
HAWK
WINTER 1971

HAWK

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1st Aviation Brigade

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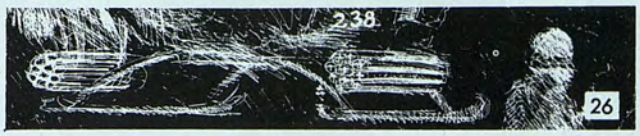

COVER: SP4 Aaron Howard, a combat artist with the USARV Information Office, painted this abstract interpretation of two Light Observation Helicopters. SP4 Howard's work also appears on pages 20, 26, and 27.

INSIDE COVER: This little girl looks quizzically at the photographer as she eats a bowl of rice—the staple of the Vietnamese diet. Photo by SP4 Tony DeStefano. Story on page 10.

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SP5 Charles B. Winer, Editor, Layout

He Will Be There

Story by SP5 James D. Bailey

You are the pilot of the third ship flying into a single ship pickup zone (PZ). The flight plan calls for thirty second separation —just enough time to get in, load up, and get out of the area. The next ship is calling a half mile final as you gently ease the ship to the landing spot. Everyone is a little nervous knowing that the whole area is hot.

After several seconds on the ground you frantically begin waving for someone to get into your ship. The tension in the ship mounts as the crew apprehensively watches the men try to decide who will get on the ship. The chopper behind you is now getting short and you have to tell him to go around one more time.

You call the unit on the ground but they don't answer. Your call is made as you fly out of the PZ—with an empty load! Another ship will soon be flying in to try his luck at accomplishing the mission in the midst of all the confusion.

This scene is re-enacted over and over again wherever combat weary, disorganized troops are being organized by personnel unfamiliar with aviation. The solution is the pathfinder.

The original concept of the pathfinder called for a small detachment to be inserted in an area the night before a combat assault to prepare the LZ for the upcoming lift. These LZs were usually in the heart of

BAILEY

SHAFER

Often the pathfinder does not have the convenience of stepping out of the ship and into a secure fire base. In this sequence, a pathfinder is seen as he rappels from the chopper (top) and as he sets foot on the ground (center). In instances where it is unsafe for the aircraft to set down, this will be the only means of placing a pathfinder unit in a location. In the bottom photo, the unit is racing back to the ship following completion of the mission.

MOLLOY

enemy activity and it became the practice to forego the night insertion. Instead the pathfinders would go in on the first ship of the initial insertion and direct the other ships to the most suitable landing spots.

His organizational ability is best demonstrated when troops are being extracted from the field. The pathfinder can cut the exposure time of an aircraft to seconds instead of disastrous minutes. With the decrease in combat activity in recent months, his role as an operations manager as well as a traffic manager is becoming his main function.

Pathfinders are still very much in demand, however, as 222nd Battalion Commander LTC Arthur E. Dewey explained. "Even though the pathfinders are not opening and clearing LZs, their basic purpose is the same. They will continue to bridge the gap between the air and the ground and will be very much involved in the build-up or phase-out of military operations."

An example of the role the pathfinder is playing Vietnam took place recently in the Thien Ngon area. The unpredictable and oftentimes uncontrollable Vietnamese weather, in the form of monsoon rains and turbulent winds, proved once again that even in a war zone, the forces of nature are still something to be reckoned with. The flooding of the Phu Dong fire base gave the pathfinder unit from the 222nd Combat Aviation Battalion an opportunity to

SHAFER

use their skills in a non-combat related area. On this occasion, they performed only as air traffic controllers and advisors with the ARVN units who were relocating the fire base.

As artillery and supplies were being extracted from the fire base, the security of the base would be considerably weakened. In addition, the operation of the fire base could not be postponed for more than a minimum amount of time. There was no room for confusion, delays, or mix-ups.

In the dull grey sunlight of the new day, the first chopper flew into the firebase and dropped off a small detachment of four pathfinders. "Because the ARVNs do most of the work, we try to keep our detachments as small as possible to eliminate any confusion," commented 1LT Thomas E. Patrick, in charge of the operation. He also went on to explain the advantage of flying into this location as compared to an insecure LZ. "Although not as challenging or as exciting, it is certainly more reassuring to land at a fire base rather than rappel into an unknown zone where the enemy could be set up and waiting for you."

Once on the ground, each man immediately went to work in his area of specialization. First Lieutenant David E. Stoutner was assigned as the traffic controller. Because the flooding had covered much of the flat land he first had to determine where the best pickup zone would be. It was necessary to take into consideration both the pilots who would be setting down and the ground crews who would be rigging the loads. When this was accomplished, he decided upon a flight pattern which would have the ships in and out of the area with the least amount of exposure time. For a short time, 1LT Stoutner's airfield would be as busy as any of the more permanent versions in the country.

While Stoutner made last minute preparations in his flight procedures, CPLs Cleo M. Foster and Parris C. French were busy selecting the first group of men to be extracted.

