

# HAWK

JANUARY

1969







# 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

# HAWK

JANUARY 1969

VOLUME II

NUMBER 5



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Singapore .....p. 10



Medal of Honor ....p. 18

**Front Cover:** Fisheye view of CH-54 Flying Crane. Photo by CWO Jay Goldsberry. **Back Cover:** CH-47 Chinook lands on USS Princeton at Vung Tau. Photo by SP5 Michael McIntosh.

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COMMANDING GENERAL  
DEPUTY BRIGADE COMMANDER  
DEPUTY BRIGADE COMMANDER FOR ADMINISTRATION

CAMMANDER 164th CAG  
COMMANDER 12th CAG  
COMMANDER 58th AVN GP (FFM) PROV.

COMMANDER 212th CAB  
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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.



# NEWSLETTER



**DRILL SERGEANTS ARE IN HEAVY DEMAND.** More volunteers are needed for the U.S. Army drill sergeant program. On August 24, 1968, the Army was short 3,393 drill sergeants, about 38% of the total authorized.

Drill sergeants receive extra uniforms, free laundry for fatigues and an 18-month stabilized tour if assigned to a Basic Combat Training unit. Promotions are available up to the grade E-6, within DA promotion quotas but without regard to time in grade or service, for outstanding performance of duty or for being top graduate at Drill Sergeant Schools. Details listed in AR 614-204. (ANF)

**THE HUMAN RESOURCES RESEARCH OFFICE** at Fort Rucker, Alabama, is gathering preliminary data for a study of the effects of combat stress on U.S. Army Aviators.

This year the office will begin "Project Predict," a series of three studies designed not only to analyze combat stress, but also to help the Army identify types of people most resistant to stress effects and develop training programs aimed at reducing these effects.

Researchers are conducting personal interviews and administering written questionnaires to warrant officer aviators with recent combat experience to gather information on stress.

In addition, they are compiling an extensive list of scientific abstracts on human performance under stress in a combat environment, such as extreme temperatures, loss of sleep, enemy fire and night operations. (ANF)

**EARLY LAST MONTH, THE 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE** welcomed Colonel Herb D. Prather to its ranks, when he assumed command of the 12th Combat Aviation Group. Colonel Prather had previously served the Brigade as Chief of Staff and Deputy Brigade Commander for Administration immediately prior to assuming duties as Deputy Aviation Officer at USARV. Colonel Prather arrived in country on May 10, 1968.

As commander of the largest Aviation Group in Vietnam, Colonel Prather will be a great asset to the Brigade and to Army Aviation in Vietnam. He is qualified in the O-1, U-6A, U-8D, U-8F, T-41B, OH-13, OH-6 and UH-1 aircraft.

**PERSONS PLANNING TO TAKE REST AND RECREATION** trips in the near future are reminded that a minimum of 45 days advance notification is required by the R&R officer. For the more popular spas of Hawaii and Sydney, earlier requests will greatly enhance one's chances of getting the trip when you want it. Priorities are given to those married personnel who wish to meet their wives in Hawaii and precedence is always given those with the most time in country.

**A CH-47A CHINOOK OF THE 205TH AS-SAULT SUPPORT HELICOPTER COMPANY** has set what might possibly be a record for the most hours flown by one ship in one month. The "Geronimo" craft was airborne 187 hours and 35 minutes during the month of October.

The regular crew of the Chinook, Flight Engineer SP/4 Robert L. Brown, Crewchief PFC Victor Krebs and Door Gunner SP/4 Kenneth McLeod spent only four days on the ground during the month and that was during aircraft's thirteenth periodic inspection.

Captain William L. Leighty, the commanding officer of the 612th Transportation Detachment, praised the outstanding cooperation and devotion to duty of the detachment, the company and the Tech Rep personnel.



## Editorial

### HAWK EDITORIAL

Countless reams of paper have been used and literally tons of news-film and tape have been used to show the world the capabilities of the helicopter as an instrument of war—whether used as an aerial weapons platform, a resupply vehicle, or in the airmobility concept of dropping troops into a battle area where they are needed.

No one has shown greater prowess at all these tasks than have the men and ships of the 1st Aviation Brigade.

But the focus of the American effort is shifting more and more into a new phase—a phase of rebuilding.

As this effort picks up momentum, it will be an effort without the newspaper space and the “glory” of conflict with a hostile enemy, the helicopter will probably turn out to be the greatest tool of construction and mercy that has yet been developed.

In this issue of *HAWK*, one example of constructive helicopter use is shown in the delivery of a bulldozer-tractor to a remote village in Thailand. It will take highly qualified individuals to actually carry out the rebuilding program. And the specialists who move the equipment and supplies throughout the country will be helicopter pilots and crews.

### CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

*Chaplain CPT Gene Huntzing*

*7/1ACS from the*



Looking out his study window, Dr. Albin Barnett saw a mob preparing to lynch a man. Running out, Dr. Barnett jumped to the wagon and said “I see what you are doing. I know you all, and if you lynch this man tonight, the sheriff will have your names tomorrow. You’ll have to lynch me too or let this man have a fair trial.” That took courage, but the young preacher made his point.

Kitty Genovese was dying in a New York street, crying for help. Everyone ignored her. Because the observers failed to care, Kitty died. How much does one’s religion mean when he fails to care enough to help another in need?

Concern is a two-way street. An officer may be concerned about his men, but are they concerned about one another? How concerned is a man when he goes to sleep on guard, jeopardizing the lives of everyone else? How concerned is a man who risks the financial security of his family on the turn of a card or roll of the dice? What kind of concern allows a man to have “lost week-ends” while his family goes unclothed and unfed? What kind of concern is it that allows a society to spend millions on entertainment and personal luxuries while neglecting the poor?

Concern is an expression of caring. Caring results in involvement. Involvement gives testimony to the degree of one’s religious conviction. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

## CAREER COUNSELOR

Choosing the Army as a career has more advantages than meets the eye at first glance. First, there is job security; no seasonal layoffs, strikes or shut-downs as in private enterprise. Second, medical expenses for you and your family are paid for by the Army. Third are the liberal retirement benefits. You may retire at one-half your base pay after 20 years or you may complete 30 years and receive three-fourths base pay.

Now, let’s talk dollars and cents. That fellow you know who works in a factory and makes \$5,000 a year isn’t realizing any more hard cash than you are, in the long run.

Say You’re an E-4 with over two years service. Your base pay is \$238.50, or \$2,862 a year. Deduct your income tax, \$304, and Social Security, \$126, and you are left with \$2,434. It’s all yours. You have no rent or grocery money to pay (assuming you and your friend are both single).

On the other hand, your \$5000 a year friend has income taxes of \$667, Social security, \$222, rent, \$720 and groceries of \$1080 per at a minimum. So what does he end up with? \$2311 as compared to your \$2434. This does not take into account his hospitalization, company retirement fund or union dues. You get 30 days paid vacation—he will probably get one week the first year, two thereafter. And don’t forget the clothing and uniform allowances you get.

