITARY LIFE.

ALWAYS THERE...

17th Combat Aviation Group

Throughout Vietnam, Army aircraft can be seen at anytime of the day and night helping to successfully complete an airmobile assault, the most effective way of fighting a highly elusive and treacherous enemy.

In II Corps, the 48 per cent of Vietnam that reaches from the enemy infiltration routes around Dak To in the northeast to the tranquil crystal beaches of Nha Trang, the aircraft of the 17th Combat Aviation Group provide total Army air support for the fighting forces of three nations.

Providing direct aerial support for II Corps is a big job, requiring long hours and dedication on the part of not only air crews but mechanics and clerks as well. As an example of the huge job the 17th Group performs, during the month of September the Group flew more than 127,000 sorties in 45,226 hours (it would take one aircraft more than five years of continuous flying to reach this figure). Group aircraft carried more than 178,000 passengers, roughly the equivalent of 11 infantry divisions, and lifted more than 21,000 tons.

Headquartered at Nha Trang, the 17th Combat Aviation Group is comprised of the 10th, 52nd, and 268th Combat Aviation Battalions, the 223rd Combat Support Aviation Battalion and the 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry Regiment. The 17th Group has participated in every major operation in II Corps since it was formed in 1966.

Created by a USARPAC General Order dated December 9, 1965, the 17th Group became operational on March 1, 1966 and was responsible for supporting troops in both I and II Corps, 68 per cent of the land area in Vietnam. During the first two years of its



Mobility: the Keynote for 10th Combat Aviation Battalion.

Photo by SP5 Hector Lopez, 17th CAG.

existence, the 17th Group amassed more than one million flying hours and transported three and one half million passengers, most of this under combat conditions.

As the American commitment in Vietnam increased, the 17th Group correspondingly expanded in size. By the beginning of this year, the Group had grown to such massive proportions that it became necessary to form another group from the 17th's northern-most battalions.

One week before the Tet Offensive, the 17th Group's 212th Combat Support Aviation Battalion combined with the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion to form the 16th Combat Aviation Group. The new group assumed responsibility for aerial support of the I Corps Tactical Zone. At the time of the division, the 17th Group had seven battalions, nearly 11,000 men and more than 600 aircraft.

Although the 17th Group now supports only II Corps, its mission has not been diminished in the

least. The 17th Group continues to lend its aerial assets to the infantry units of three nations: Vietnam, the United States and Korea. Among the units relying on the Group for aerial support are the Capitol and White Horse ROK Infantry Divisions, the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Air Cavalry, the 4th Infantry Division, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, elements of the 5th Special Forces and the 22nd and 23rd ARVN Divisions.

Though the 17th Group's primary enemy are the NVA and Viet Cong who infest the hills of II Corps, crew members continually face another enemy that is as treacherous and sometimes as deadly as the North Vietnamese soldier. This enemy is the unusual terrain and weather conditions of the Central Highlands.

"Flying in II Corps is more challenging to the aviator than in any other Corps," said Lieutenant Colonel John C. Thorpe, Group operations officer. "On any given day, an aviator can find himself



17th Group Chinooks keep American, ARVN, and ROK troops supplied throughout III Corps.

flying from sea level to 7,000 foot mountains. He has to deal with every type of terrain found in Vietnam, from rice paddies to triple canopy jungle."

Sometimes a 17th Group helicopter will have to drop 250 feet straight down through branches, vines and tall bamboo to reach the ground. "There are some instances when a ship goes into a PZ, it goes down through the trees and then half way down, has to turn 45 degrees to clear the trees so he can go the rest of the way down," Colonel Thorpe said.

The terrain also presents other problems for the Huey pilots. With the land elevation in II Corps ranging from sea level to 7,000 feet, the pilots must keep a close watch on air density and humidity, two factors that determine how much a helicopter can lift. A pilot might be able to take on a full load at one point, but after traveling a few miles, and a few thousand feet up, he may discover that the thinner air density prohibits him from maneuvering effectively.

With a full load in an area where air density is low, it is impossible to hover a UH-1, making a long approach to a landing zone necessary. In many cases in the Central Highlands, tactical LZs just do not have long approaches. Often the necessary LZs are carved

out of the sides of mountains by Air Force jets.