"We try to remove all the men who we do not absolutely need," said CPL French. "This alone will eliminate much of the confusion. Our aim is to have the men waiting in small groups so that when the ships set down, no time will be wasted while they try to figure out who will go and who will wait for the next slick. With a little organization, the ships can remove the men in no time at all."

CPL Foster added, "There will always be a certain amount of confusion because of the communication barrier. It can get pretty hectic sometimes when we have everything going at once. Most of the ARVN officers speak good English but the enlisted men speak English about the same as we speak Vietnamese."

When Foster was satisfied that the men knew where they were to be and who was to go first, he went over to the rigging crews. French stayed behind in case any problems arose. Stoutner had the first slicks come in to remove the troops. When they were out, the Chinooks would be flying in to pick up the big artillery. A sloppy job of rigging can result in money lost, in damaged equipment, and possibly the loss of lives. For this reason, the operation must be very exact.

Based on past success, the pathfinders have earned the respect of the ARVN units with whom they work. Conversely, the pathfinders have a great deal of respect for the ARVNs who will eventually replace them.

"When we are out in the field, we are an integral part of the ARVN unit," said CPL Foster. "The Vietnamese soldiers we have worked with are as good as any of ours and we have built up a strong relationship working alongside them."

The pickups continued throughout the rest of the day. LT Patrick, as chief coordinator, was in constant contact with both Stoutner and the rigging crew. The operation ran smoothly and without any major hitches. After the large equipment had been removed, the slicks returned to pick up the remaining men along with supplies and small equipment which had not been extracted.

By nightfall, the last slick was flying out of Phu Dong. In it were the four pathfinders. It had been a long day and no doubt they were glad that it was over. It was also a satisfying day. The whole move had been accomplished in 12 hours.

These four men can note as well as anyone the progress of the Vietnamization program. They have seen their own role in the war effort change drastically. At the outbreak of the Vietnam War, the pathfinders were in great demand as the concept of airmobility to and from the field was refined and the flexibility of the infantryman was increased. Preparing landing zones and drop zones as well as performing air traffic control measures were to become a vital part of the war.

Because his role has been altered does not mean his job has been eliminated. Wherever sophisticated military air traffic control equipment has not been set up, the skills of the pathfinder will be required. In areas where it is impractical or impossible to set up normal facilities for air traffic control and guidance, he will be there.

In the midst of smoke marking the spot for the helicopter to set down, the pathfinders organize the troops who are to be picked up.

MOLLOY

Loading The Dice

Story by SP4 Phil Terrana

Specialist Five Pascual Mantanona glanced at his watch as he climbed out of bed. It was still too dark to make out any numbers, but the glowing hands put the time around five o'clock. "Montana" is a crew chief assigned to the 114th Assault Helicopter Company, and for a crew chief the day begins pretty early.

Actually, today's mission began about nine hours earlier when yesterday's flight returned. The ship had taken some hits in the tail section. They were clean hits and hadn't caused any serious damage. All that showed were several holes where the rounds had entered and left. Being scheduled on an early flight this morning, he might very well have been tempted to let the work go, but a good crew chief does not operate in this manner.

"There is a sort of competition between the crew chiefs," he explained. "If you take pride in your work and pride in your ship then you will want it always to be mission ready and looking perfect." The fact that his ships have flown over 1,500 hours since his arrival six months ago in the "White Knight" Platoon is proof that he does have this pride.

And so about nine o'clock last night he repaired the holes. He also checked the instruments, blades, and engine. It was close to midnight when, satisfied with the ship's condition and appearance, he picked up his shirt and cap, wiped off the grease from his arms and face, and returned to his hootch.

Working these hours will result in many meals being missed and after eating C-rations for lunch, a hot meal can mean a lot at the end of the day—especially a long day. For this reason, the hotplate in his room is more of a necessity than a luxury. You won't see him heating up a can of stew or boiling a hot dog though. Montana is originally from the island of Guam and his roommate, SP4 Frank Akana, is from Hawaii and both boast of being better than average in the art of Polynesian cooking. Preparing special meals for themselves and the other men in the barracks is just one of the ways they relax at the end of a long twelve-fourteen hour day.

But that was all last night. Now it is five o'clock the next morning and there is still a lot that remains to be done. After washing up and grabbing a quick bite to eat at the mess hall—the hot coffee being the main course—Montana heads for his ship.

Walking down the flight line, he jokes with the other crewmen about taking a hit yesterday and how he is getting too short for such things to be happening.

When he arrives at his ship, he unlocks the doors and he and SP5 Olin Matherne, the other half of today's crew, begin setting up the interior. Today the ship would be flying command and control (C&C) and that means a lot of people and a lot of equipment would be brought aboard.

When WO Richardson, today's command ship pilot, arrives Montana repeats his previous day's adventure suggesting that possibly Charlie did not realize he was so short. In this kind of job, you tend to become just a bit cocky.