Dollars-and-cents-wise, therefore, it would be wise for you to take a second look before getting out of the Army. In your next hitch, you could make E-5 or E-6—which could put you way ahead of your \$5000-per-year friend.

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## ***"I Have Flown Among the the Trees and Seen the Face of the Enemy"***

***Story and Photos by***

*CWO Jay Goldsberry*

*"What is a Scout? I'll tell you what I demand from my scouts and get. I demand that my scouts have the eyes of Kit Carson. They can tell the difference between a 30-minute-old foot print and a day-old foot print. They can track a man, via his foot prints, through the nippa palm until they find him and kill him. My scouts find caches, hidden, that the ground troops have missed even though they walked over the same ground. My scouts can draw out a VC. A VC standing there shooting at them, the ship spins around and plasters him with the minigun. These scout ships are fighting vehicles... This entire troop is organized around its scouts. The scouts are the troop. The guns are here only to kill what the scouts find, and to cover the scouts. The lift is here to put infantry on the ground in those cases where it's needed to develop the situation and to protect the scout should he go down... The entire troop is here as a scout vehicle to find, one, to fix, two, and to destroy, if possible, and to recommend the insertion of higher elements. My scouts are my reason for existence."*

*Major John D. Jenks  
CO A 3/17*

### **CORRESPONDENT'S NOTE:**

The 1st Aviation Brigade is made up of specialists in many and varied field. Among the most hazardous of the specialties in all combat aviation is the Army's Air Cavalry Scout. Scouts face the enemy daily, right in his own strongholds. They depend upon each other, their ships and their skill as no other team must. A 3/17 Scout Platoon has chosen a motto which says all of this compactly. "I have flown among the trees and seen the face of the enemy." The following excerpts are drawn from an interview with 1LT John Briggs (pilot) and SFC John Conner (observer) both with the Scout Platoon A Troop 3/17 Air Cavalry Squadron (Silver Spur). These two men show great pride in their unit and their duties as aerial scouts. This same esprit pervades all of the Air Cavalry troopers I've met.

\* \* \*

*Q. What type of people fly as Scouts?*





*HueyCobra prepares to lay down fires directed by LOH Scout ship.*

**A. P** "A different breed of person. Not just the scouts, but everyone who works in the Air Cav. They're in an experience that 99 per cent of the other aviators don't ever get into. Some people are the type to begin with and others just seem to grow into the job... There are people who are terrified of being in a Cav unit and yet there are others who would give their right arm to get in one. I was very apprehensive about coming here. At Group they kidded me that all of the assignments were pretty good except the Air Cav. They told me that I would go to the 3/17. I was just a little upset about it. Frankly, now I'm glad I came. This is a fantastic unit."

**O** "Scouts have always had the spirit, the audaciousness to get out there and do something and be the first to do it. That spirit carries right on up to the Air Cavalry now. A good scout's still got that spirit."

**P** "You're not just one of the mass

of helicopter pilots. When something's going on, they're asking you what's there, where're they going and what are they doing. What should we do about it. It's a lot better when you can see that you're doing a job. It's helping somebody else to their job better. It never gets dull. You're always doing something that's worthwhile. You've got people who are depending upon you and using what you find to good advantage. I never get complacent."

**Q.** *I gather you have long since discarded any notion of the immediate fatality of flying scout ships.*

**A. P** "You don't really think about it. You don't have time. Most of us pretty well realize that if it does happen it will happen so fast that worrying about it is not going to do any good. We've had very few incidents of scout pilots being killed. Leg wounds represent 90 per cent of our injuries. They're no big problem. I'd much rather be

flying my LOH than be up there in a Huey. I think it's safer down here hovering in the trees. I feel safer. I'm glad I'm in the scouts."

**Q.** *What sort of training have you had for your scout work?*

**A. P** "The training in the states, aside from learning how to fly was not that useful. You get it all here. Before a scout pilot goes out flying he flies five, six or seven missions as an observer with an experienced pilot. You have to pick it up as you go. Other people talking, platoon leader, CO telling experiences they've had—this is how I learned. They know what is out there, and how the people act from past experience. It's pretty well all picked up here."

**O** "It's been a good program in this scout platoon. They've worked it with every new pilot... First, once he's LOH qualified, he goes out with an old experienced scout-pilot as his observer for several days until the platoon leader is satisfied that the man is fully capable of handling the mission. You'd be surprised how fast he will pick up experience."

**Q.** *How much does the observer contribute to the mission?*

**A. O** "We help navigate and plot the coordinates for the pilot of suspected enemy positions. The pilot is blind on the left side of the ship. I've got to protect the ship on my side with my CAR-15 while I observe. I am looking for targets and signs of the enemy. I bring my findings to the pilot's attention, then we'll both check them out. Bunkers, signs of recent activity, equipment, trails, tracks, people, flags are all objects we're looking for."

**Q.** *How do you feel about being a scout?*

**A. P** "It's not that easy to be a scout. We've had lots of pilots assigned to the platoon who don't make it. A lot of them get sick with the type of flying you do so much, some of them just weren't cut out for it... You don't really

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use the good flying techniques when you're flying scouts. About the sloppier you are sometimes the safer it is. Flying out of trim often makes it hard for "Charlie" to figure out which direction you're flying, then he can't lead you. Flying sideways, flying backwards, out of trim, lots of turns. They don't know where you're going next. If they do they'll probably shoot you down...About the only time they're going to get you is when you're hovering, flying straight, or passing directly over them."

**Q.** *How long can you two take this concentrated effort?*

**A. P.** "When you make contact you'll pull out for the gunships to work. This will give us some rest. Lately we've been working an extra relief ship into our plan which will relieve us after an hour or two of this type flying."

**O.** "Sometimes you'll fly four to six hours if you have a heavy contact going. They usually need every bird then. So you just refuel and return to the AO. The strain on the pilots is pretty great."

**Q.** *What does "Charlie" think of you?*

**A.** They're pretty well scared of the LOH, they'll do everything they can to avoid it. The experienced VC will try to hide from us to the very last second. The new guys will jump out and start shooting as soon as they see us. They don't last long that way."

*1LT John Briggs and his observer, SFC John Conner during a quieter moment.*



**Q.** *I understand from many scout people that much of your daring is really based on your faith in the LOH. Care to comment on this?*

**A. P.** "Yes, in my opinion the LOH is a fantastic helicopter. It has good crew protection, an outstanding engine and amazing crash survivability. With a ship like that I'll take the chances necessary to accomplish the mission."

**O.** "It is highly maneuverable, sturdy, takes hits and keeps flying. It is easy to fly so that I can fly when the time comes. 'Charlie's' afraid of our LOH's flexibility. There's no comparison with it and the OH-13 I flew in on the Czech border."