The pilot may encounter sudden fog, rainstorms or thunder-showers, reducing visibility and making navigation more difficult. Two more problems facing the aviator are the unexpected air currents and turbulence created by the mountain barriers. To combat this terrain and climate problem, the 17th Group has each of its battalions oriented around geographical areas.

One of the largest areas of operation assigned to any 1st Brigade battalion is assigned to the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, "The Vagabonds of Vietnam," located at Dong Ba Thin. The Vagabonds are responsible for the seven southern provinces of II Corps, an area that covers approximately 50 percent of the Corps and 25 percent of the entire country.

The Vagabonds arrived in Vietnam in October, 1965, being an original member of the group when it was formed. The 10th Battalion has taken part in such operations as Van Buren, Harrison, Fillmore, and John Paul Jones, to mention just a few.

During Operation John Paul Jones, the Vagabonds flew 61 combat assaults with a total of 7,444 hours flown in lifting nearly 40,000 troops and nearly 2,000 tons of

cargo.

The 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion was one of the first aviation battalions to arrive in Vietnam and it is also one of the oldest in the Army.

Organized in 1940 as the 240th Quartermaster Battalion, the unit later became the 52nd Transportation Battalion. Just prior to coming to Vietnam the unit received its present designation. Arriving in country in March of 1963, the 52nd is now the largest aviation battalion in Vietnam.

Since arrival in country, the "Flying Dragons" have participated in every major operation in II Corps, just a few being Duc Co, the bloody battle of Ia Drang Valley, Operations Paul Revere, Francis Marion, and MacArthur, climaxed by the Thanksgiving Day victory of Hill 881. During the 1968 VC Tet Offensive the battalion was the decisive factor in the defense of the cities of Ban Me Thout, Pleiku and Kontum. The battalion's six companies work in the Pleiku-Kontum area but support virtually all of the combat units operating in the II Corps.

The 268th Combat Aviation Battalion, located at Phu Hiep, works in three provinces north of Nha Trang. The 268th provides a large



Rockets: lethal stings of Group gunships.
Photo by Lopez.

part of the aerial support for the 173rd Airborne Brigade, stationed at LZ English. The 268th also supports the 22nd ARVN Division at Ba Gi and the Capitol ROK Infantry Division at Qui Nhon.

The 223rd Combat Support Aviation Battalion, headquartered at Qui Nhon, is the Brigade's only all fixed-wing battalion. With four Reconnaissance Airplane Companies, one Surveillance Airplane Company and a Utility Airplane Company, the 223rd handles all fixed wing commitments for the 17th Group.

The four RACs fly for the province headquarters, US and Free World Forces Artillery and major tactical commands. "They provide the 'eyes' for the tactical commands and gather a large amount of intelligence for them," said Colonel Thorpe.

"Each province has a certain plane flying over it each day," he said. "One pilot usually flies over the same province, therefore he is able to detect very slight changes in the terrain."

The Mohawks of the Surveillance Airplane Company fly directly for I Field Force Headquarters and, unlike most aviation companies, they do most of their flying at night.

The 223rd's 18th Utility Air-



Troopers from the 7/17 Air Cav provide the Group with a hard hitting recon unit.

Photo by SP5 John Stidham.



52nd Battalion Cobras stalk Charlie in the Central Highlands.

Photo by SP4 Linnard Bybee.

plane Company, is the oldest fixed wing unit in Vietnam. Its U-1 Otters furnish light transport capability from the DMZ in the north to the delta city of Can Tho in the south, making them the only unit in the 17th Group to regularly furnish support in the III and IV Corps Tactical Zones.

Probably the most interesting unit in the 17th Group is the 7th Squadron of the 17th Air Cavalry Regiment. The 7/17th is a well integrated combination of aerial and ground firepower whose mission is to find the enemy, establish contact, develop the situation and pull out with vital intelligence.

The 7/17 was intended to be exclusively a reconnaissance unit, however it has established an impressive combat record.