Mr. Richardson only smiles. Working with crew chiefs day after day he knows that enemy contact is as much a part of their jobs as waxing the body or filling the tanks. Montana's apparent resentment towards Charlie is a chance to show off his repair work from the night before.

A crew chief knows that both phases of his job—ground maintenance and aerial combat—are equally important. "If I perform my duties as a crew chief well, then I am confident I'll be able to do my job as a gunner."

As Company Commander MAJ Miles C. Hedrick explained, "A crew chief has to practically become a part of his ship. It has to be like a marriage almost if the job is going to be done right." Like many crew chiefs, Montana is already married but he certainly hasn't neglected his ship.

The rotor blade is unhooked from the revetment and in a few minutes the crew is strapped in, the blades are spinning, and the crew and ship are ready.

"Clear left."

"Clear right," and the ship lifts about seven or eight feet above the ground.

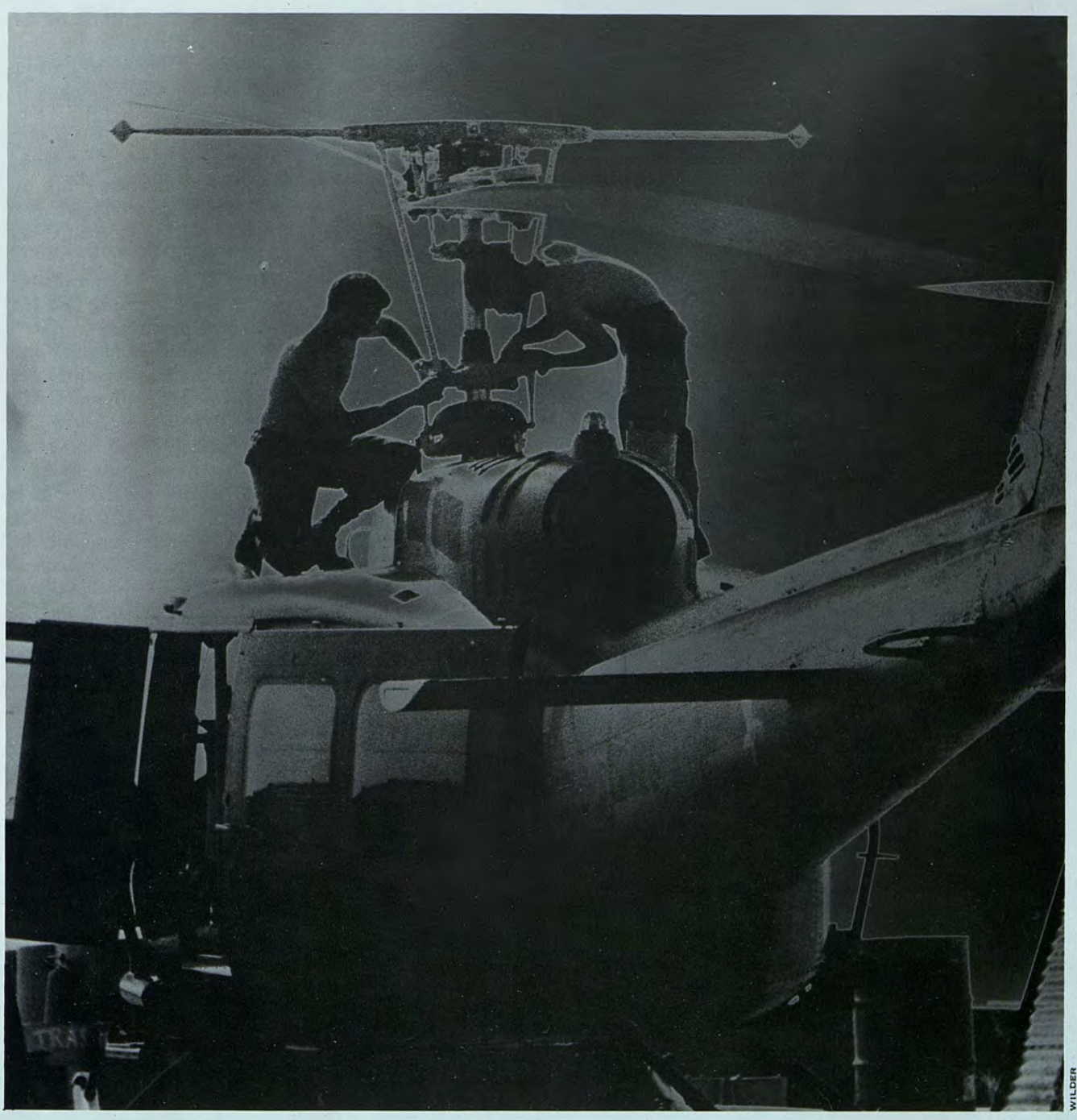
"Clear to turn left, sir," and the ship revolves slightly and then proceeds forward gaining altitude swiftly. It is about 6: 15 and a light rain is beginning to fall outside. Below them, lights were flickering on and a new day was beginning for the people of the Delta.