**Q.** *In looking over your ship I noticed a lot of grenades. How do you employ them?*

**A. O.** "We use incendiaries, fragmentation and, preferably, concussion grenades all day long. Of course we use a little smoke, but

as we gain experience we use it less and less. We never throw the grenade. It's too dangerous to pull the pin inside the ship. So we just drop the grenade in a small-time bombing run. Then we scoot out of blast range. Sometimes we hover over a bunker and try to get it inside. Then we have to hover close and when I release it I tell the pilot to clear out... We have four to five seconds to get away. That's another thing I like about the LOH. It's got great pick-up (sic)."

\* \* \*

"Silver Spur is noted in the 9th Div and throughout Vietnam... The company commanders almost to a man with the 9th adore my scout pilots. They know them personally, if not by name, by call sign. Any time one of my scouts is shot down my radio network is immediately flooded with inquiries from throughout the Div area as to the status, who it was, and how serious. I've had sergeants who lined up their squads and presented arms as I walked by in appreciation for what my scouts have done. I've met wounded men in the hospital while checking on my own wounded, who just wanted to shake my hand and say 'thank you' to the scout pilot who brought them in from on top of the bunker when no one else could get 'em. The stories go on and on. It's phenomenal... it's well deserved. My boys take risks and that's what it takes to do an outstanding job."

Major Jenks



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*An Air Cavalry Scout LOH skims the treetops in search of the enemy.*



# HONORS TO THE BRIGADE

*Three Awards Given Brigade Members by Quad-A*



Achievement is a keynote to Army Aviation, and it is fitting that achievement gain proper recognition. Such recognition was given to two men and one unit of the 1st Aviation Brigade by the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA or Quad-A) in its tenth annual meeting at the Sheraton Park Hotel, Washington D.C..

Major Robin K. Miller, already well known both within and outside the aviation circles for his heroic exploits, was presented with the "Army Aviator of the Year Award" by General Bruce Palmer, Jr., U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff. Major Miller has distinguished himself as a pilot and armed platoon leader during three tours of duty in Vietnam. He served in most recently with the Brigade's 114th Assault Helicopter Company in the Mekong Delta. During his tour with the 114th, he repeatedly carried out unselfish acts of valor such as the rescue of a captured American from the very clutches of a Viet Cong sampan convoy and missions of mercy as the evacuation of an entire orphanage under enemy fire during the Tet Offen-

sive. Major Miller has been an inspiration to many men, aviators and nonrated personnel alike.

Sergeant First Class Jesse J. Dodson, Jr. was proclaimed "Army Aviation Soldier of the Year." He was presented the award by Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Stanley R. Resor in recognition for his high achievements as shop foreman of the 405th Transportation Maintenance Battalion of the 170th Assault Helicopter Company. Sergeant Dodson was commended on his professionalism and expert technical ability. His thorough knowledge of helicopters and ability to apply this knowledge to the im-



*MAJ Robin K. Miller named Army Aviator of the Year.*

mediate military requirements, combined with an outstanding quality of leadership rendered invaluable support to his unit and to the entire area of operations.

The third award to go to a Brigade member was the "Outstanding Army Aviation Unit of the Year Award," received by the 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion, the largest and one of the hardest working aviation battalions in Vietnam. Stationed at Dragon Mountain in II Corps, the 52nd is one of the Army's oldest aviation units. Since arriving in country in 1963, the "Flying Dragons" have participated in every major operation in II Corps. On hand to receive the award from U.S. Army Chief of Staff William C. Westmoreland were three former commanders of the battalion: LTC Raymond G. Lehman, LTC Edward P. Lukert, and LTC Paul C. Smithey. The battalion's representative present was Sergeant Major Elmer J. Winters.

The award, a trophy sponsored by Hughes Tool Co., was presented last year to the Brigade itself. It was a proud day for all Army Aviators everywhere.

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# HAWK HONEY



*Melodye Prentiss  
Photo  
Courtesy Playboy Magazine*



*International Mission:*

## Tractor for Thais

In Vietnam, the CH-47B "Chinooks" of the 1st Aviation Brigade are often called upon to sling load many different kinds of heavy cargo, including food, equipment and ammunition. Moving a bulldozer is not an unusual task for a "Hook" but when the bulldozer is in Surat Thani, Thailand, and the person requesting such a move is the King of Thailand, the event becomes very unusual, and for the United States Army it becomes a contribution to "practical diplomacy."

This unusual mission was assigned to the 132nd Assault Sup-

port Helicopter Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion in late September. The selected crew, including Chief Warrant Officer Billy Stafford, Aircraft Commander, Pilot Chief Warrant Officer Robert Merkle, Specialists Five Mike Deming and Mike Borque and Specialist Four Tom Grillo prepared the CH-47B and themselves for the journey.

The crew was aided in their preparations by the 16th Transportation Corps Detachment, the 132nd's maintenance support unit. The 16th insured the Chinook's readiness for the long flight by

running a thorough maintenance check on the ship and installing a 600-gallon auxiliary fuel cell to eliminate time-consuming fuel stops. Besides their normal issue weapons and ammunition, the crew carried extra jungle fatigues and civilian clothes.

On the last day of September the "Hercules" crew lifted off the Chu Lai heliport enroute to Ubon, Thailand. The Chinook's flight path was over Laos and then south through Thailand. A1E fighters insured safe passage for the Hercules by escorting it across Laos. Upon arriving at Ubon, the crew received an additional mission. An F-4 jet had crashed four miles from the runway and had to be recovered. Under the supervision of the Ubon Base Maintenance Officer, the Hercules crew recovered the downed Air Force fighter without incident.

This task completed, the Chinook flew to Bangkok to begin its primary mission. Upon arriving at Bangkok the crew was greeted by officials from the Joint United States Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG) and the Military Assistance Command, Thailand (MACTHAI).

In a briefing headed by Brigadier General John W. Baer, Colonel Glenn H. Gardner, the MACTHAI Chief of Staff, pointed out the great importance and the inherent political implications dependent upon the success of the mission. The briefing also covered the positioning of refuel points, times for arrival and the sequence of events. A special emphasis was made upon protocol since it explained prescribed behavior in the presence of King Bhumibol Adulajadej and Queen Sirikit of Thailand.

*His Majesty King Bhumibol of Thailand, congratulates SP/5 Mike Deming, flight engineer, upon completion of the mission.*



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The crew departed Bangkok on October 3 enroute to Surat Thani to pick up their important cargo, a bulldozer to be used in vital construction projects in the village of Phra Saong 50 miles away. With the usual skill and professionalism of a Hercules crew, the move was performed without incident. The earth moving equipment was a gift from the King and Queen of Thailand to the people of this small village.

Upon the completion of a successful helilift, the crew was greeted by the entire village and thanked personally by the Royal family. Each member of the Hercules Chinook crew was given a gift as a token of appreciation for the work they did in helping one of the rural villages of Thailand in its self-help civic action program.

In a letter to Major General Robert R. Williams, the commanding general of the 1st Aviation Brigade, General Creighton W. Abrams, Commander, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, commended the Hercules crew members on behalf of the American Ambassador to Thailand, Leonard Unger, for their support and contribution to "practical diplomacy."