In a typical Air Cav operation an OH-6A "Cayuse" scout aircraft will fly at tree top level over an area that is suspected to house enemy troops. When the Cayuse spots the enemy, the Cav's Huey-Cobras are called in to engage the hostile forces. If the gunships are not able to knock out the enemy, then artillery and air strikes are called in.

After the aircraft crews check out the area, then infantrymen from the Cav's Delta Troop and/or the Aero-Rifle Platoons of A and B troop are flown in to make a thorough ground search of the area. The infantrymen are always closely supported by the Aero Scout teams that coordinate their movements and direct gunship and

air strikes. When the infantrymen have gathered all of the information they need, they are lifted out by the UH-1s assigned to each troop.

Harrassment of the enemy is a primary mission of the 7/17th. As long as the Cav is in operation in the area, the enemy cannot remain stationery for very long. The enemy has to keep moving without a base of operations. He is forced to spend much of his time relocating and reconstructing his positions, rather than mounting attacks on allied bases and friendly villages.

The speed with which the 7/17th can react to enemy operations, combined with its ability to seek out the enemy, typifies the 17th Group. The Group's 14 Assault Helicopter Companies are strategically located throughout II Corps, making their troop transport capability and tremendous firepower only minutes away from any point where it is needed. The five Assault Support Helicopter Companies provide enough muscle to deliver anything that a combat unit might need, from artillery to food to medevacs. The six fixed wing companies search out Charlie in his most remote hiding places plus serving as artillery spotters and directing air strikes.

At any time during the day or night, 17th Group aircraft are patrolling the skys of II Corps, living up to their motto of "Always There."

A BRIGADE FAREWELL TO...



COLONEL ROBERT O. LAMBERT, Commanding Officer of the Brigade's 12th Combat Aviation Group, departs his present position this month to assume duties as the Deputy Aviation Officer, USARV.

Arriving in country in March, 1968, in the wake of the devastating Tet Offensive, Colonel Lambert was quick to grasp firm hold on his position as the commander of the largest aviation group in Vietnam and take the necessary action to guide the Group through the period with outstanding insight and ability.

Throughout his time as 12th Group commander, Colonel Lambert maintained close liaison with his one air cavalry squadron and six aviation battalion commanders. By so doing he was able to uncover problem areas and increase unit efficiency and combat effectiveness.

The 1st Aviation Brigade is fortunate that though Colonel Lambert is leaving its ranks, he will be available for consultation in his new position at USARV.



COLONEL WORTHINGTON M. MAHONE leaves his position as Commanding Officer of the 1st Aviation Brigade's southernmost group, the 164th Combat Aviation Group, this December. Having served as the Group commander since June 21 of this year, he will be extremely welcome in his new position as Director, Department of Tactics, Fort Rucker, Alabama.

Colonel Mahone served for six months with USARV Headquarters before assuming command over the Delta Group. Bringing with him the extensive experience of a long career in Army Aviation, Master Aviator Colonel Mahone was quick to apprise the strategic situation and peculiar problems of air-mobile warfare in the treacherous Delta region.

Under his close supervision, the Group's two battalions and air cavalry squadron were able to maximize their effectiveness in support of the ARVN forces that are responsible for the destruction of Viet Cong influence in IV Corps.

With Colonel Mahone's departure, the 1st Brigade is losing one of its ablest commanders.

COLONEL CHARLES C. WALTs, commanding officer of the newly created 58th Aviation Group, Flight Facilities Mobile (Provisional), departed the 1st Aviation Brigade and Vietnam November 13. Colonel Walts took command of the group when it was still an aviation battalion in early July. Under his guidance and leadership it expanded its facilities to meet the fast rising demands of the war upon Army Aviation. Colonel Walts was instrumental in the elevation of the 58th's status from a battalion to a Group.

The Group has assets ranging from one end of Vietnam to the



other and is responsible for all army aircraft control and airfield facilities from the Delta to the DMZ. COL Walts was continually on the move increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the group's units.

Prior to coming to the Brigade, COL Walts had been Project Officer AAD, USARV from November 1967 to June 1968.

COL Walts is leaving the Brigade to go to HQ USA Combat Development Command, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

DEAR SON:
WE KNOW HOW LONELY
YOU MUST BE AT THIS
TIME OF YEAR.....

LONG
BINH

APO