Montana's job for the rest of the day, like that of all crew chiefs who were also taking to the air throughout the country, would be to aid the pilots in making sure the people can go about their business peacefully and uninterrupted.

"As usual, Mantanona, everything works perfect," the pilot's voice comes over the radio. Montana looks up from his seat where he is adjusting his mini-gun, smiles and gives the thumbs up sign. This compliment from the pilot is the reward for a crew chief who has worked long and hard to insure the ship's readiness. Flying day-in, day-out, a good pilot and a good crew chief will forge a strong bond based on mutual respect for each other's ability to do his job. This respect is evidenced in the simple compliments given one by the other.

In reference to his ground maintenance, Montana comments, "I like to do as much of the work as possible myself. It isn't a case of not trusting the ground crews but rather because it gives me a better feel for the ship. You understand better how it is constructed and what makes it run. You can always have a T.I. (technical inspector) check it when you are finished."

Emphasizing the importance of a crew chief having a feel for his ship, he went on to add that, "Helicopters are pretty commonplace over here now and too often they are taken for granted—like a car almost. The crew chief must go further than just checking out the instru-



ments and this is where having a feel for the machine comes in."

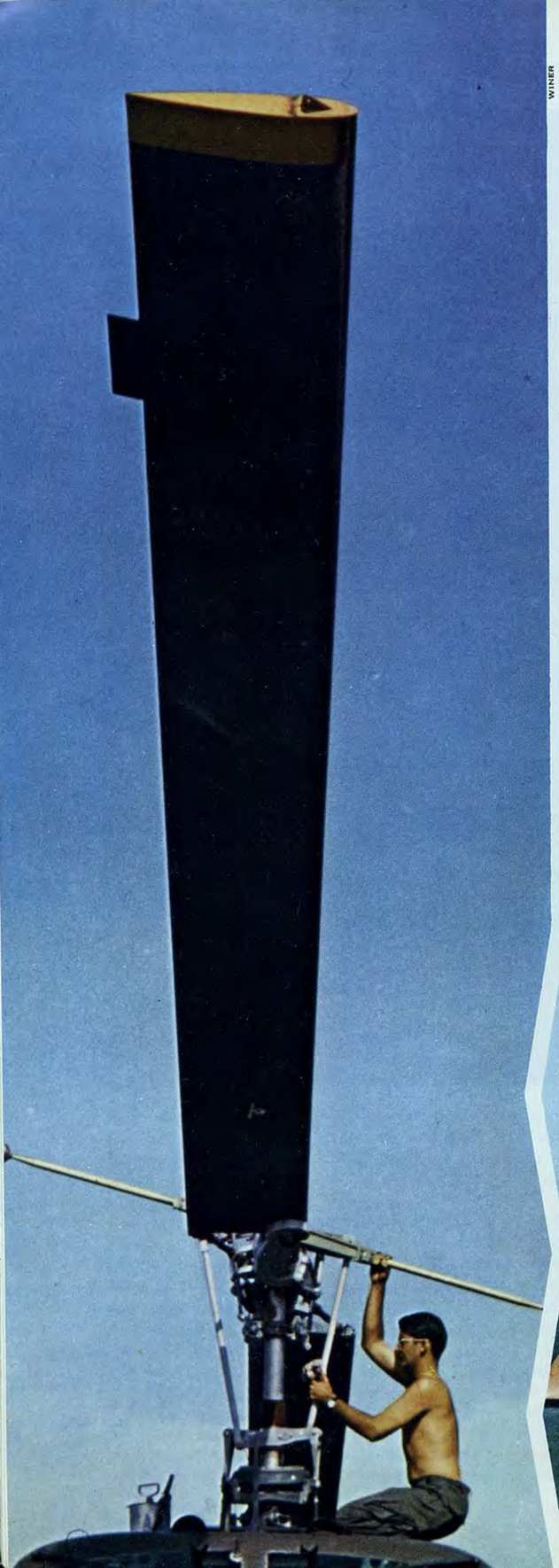
The fueling stop at the Phi Troung Vi Thanh Airfield represents the last chance for the crew to prepare the ship for the day's mission. After refueling, a fresh supply of ammo is brought from across the field and packed in the casings beneath the seats. With the seats replaced and the weapons mounted, the ship takes to the air.

They are only in the air a few moments before the yellow smoke is spotted. They set down to pick up a major and his ARVN counterpart who together will coordinate the day's activities from their 2,000 foot vantage point. Montana and Matherne are now in the gunner's wells.

"At 2,000 feet, with the doors opened, it can get pretty cold," Montana comments as he pulls his gloves tight over his fists. At times he will need a field jacket to keep him warm while none of his preparations will help him when the rain whips in on his face later in the day. He'll have to just sit there and make the best of it. For the time being, though, he is comfortable and he lights up a cigarette and begins his daylong vigilance.