*... Except maybe when the 'dozer is located in Surat Thani, Thailand.*

*Moving a bulldozer is not an unusual task for a 'Hook' ...*



*Story by 132nd ASHC  
IO Photo by JUSMAG IO*

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## The Twain Shall Meet : SINGAPORE R&R



East is East and West is West but an American humorist named Twain saw them meet in Singapore and his descriptive reports spurred international tourism towards this cosmopolitan free port where fare-

wells are reluctant and where there are gentle reminders to return to her shores.

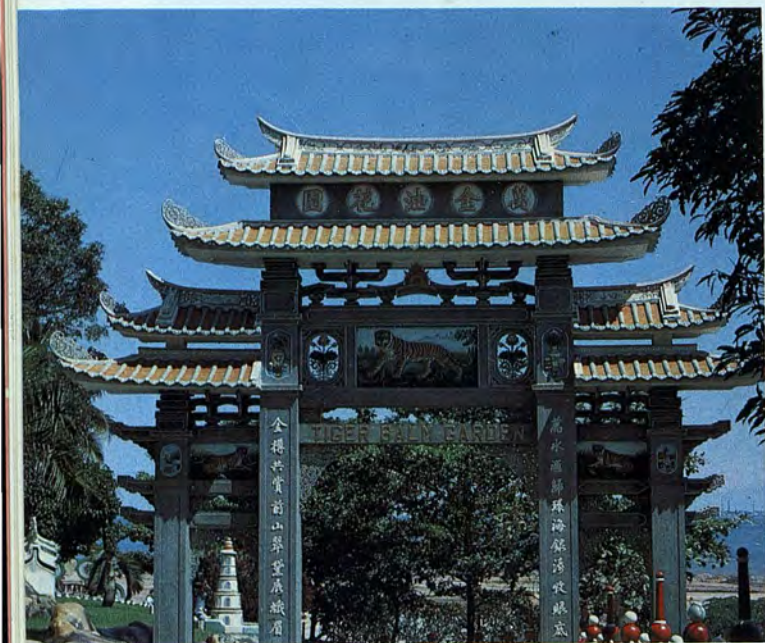
Although the sun has finally set on the British Empire in Singapore, the evident westernizing of the former crown colony adds to its allure as an R&R "Shangri La."

The wordless sounding rhythm of Singapore is heard by those who will listen. There is the drumming tempo of tradesmen hawking wares ranging from Persian carpets, star sapphires, hand printed batik cloths scented with aromatic sandalwood and jade from Burma to German, Japanese or British cameras, transistor radios, watches and tape recorders; there is the inviting sound of finger-snapping dancers on the discotheque deck of the popular cruise boat JEYA MANIS and the pulsating exciting warmth of a city whose recreational spontaneity is yours for the modest investment of time.

The faces of Singapore are many. There is the progressive Singapore whose multi-storied housing developments and complexes reflect a resourceful people on the move; there is the city still reigning as a focal point of far eastern trade; and there is a Singapore preserving the multi-racial and religious traditions of its Chinese, Malay, Indian, Pakistani, European and Eurasian inhabitants.

Singapore is a study in international living. The streets teem with sloc-eyed Chinese girls in slit-to-the-hip *cheongsams*; with Malay women in form fashioned sarongs and Eurasian girls striding attractively in mod bellbottom slacks.

*Where Oriental architecture abounds.*





From the barges in the Singapore River to the commanding locale of Mount Faber overlooking the city and port, a visitor can sense the Singapore that was, is and will be.

A highpoint in shock and fascination awaits visitors to Singapore's famed Tiger Balm Gardens where acres of concrete landscaped into grottoes and caves are covered with painted statuary depicting Chinese myths and legends. Within the complex, there is a subterranean cavern called "The Chinese Hell" where a variety of imaginative tortures ranging from the disembowling of offenders to the severing of their offensive tongues are realistically presented in masterful representations.

At dusk, Singapore is a procession of pleasure seekers. The city abounds in restaurants serving cuisines prepared to satisfy the most discriminating of gourmets. In addition to Russian, French, Japanese and Chinese delicacies, there are exotic dishes to be savored such as the Malay *Satay*, pieces of spiced barbecued meat strung together on a thin strip of coconut and eaten with a curried peanut sauce.

After dinner, there are avenues for sustained enjoyment including moonlight cruises, sampanning, fishing off Clifford Pier, strolling through night bazaars and fashionable night clubs where entertainment is presented by stellar acts from the cabarets of Europe and the top spots of Asia.

Singapore is a vibrant city aware of the warmth and rhythm it generates in herself and others.

*Tiger Balm Gardens offers statues depicting activities from the bizarre to the ribald.*



*Theater productions hold attractions for many tastes.*



*There is also a strong Western influence.*



Story by  
SFC Edward J.  
G. Cannata



## Guardians of the Delta :

# 13th CAB

The 13th Combat Aviation Battalion is a legend throughout the rice-rich land of the Mekong Delta and reality over the miles of waterways and canals where the Viet Cong guide food and ammunition supply sampans to shore line drop off points.

Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Richard A. Keilman and with headquarters at Soc Trang, the 13th CAB consists of the 121st and 336th Assault Helicopter Companies and the 221st Reconnaissance Airplane Company. The Battalion is also comprised of the 114th and 175th Assault Helicopter Companies stationed at Vinh Long.

The 164th Combat Aviation Group's "Delta Battalion" furnishes direct aviation support to the ARVN IV Corps by providing tactical air movement of combat troops and supplies within the combat zone and conducting surveillance within the IV Corps Tactical Zone.

The strategic necessity of the Battalion's mission is evident when one considers that the ARVN IV Corps is composed of approximately 40,000 men organized into three infantry divisions and supporting troops and has territorial responsibility for the 15 provinces which comprise the tactical zone. These

areas are garrisoned by regional and popular force troops under the command of the sector chief. A third major force in the area is the National Police. Supported by the battalion's aviation strength, these combined elements constitute a combat capability to deal effectively with the Viet Cong at various levels of strength.

With 40 per cent of Vietnam's 16 million inhabitants residing in the Delta area where approximately two-thirds of all food in South Vietnam is grown and where three-quarters of all the rice cultivated is produced, the air-mobile support of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion is of strategic significance.

The Delta Battalion (Provisional) was formed in Can Tho on July 4, 1963 to provide airmobility to the IV Vietnamese Corps. The provisional headquarters assumed command over the 114th Aviation Company and the 121st Aviation Company, at that time both air-mobile companies. Within a year, the 13th Battalion Headquarters was activated at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Battalion headquarters left the United States and replaced the Delta Battalion September 29, 1964 at Can Tho, where it remained until its recent move to Soc Trang in October of 1968.

The 121st Assault Helicopter Company at Soc Trang is presently commanded by Major Harold M. Ramey. Arriving at Soc Trang in 1962, the 121st became the first Army Aviation unit in the Mekong Delta.