The time passes slowly for a door gunner just as it does for a perimeter guard or a member of an ambush patrol or for that matter anyone whose job involves waiting and anticipation. Staring at the rice paddies below and wondering if and when you might be fired upon can be very exhausting—both physically and mentally. "As long as I see the M-60 or the mini-gun close by, I feel alright," he remarks, shrugging off the danger aspect of his job. As for the waiting, he adds, "I don't mind the routine or I wouldn't do it. What it comes down to is that I just like to fly."

His hopes of someday piloting his own craft are pushed aside though. His only concern right now is being a good door gunner. The overall mission of the



WINER

ship may vary from day to day but the mission of the gunner/crew chief stays the same. He must have a total understanding of the ship and how it functions and he must detect the enemy before he can cause damage to the craft.

The morning goes by without a hitch and the ship sets down at the Can Tho Airfield for lunch. It's a short stop with not much chance to relax but there are no complaints from the crew. Yesterday's meal, they remember, was franks and beans with some fruit cocktail for dessert and it was served in the air.

Following lunch, a new back-seat crew is taken aboard and the afternoon picks up where the morning had left off. On something like a swing ship, the crew is constantly setting down to drop off supplies and mail and there is a great deal more activity. The locations are often insecure and usually quite remote. Flying C&C, much of this excitement is lost. With the Cobras and gunships circling below, the C&C is normally an observer of all the action. The crew is sitting back listening to the music coming in over the radio. It is a jumbled-up mixture of the top forty hits and the static-dominated conversation between the pilot and the back seat. In the background is the almost unheard noise of the rotor blades. Suddenly the pop-pop-pop sound of automatic weapons fire echoes through the air and Montana's eyes light up.

"Two days in a row and I'm short besides," he complains while returning the fire. Soon after this incident the pilot sets down and the crew gives the ship a fast but thorough inspection. As was the case yesterday, they were lucky and had not received any serious hits.

The remainder of the afternoon proceeded without incident. As dusk begins setting in on the countryside below, the ship heads back. Another ship and another crew would keep a watchful eye on the Delta during the night. Montana and Matherne sit back and give their eyes a rest. They had been fired on only once today. Some crews were hit much harder while many others weren't fired upon at all. Perhaps on another mission or on another day they might receive fire all day. There's no way of telling. Flying over the green rice paddies is as much a game of chance as rolling the dice across the green felt boards in Las Vegas.

Back at Vinh Long, the blades are still spinning as the crew begins removing the seats and equipment, putting them in the conex for overnight storage. Just as they had left it this morning, Vinh Long is dark and again it is raining. Looking back, it occurs to Montana that all the daylight he had seen today had been through the door of a Huey.

The pilot and co-pilot finish their paper work, thank the crew for a good day's work and head back to their hootch. Their day's work is finished. After he and Matherne have tied down the blade and locked up the ship, Montana returns to the hangar His ship is not scheduled to go up tomorrow so he can let the repair work go for the night.

Returning to the barracks, he hears the radios and stereos playing everything from rock to country and western. There is a small crowd gathered in the corner of the room where a poker game is in progress.

Most of the men are still in their uniforms. There are too few hours left in the day and the change into civies is neither necessary nor worth the hassle. The talk revolves mostly around choppers, who took hits during the mission, and various maintenance problems which arose during the day.

Montana pulls a beer out of the refrigerator and walks over to the card game. Even though he has no flight tomorrow, he'll probably still be getting up pretty early. He has that PE coming up in a few days and he still has to work on those hits they took today. Tomorrow he'll have that chopper looking like an empty birdcage. Deciding to finally call it a day, he heads for his room making one final comment as he goes.

"Two days in a row! Can you believe that, Smitty? Short as I am and they're still shooting."

From his room he can hear men coming in and out of the barracks. This will go on all through the night. The day's twenty-four hours long and a man in the flight section can expect to work any part of it.

Lying in bed, he might reflect back upon that thought he had earlier—the one about spending all his daylight hours looking out of a helicopter. In many ways he'll think, this can be a rewarding experience—an interesting way of spending the day. He has those white clouds breaking all around him and the rice paddies spread for miles on end below. For much of the day he focuses his attention on the miles of waterway twisting through the Delta, listening to the radio playing some of the good tunes from back in the world.

But every so often, he'll be reminded of the basic facts surrounding his job as a gunner/crew chief. He'll remember that occasionally those white clouds do turn black and they can pour on him as cold a rain as he's going to find anywhere on the ground. He is reminded also that in those rice paddies is an enemy just waiting for the opportunity to break into that peaceful, relaxing music with a blast that could send him and his ship crashing to the ground. And if he contemplates further, he'll remember that the lives of everyone who flew on his ship today depended on how well he performed his job.

SP5 Pascual Mantanona (Montana), as well as the other crew chief/gunners mentioned and pictured in this story, is very competent. He is also representative of other crew chief/gunners serving in Vietnam. As gunners, they all must partake in the daily game of chance and as crew chiefs they all must work long hours to assure that the odds will be in their favor when it is their turn to roll the dice.