Aviators of the 121st "Soc Trang Tigers" are believers in "practice makes perfect" and put this belief

*13th CAB slicks refuel at Vi Thanh before another combat assault.*



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into action in their approach to unusual and emergency flying situations. A two-part program composed of instrument flying and emergency phases insures that pilots remain proficient in all procedures is directed by Captain William Reisner. Each "Tiger" pilot takes a two-hour check ride with the Captain every 90 days. Forced landings, governor failures, power failures and other emergencies are simulated during the ride.

The second part of the program is an instrument phase during which an aviator is further trained in basic instruments, ground control landings and instrument conditions. Proficiency in "blind flying" is a "must" in Vietnam because of its rapidly changing weather conditions.

The 221st Reconnaissance Airplane Company, "The Shotguns," commanded by Major Robert W. Hornaday, arrived in Soc Trang in 1965. Their motto, "Eyes Over the Delta," indicates their mission of visual reconnaissance of the lowlands.

Armed with marking rockets, the Company's "BirdDogs" usually do not work in groups, but generally carry out reconnaissance missions in single ship sorties, serving as radio relay, adjusting artillery and reconnaissance.

On his recon patrols the pilot is visually sensitive to changes in



*Pathfinder watches intently as troops are boarding in the PZ.*

the landscape. If he notices removal of earth in an area, his report may provide intelligence with vital information pertaining to enemy build up of entrenchments.

When a BirdDog pilot spots a potential target, he radios the sector control and requests gunships, artillery or airstrikes. His call for gunship assistance is answered by a gun platoon of one of the assault helicopter companies of the 13th CAB. Representative of these is the 336th Assault Helicopter Company.

The main mission of the 336th, commanded by Major Boswell, is aviation support of the three ARVN Divisions. Usually it sup-

ports the 21st Division, but its gunships, the "T-Birds," support everyone they can. The majority of the 336th's lifts are performed south of Can Tho with the 21st "Soc Trang Tigers," but when the "Warriors" of the 336th are called upon to provide the troop lift for special operations, they work throughout the Corps, also frequently supporting the Special Forces outposts throughout the Delta.

An example of the 336th's combat effectiveness occurred recently when Warrant Officer John Kimmell of San Jose, California, walked to the flight line to undertake what he thought would be a "routine" command and control mission for an action 10 miles south of Can Tho. An ARVN cavalry squadron and an infantry battalion were in heavy contact with a VC unit and there was no one in the air to direct the operation.

As WO Kimmell's aircraft flew over the battle area, an ARVN tracked vehicle received a direct hit from a B-40 rocket, killing two and wounding seven. Since a medical evacuation helicopter was not in the immediate vicinity, and further delay might encourage the VC to attack in force, WO Kimmell landed and medevaced the wounded. When he returned to the

*ARVN troops jump off 121st AHC slicks in another effort to nail Charlie in the Delta.*





battle area, he saw that the ARVN's were still engaging the enemy to their front while a VC company was crossing a canal in an attempt to flank and destroy.

WO Kimmell ordered his door gunners Specialists Four James Kennedy and William R. Phillips to open fire as he swept over and at the advancing enemy. Within five minutes, the enemy retreated across the canal and headed for the safety of the tree line. Regrouping, the VC began firing at WO Kimmell's circling helicopter. Again the door gunners decimated the enemy until they broke for cover. With the arrival of gunships, WO Kimmell flew his aircraft to Can Tho to assess aircraft damage and when he learned it was minimal, continued his mission of command and control until darkness and the end of the operation.

The 114th AHC, commanded by Major J. T. Caraballo, and the 175th AHC, commanded by Major John H. Boysen, are both stationed at Vinh Long and complete the 13th Battalion's airmobile arm.

At the Vinh Long airfield, there is a sandbagged "hutch" where the crews of the gunships from the 114th "Cobras" and 175th "Mavericks" take alternate turns at night vigils providing men and aircraft for the mortar alert standby mission. While guarding the airfield,



*After a full day of tangling with Charlie, the ships head home to await another day's fight.*

two gunships are parked in front of the structure dubbed "Hero Hutch." If and when the compound comes under attack, the crews scramble to their aircraft and lift off within minutes. Once airborne, they seek out and destroy the enemy when and where he can be found.

During the Tet Offensive, the hutch was demolished by a direct hit from what is believed to be a mortar round seconds after the crews had run to their gunships. Their aerial efforts during the Tet Offensive earned for the "Cobras" and the "Mavericks" not only praise from fellow soldiers and the villagers of Vinh Long, but also the unofficial title of "The Angry

Men From the Hutch That Was."

The 13th Combat Aviation Battalion has an enviable record of heroism and accomplishments of service. It was awarded the Valorous Unit Citation for the period 4-6 April 1965, the first such citation awarded in the Vietnam war. The Battalion has also received the Outstanding Army Aviation Unit of 1965 award and the award of the Hughes Command Mobility Trophy.

Add to these the numerous awards of valor and meritorious service of the men of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion and you have an insight into the motivation and professionalism of one of Army Aviation's most representative Battalions.

This spirit of the 13th CAB reflects the courage of Colonel Jack Taylor Dempsey who was commanding officer of the Battalion Easter Sunday, March 26th, 1967. That morning, Colonel Dempsey made a heroic attempt to rescue the crews of two helicopters shot down in a landing zone. His helicopter was less than five feet from touchdown in the LZ when concentrated Viet Cong fire ripped through his aircraft and took his life. His last words, "I am going in after my men" are part of the Battalion's heritage over the Mekong.

*Slicks wait in staging area to be called out again.*



HAWK



# ABOUT VIETNAM

## GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

The American soldier's humor has always colored his descriptions of places and situations. Vietnam has been described as "the only place in the world where you can stand hip-deep in mud and have dust blowing in your face." Another description characterizes the country as having two seasons: Hot Wet and Hot Dry.

Though greatly exaggerated, these descriptions hold a certain element of truth. Although the Republic of Vietnam is relatively small (approximately the same land area as Washington state), it is a land of diverse character. The terrain varies from the table-flat ricelands of the Mekong Delta to the rolling dunes of the coastal plain to the sharp ridges of the mountains in the central highlands. Lying in the tropical zone, it has a variety of climates, ranging from distinctly dry seasons to heavy rains.

Geographically, South Vietnam is divided into three well defined areas. The first is the central highlands, which comprises about two-thirds of the country. Although this is the largest geographic area, it is the least populated, due to the heavy jungles and high mountains which impede travel and communications.

The second geographic area is the coastal plain, a narrow strip approximately 25 miles wide, running along the coast of the South China Sea from the 17th parallel almost to Vung Tau. This area is the center of the fishing industry, and is noted for its numerous beaches and bays, and excellent coves for small craft anchorages.

The Delta, lying south and west of Saigon, covers about one fourth of the Republic of Vietnam's total area, and provides living space for nearly half of the country's total population of 16 million. Domi-



nated by the Mekong, Bassac, Saigon and Dong Hai Rivers, it is characterized by a flat, poorly drained surface, crisscrossed by many streams and intricate networks of man-made canals.