TERRANA

WINER

Coffee, Tea, or Nuoc Mam

Story by SP4 M.E. Fitzgerald

Photos by SP4 Tony DeStefano

Sampling the cuisine of Vietnam can be a pleasure for the Westerner, but only if he judges Vietnamese cooking by Oriental standards, not his own. The flavors are more subtle, the combinations often unique, but the diet is certainly the culinary equal of the best America has to offer. Proper understanding of Vietnamese cooking can result in immense enjoyment for the non-Oriental.

Vietnamese food has its own special character, as do most regional foods. Though it has been strongly influenced by the Chinese and Japanese over the centuries, it still maintains its own individuality.

The primary difference between Vietnamese and other Oriental dishes is the type of seasoning used. Chinese and Japanese food, especially, is often darker in color because of the extensive use of soy sauce for seasoning, while Vietnamese cooking is lighter and more natural in color due to a titillating fish sauce called nuoc mam (nook mam).

Nuoc mam is one of the most common ingredients used with recipes in Vietnam. It is the equivalent of salt or soy sauce, yet it has an unmistakable spicy flavor that is more commonly found in Central and South American countries.

Nuoc mam is an almost clear liquid, with a slightly yellowish tint, and a definite fishy odor.

Nuoc mam fish sauce is made by packing fresh fish in barrels, in alternating layers with salt, and allowing the ingredients to ferment.

When the fermenting process is complete, the clear fish sauce is drawn off and bottled. This is the first-rate sauce and has the most flavor.

A second-rate sauce is made by pressing the remaining contents of the barrel and then straining out the pieces of fish and salt impurities. This sauce contains a higher degree of fish oil than does the first grade of nuoc mam.

Yet another grade of nuoc mam can be made from the residue. By adding water to the fish-salt mixture and straining again, a much weaker and milder sauce will result. Many Americans prefer the weaker sauce, but for true Vietnamese flavor in all dishes, only the first two sauces are recommended.

Among the somewhat unusual but fascinating ingredients used by the Vietnamese in their meals are such succulents as bamboo shoots, Chinese cabbage, mushrooms, water chestnuts, tender bean sprouts, and "long rice."

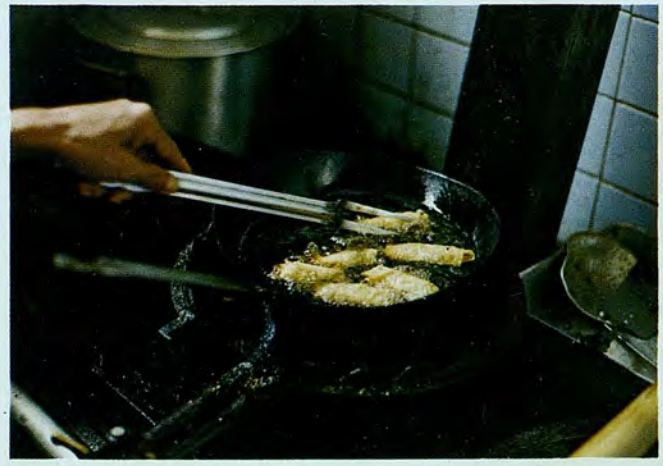
The Vietnamese, of course, are not vegetarians. In addition to the vegetables already mentioned, basic ingredients in their diet include pork, chicken, beef, and fish of all kinds—seasoned with a distinctive, but not overpowering, flavor.

For example, not until an epicure of Oriental dishes tastes beef stew cooked with stick cinnamon can he appreciate the tastes peculiar to Vietnam. Equally tantalizing is the carmelized pork, the stuffed and fried cucumbers, and delicious spring rolls.

And then, of course, there is the staple of the Vietnamese diet—rice.

There are two types of rice eaten in Vietnam. The long grained rice (mentioned earlier), which is considered more of a delicacy, and the usual short-grained rice. Although the long-grained rice is richer in flavor, it is the short grained rice that supplies the needs of most of the people.

The readily obtainable shorter rice, besides being



Spring rolls, simmered in oil, turned moist and brown for eating (above). The inner filling of spring rolls consists of rice, vegetable, and meat that is rolled in wafer-thin rice paper (above right). Bean sprouts used in the filling for spring rolls also provide a popular addition to other Vietnamese dishes (right).

easier to eat with chopsticks because of its starchy texture, can also be converted into another very special Vietnamese food called rice paper.

Rice paper is a tissue-thin round sheet of dried rice paste. When dipped in water, it softens and becomes pliable for use in wrapping foods into rolls prior to cooking. When served, the oils from the foods inside keep the paper soft so it can be eaten with the rest of the meal.

Not to be forgotten, however, are the delightful Vietnamese garnishments, such as the decorative but edible dried lily flowers, Chinese parsley, fresh mint leaves, and citronela roots—often called lemon grass. These, combined with the basic ingredients, make the Vietnamese setting a delight to the eye as well as to the palate.

Sometimes during breakfast, a third variety of rice may appear. It is called soy rice. This rice is cooked at a lower temperature in a soy sauce base, resulting in a darker color than the normal white rices. This rice, while lacking the richness of the two other varieties, is very "heavy" and is limited almost exclusively to the morning meal.

In all of the foods mentioned, the characteristics most common to all are that the texture, taste, and natural color are kept even after cooking. This is done by a process called sautéing. Only after quickly pan-frying over a sizzling heat can the natural flavors and colors be trapped in the food.

The real secrets to Vietnamese cooking, however, lay in the market place. This beehive of activity supplies the local area with almost all of the food its customers will use that day.

Crowded along the sidewalks and store fronts, the merchants display their wares for strolling shoppers looking for the freshest buys. Some have plucked chickens hanging by their necks or large pots full of oysters or large snails, while others are arranging stacks of fresh bread or clumps of bamboo shoots and mint leaves. Fish are stacked on shelves and in boxes, resembling oversized sardines in cans.

Whether it is leeks or mustard cabbage, star fruit or water chestnuts, or just a bowl of seasame seeds, the market place is a shopper's paradise.

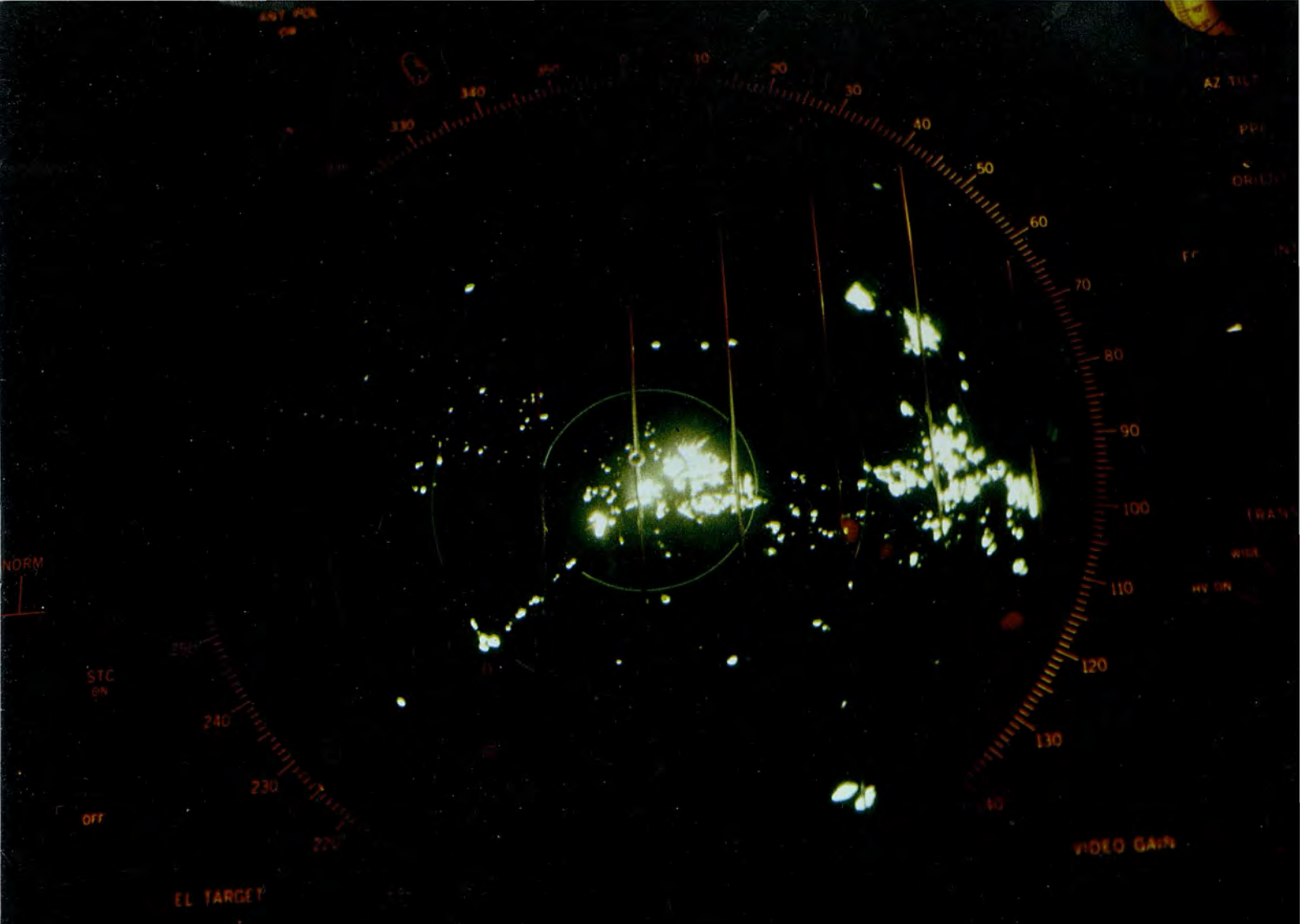
Because the majority of the Vietnamese do not have refrigerators, most foods cannot be stored overnight.