These canals serve not only to irrigate the extensive rice paddies but also afford avenues for small boat travel to Saigon and the innumerable small communities in the region. During the heavy monsoon season, a major portion of the Delta is flooded, making cultivation and travel almost impossible.

Vietnam has a "monsoonal" climate, with two major seasons—the Southwest (summer) monsoon, or wet season, which extends from mid-May to early October, and the Northeast (winter) monsoon, or dry season, from early November to mid-March. The short intervening periods are known as the Spring and Autumn Transitions.

The spring transition is characterized by periods of very high temperatures and high humidity, while autumn transition brings the highest precipitation and heaviest cloud cover. It is during the autumn transition, in the months from July to November that destructive tropical typhoons sweep in off the seas. September is the month most likely to bring typhoons to the northern area. In the months following, the storms wrack the south.

Temperatures also vary with location. In the north, the nights are usually cool and pleasant, as opposed to the warm and humid atmosphere found in the south.

Considering all of these variations in Vietnam's climate and landscape, perhaps the American soldier is right. Maybe there is a basis in fact to the adage that "many a truth is often spoken in jest."



*Indispensable Man:*

# CREW CHIEF



The typical combat helicopter pilot completes a day's mission over Vietnam by hitting the battery switch, scrawling his name in a flight record and seeking a remedy for the stomach pains and frayed nerves which accompany his hazardous occupation.

It's a behavior pattern that has developed from a confidence in the fact that his aircraft will be attended to in a knowledgeable and professional manner. This must be the case, because early the next day he will preflight this same aircraft in the half light of morning and fly it over country which is not known for the hospitality that it extends to pilots who 'drop in' unexpectedly. A confidence such as this is justified by the efforts of the 67N20, or more informally, the crew chief.

In an assault helicopter company, the duties performed by helicopter crew chiefs are enormously important. The complexity of the machinery which he maintains and the proficiency demanded of him by

such a job place him among an elite group upon whose shoulders rest the safety of every crewmember who pulls pitch in a helicopter.

His day begins early, usually two hours before dawn, making sure that the aircraft is mechanically ready by checking the head and the stabilizing bar as well as checking the oil gauges, the hydraulic system, the electrical systems and the fuel intake. He also supervises loading to insure a safe center of gravity.

While in flight he watches for enemy, lays down suppressive fire when needed, listens for abnormal noises from the engine or transmission, clears the tail rotor in tight landing zones and inspects the aircraft whenever it is shut down.

When the mission has been completed and the aircraft is shut down at the end of the day, the crew chief begins his daily inspection. He cleans and greases the head, cleans the air filters by running water through them, checks the

engine for loose or worn fuel and oil lines and greases the tail rotor. In addition, he scrutinizes the entire engine for loose or worn parts and makes sure all components are functional for the next day. He checks the oil gauges, the hydraulic and electrical systems and the stabilizing bar. Then the aircraft must be cleaned, washed and reinspected.

How does a man go about becoming a crew chief? Most enlist for the job and attend a five-week basic maintenance course to emerge with the MOS of 67A10. Those who excel advance to 67N20 school to become crew chiefs. Another method used by many in becoming crew chiefs is the On-The-Job training method. After serving as a door gunner for several months, the opportunity is open to those with the initiative to add to their knowledge by working with experienced helicopter mechanics in the hangar. He is then generally sent to the Army Aviation Refresher Training School at Vung Tau for several weeks to supplement his

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training. When the former door gunner has shown sufficient progress he may return to the flight line as a crew chief.

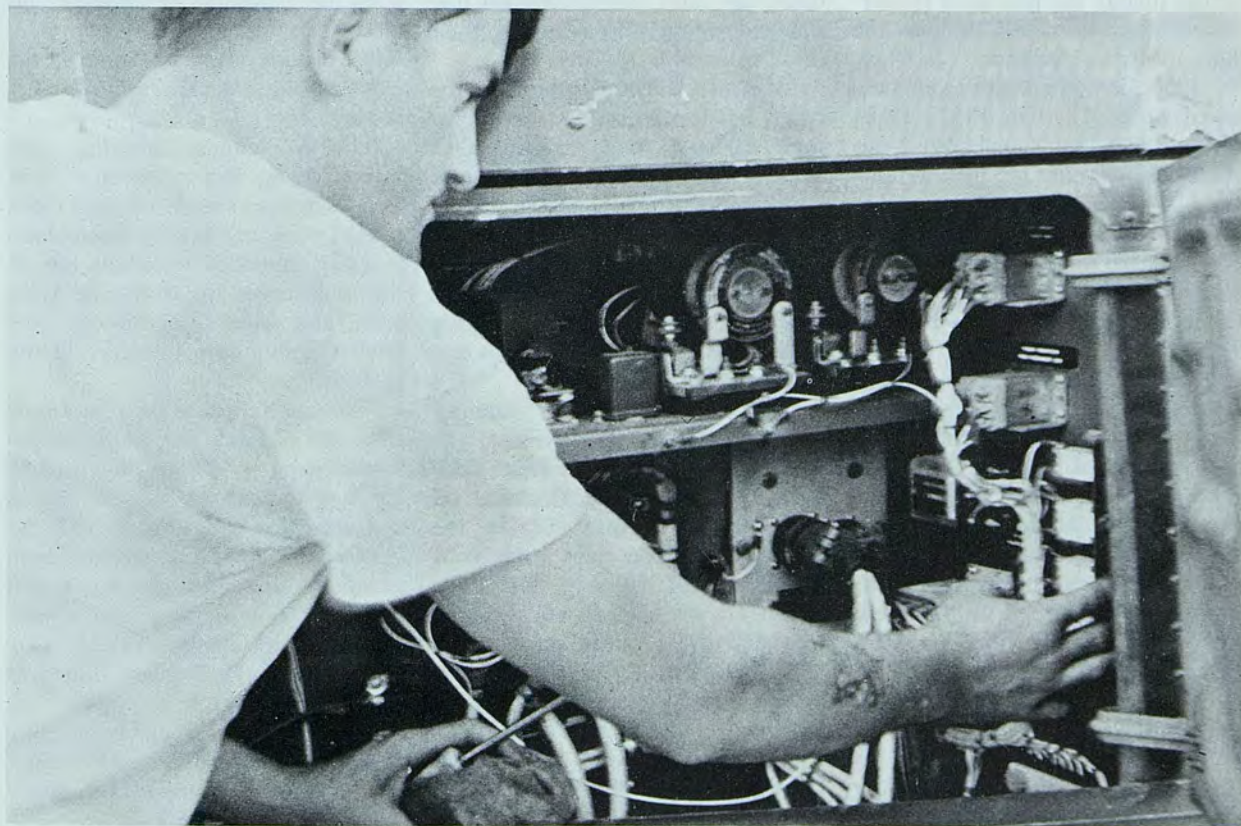
On arrival in an assault helicopter company, a new crew chief is usually assigned to the service platoon to work in the hangar for familiarization with the procedures and techniques used in Vietnam. After proving himself in the hangar, he is assigned to his own aircraft as a crew engineer.

A crew chief's job is not an easy one. His position might be compared to that of a tackle on a football team. Diligently applying himself to his responsibilities, he constantly strives to improve his technical knowledge in order to insure the successful achievement of the team's objective. There isn't a lot of glory involved, but no team could function without him.



*Oil level is very important and requires much attention.*

*Electrical systems must be checked daily.*





**Gary G. Wetzel/  
Awarded Brigade's/  
1st Medal of Honor**

**173d AHC Gunner/  
Presented Medal/  
By the President**

Army Aviators have won thousands of valor awards in the Republic of Vietnam since the arrival of American forces in the hostile zone in 1961. The bulk of the aviator awards have been presented to the pilots and crews of aircraft within the 1st Aviation Brigade. Never previously, however, did a Brigade member win the nation's highest medal, the Medal of Honor.

Now there is a new standard of valor in Army Aviation. On Nov. 19, 1968, President Johnson presented Spec. 4 (then PFC) Gary G. Wetzel of Oak Creek, Wis., the Medal of Honor for his actions Jan. 8, 1968, with the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company near Ap Tan Hoi, some 16 miles south of Saigon. The following is a description of his actions on that day.—Editor's Note.

"PFC Wetzel was a door gunner aboard a UH-1D helicopter which was one of a 14-ship insertion force in support of a 9th Infantry Division operation. The insertion force was required to make their approach and landing to a landing zone that had not been prepped in any fashion—neither by artillery fires or gunship sweeps. The UH-1's commenced their approach to touchdown with full suppressive fires employed.

"The enemy, well concealed in heavily fortified bunkers along the north, west and south edges of the

LZ (see diagram), were not to be lured into a premature fire fight, however, and utilized complete fire discipline until the helicopters had touched down and were in their most vulnerable position.

"Wetzel's ship, the third in the heavy-left formation, touched down some 10 feet from the rice dike that formed the left, or western boundary of the LZ. As the friendly fires ceased and the infantry began their off-loading, intensive hostile fires were received from a deadly accurate enemy employing small arms, automatic weapons and RPG (rocket) fires.

"As the last of the infantry troops departed the aircraft, the ship was hit in the left front door by an RPG round that shattered all the plexiglas in that area of the aircraft, blew the right front door completely off the ship, threw the pilot from the aircraft and severely wounded the aircraft commander.

"At this time Wetzel left his position in the gun well and ran to the front of the ship to attempt to extricate the aircraft commander. Ignoring the hail of small arms and automatic weapons fire spraying

the area from enemy positions just several meters distant, the courageous young gunner tore the door open and had just reached for his aircraft commander when two more RPG rounds impacted against the front of the aircraft in rapid succession.

"These rounds, landing just inches away from Wetzel's location, tore his arm off at the elbow, ripped open his left leg from thigh to calf, imbedded countless bits of shrapnel across his chest and right arm, and blew him several feet from the ship into the mire of the rice paddy.

"Although bleeding profusely from the wounds and suffering intolerable pain, Wetzel staggered to his feet, moved to the gun well in the crippled UH-1 and, with his single usable hand and arm, manned his machine gun and began returning fire on the enemy positions located along the rice dike, and against the bunker that was shielding automatic weapons that had kept friendly troops completely pinned down, incapable of moving or returning effective fires, since their arrival in the LZ.





"Fighting off the shock and agonizing pain only by his undaunted efforts to stop the fires that were being placed so accurately against him and his comrades, Wetzel maintained his station in the direct line of hostile fires and pumped round after round into the enemy positions until the machine gun nest was destroyed and those manning it were either killed or wounded beyond effectiveness. Just seconds after the enemy position was silenced by this action, his own M-60 jammed and refused to fire any further.

"Unable to apply immediate action to the weapon, Wetzel made a move to depart the gun well. The loss of blood was finally taking its toll, however, and he passed out again and fell into the mire of the rice paddy. Regaining consciousness seconds later, and still refusing to tend his own wounds, Wetzel,

disregarding the intense pain coursing through his mutilated body, started crawling around the front of the ship in an attempt to locate the remainder of the crew.

"Rounding the front of the UH-1, he saw the crew chief, badly wounded himself, attempting to drag the aircraft commander to the safety of a rice dike several meters off to the right flank. Dragging himself across the muck and mire, Wetzel joined his comrade and attempted to assist him in dragging his badly wounded aircraft commander to the safety of the dike.

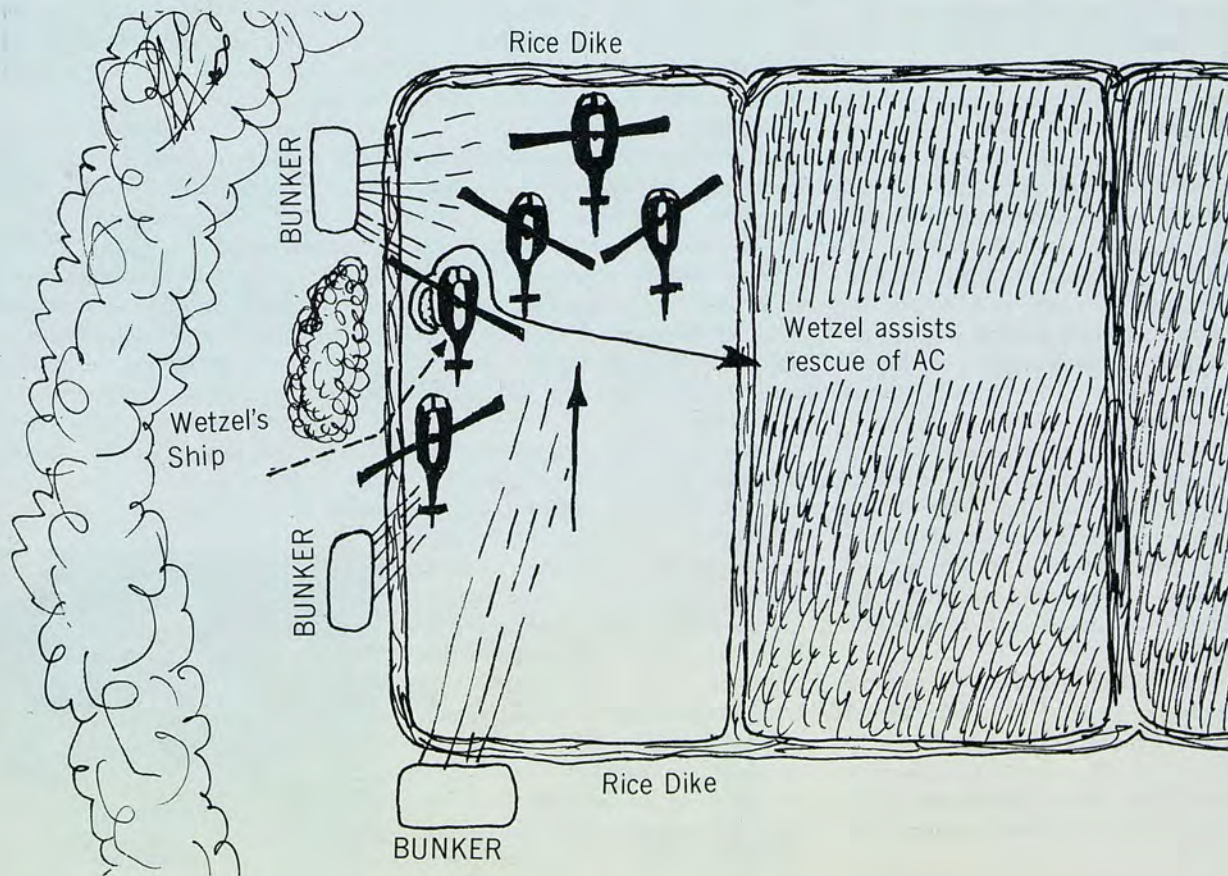
"The strain of the added exertion to his already overstressed body caused him to black out again; but, coming to, he persisted in his endeavor to drag his wounded comrade to safety.

"Blown apart by enemy fires, Wetzel nonetheless ignored his own

well being and safety and placed, time and time again, the lives of his fellow Americans above his own. Many times during the horrors of the late afternoon insertion he might well have seen to his own safety but he chose, instead, to rise to the call of a fallen comrade rather than attend grave wounds that might well have caused his own death.

"His alone was the determination that silenced the fires of a hostile machine gun emplacement and eliminated the obstacle that held the advancement of an entire operation at bay for an extended period and caused unknown casualties on the field of battle.

"His alone was the inspiration and selfless devotion that caused him to rise above the conditions that prevailed around him and to perform in a manner that was far above the call of duty."







# RIDE THE WILD COBRA!

*Gunship Emergency Rescue*

*Photos by 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing*

Captain Ronald R. Fogleman, an F-100 Supersabre pilot with the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing's 510th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Bien Hoa Airbase, is walking proof of the extreme versatility of Army Aviation's AH-1G HueyCobra. The Cobra, a lethal gunship by design, has now proven itself capable for emergency "slick" work as well.

Shoulder-deep in water with Viet Cong snipers all around, CPT Fogleman, who had just had his wings shot from under him was in no debating mood when he was offered a "side-car" ride on the 18x36 inch ammunition door of a 1st Aviation Brigade Cobra. He had been forced to eject from his damaged aircraft just before the fighter crashed during a close air support mission south of the U Minh Forest, 130 miles southwest of Saigon.

The Air Force pilot was surrounded by relentlessly searching enemy. He had the cover of two fellow Supersabres, but they could do little for fear of hitting his concealed position by accident, and Fogleman dared not reveal himself.

He had to be evacuated immediately, or not at all. The nearest ships available that could do the job were a pair of Cobras from the 235th Armed Helicopter Company, 307th Combat Aviation Battalion.

CPT Fogleman could hear the enemy talking and getting nearer. But he had to maintain radio contact. "I made contact with my air cover, but kept it to a minimum so the enemy couldn't hear me. I had been on the ground for about 45 minutes and I asked for the first time about the chopper."

The cover flight leader informed him the Cobras were almost there and advised he could go out with them or wait for a regular rescue helicopter.

"I didn't hesitate a second," said Fogleman. "I told them I'd take the first thing that came along! Those Cobras were one of the greatest things I've ever seen. When they came in, everything got real quiet of the ground. One set down about 20 yards in front of me. But they couldn't spot me and started to lift off."

"We found the area where Captain Fogleman 'punched out,'" explained Warrant Officer Charles P. Haney, Jr. Hickory, North Carolina, fire team leader of the Cobras, "but all we could see was his parachute. My wing man circled above and I dropped down on the deck to try to locate the Captain. We hovered for what seemed an eternity and finally spotted him, in water up to his chin holding the radio to his ear. While I went in to get him, the other ship poured suppressing fire on a nearby tree-

line."

For the first time, Captain Fogleman had exposed himself. "I jumped up and waved my arms, and started through the mud toward that beautiful chopper," he said. "I hopped on one of the skids and hugged it tight, but one of the crew tapped me on the head and motioned for me to crawl onto the gun bay door. It was only three feet long and 18 inches wide, but believe me, I crawled on and clamped onto the cables."

Then gunner/pilot Warrant Officer Steven Walston, who had opened the ammo door and motioned Fogleman on, gave Haney the go-ahead and the Cobra quickly pulled out of the deathtrap. Without receiving a hit, the ship with its unusual cargo arrived at Cau Mau 15 minutes later.

"It's the only way to fly," laughed Captain Fogleman, "when you don't want to be Charlie's unwelcome visitor." He returned to Bien Hoa Air Base and the following morning was off on another combat mission.

Warrant Officer Haney, a second tour volunteer aviator stated that he had been taught to use ammo doors to lift personnel in an emergency, but had never done it before and added that he hoped he never would have to try it himself.

But rough as it had been, especially at 1,000 feet, the altitude forced on Haney by enemy fire, Captain Fogleman had no complaints. An expediency it was, but just another aspect of the many-sided HueyCobra.



*CPT Fogleman examines ammo door—his seat to safety.*

HAWK



# 1969:

## YEAR OF THE COCK



On the 7th of February the citizens of Vietnam will turn out the Year of the Monkey for the Year of the Cock. The name of this annual observance is simple: TET.

Most Americans in Vietnam recall the holiday last year as the name of the biggest Communist offensive of the Vietnam conflict. But Tet was a big deal in Southeast Asia long before any of the current battles were even conceived. It is the annual celebration of the lunar Chinese New Year. And it's an amalgamation of Christmas, Easter, the Fourth of July, Labor Day and all the other important holidays thrown in to one seven-day period.

No Vietnamese will carry a debt through the season. Nor will they attempt to provoke an argument or speak ill of a neighbor. It's bad luck—and that brand of bad luck will stick throughout the year.

Depicted around the periphery of this page are several of the good luck tokens you may encounter during the holidays.

The apricot tree is symbolic of good spirits and is said to frighten away evil spirits because of the power of the good that dwells in or near the tree.

The *Cay Neu*—an ancient symbol for Tet—is a long, clean shaft of bamboo placed in the ground outside a house. It offers symbolic foods at the top in a small basket for the good spirits in the area and is adorned with feathers, talismen, bits of colored glass and straw and various and sundry items designed to attract good spirits and, at the same time, drive away those spirits of evil. The *Cay Neu* is mainly used now only in rural communities.

The dance of the Unicorn is symbolic of wisdom and kindness to the Chinese community in Vietnam. During the dance, onlookers place money either on a *Cay Neu* or some other high place, and if the Unicorn “eats” the money, good luck will follow.

Despite its present connotation in the vernacular of the American soldier in Vietnam, Tet is very meaningful to the Vietnamese and is perhaps the optimum time of year for exposure to cultural traits and beliefs of our host country.