For this reason, everything is used and nothing is left over. Fat or bones from meats and unused leafy plants or vegetables can be used as a base for a stew or sauce in the next meal. This explains the presence of soup at most Vietnamese meals.

The most obvious influence from the Western world on the eating habits of the Vietnamese is egg custard. This tasty dessert, once introduced, was readily accepted as an addition to their meals and remains today, long after the French have left.

Despite the lack of modern conveniences, the Vietnamese diet is refined to a high degree and is rich in natural proteins and flavor, and any American fortunate enough to sample a true Vietnamese meal will agree.

A succulent meal of poultry, rice, and sliced bamboo shoots awaits some fortunate Vietnamese family.



MID-AIR NIGHTMARE

Story by SP5 Terry Ogle

"Then it came; the nightmarish sound . . . . The transmission was heard on a console speaker which Keith had switched on when his emergency transmission began. First there was a burst of static, then a succession of piercing; frantic, chilling screams. Heads turned. Faces paled. George was sobbing. Senior supervisors came hurrying from other sections . . ."

This dramatic passage, from the recent bestseller *Airport*, describes the sounds of a mid-air collision heard in the control tower of a large metropolitan airport. To the layman, it is an absorbing, thrilling scene; to the occasional air traveler, perhaps the cause of a slight feeling of uneasiness; but to an air traffic controller, it is a nightmare he hopes will never happen.

The spectre of death in the sky has haunted man since the early years of flight. The tremendous impact on collision; the harsh sound of tearing metal; the sickening sound of bodies being broken; all these lurk in the back of the mind of every person who flies. Such dis-

asters are infrequent, but do occur. No matter how blasé a pilot or crew chief might be; despite the studied air of nonchalance he cultivates; he is still worried about the possibility of a crash or collision. If this is not the case, he has no place in Army Aviation. Having an awareness of the consequences of a mistake is a necessity for the aviator. The man who fully understands what can happen if an error is made will be constantly alert to the smallest departure from the ordinary. More than that, he will realize the importance of the information conveyed to him by the air traffic controller, whose job it is to coordinate landings, takeoffs, and flight plans.

Terminal air traffic control in Vietnam is the responsibility of more than 30 Airfield Detachments located at every Army Airfield in this country. A typical airfield detachment is composed of one officer and a dozen or more enlisted men, all skilled technicians who are responsible for the safe and efficient use of the airfield. The tower operator is the most visible member of the airfield team, as he directs landings in good visibility and generally supervises all air traffic. No less important is the ground control approach (GCA) specialist, who guides aircraft in through the use of radar when conditions limit vision. The "unsung hero" of the detachment is the maintenance man, who is responsible for the accurate functioning of the delicate instruments used by the controllers.

Thorough training, of course, is the major form of insurance against a collision. All air traffic controllers were formerly trained at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. Now the Army has its own facility at Fort Rucker, Alabama. At these installations they learn the fundamentals of supervising air traffic, and have practical application of problems they can expect to encounter in Vietnam. Once rated, the controller is considered competent to supervise aircraft using the airfield, but he is still under frequent observation by his peers, and all transmissions from air to ground are recorded on tape and stored for later audit by inspectors.

Knowing general procedures for landings and takeoffs is not enough—the controller must have a thorough knowledge of the particular airfield he is assigned to. He must memorize all approach patterns within the airfield's AO (area of operations) as well as all holding patterns for aircraft awaiting clearance to land. Naturally, emergency procedures are foremost among the items he must commit to memory.

When weather permits, air traffic controllers in Vietnam use the technique of lateral, vertical, and longitudinal positioning to direct aircraft to their destination. Normally, the controller can supervise numerous aircraft at once, with absolute safety.

If the weather is inclement, the actual landing becomes the task of the Ground Control Operator. Utilizing the glide path indicated on the radar scope, the operator directs the aircraft in the proper approach to the airfield.

If a pilot wants to go from one particular point to another, the GCA specialist can, given the necessary grid coordinates, vector him directly to his destination. This method is employed most frequently to maneuver an aircraft through artillery fire. Needless to say, there is no room for error in such a situation.

In case of a rocket or mortar attack in the vicinity of the airfield, the operators become spotters, taking azimuth readings on artillery flashes and relaying the information.

The pressures of being an air traffic controller are immense. The trust placed in his directions by the pilot is complete; an error can mean death. Despite working under this strain every day, morale in most airfield detachments is unusually high. Most members of the detachments are volunteers; many are on extensions or second tours. What is it about their jobs that make them so desirable?

Basically, it is a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment found in few other jobs. SP4 Richard Pratt, an air traffic controller from Hood River, Oregon, describes his job as ". . . great responsibility, a lot of pressure, but at the end of the day I know I've done a job that really did some good. We don't have the most important job in Vietnam, but they'd have a hard time without us."

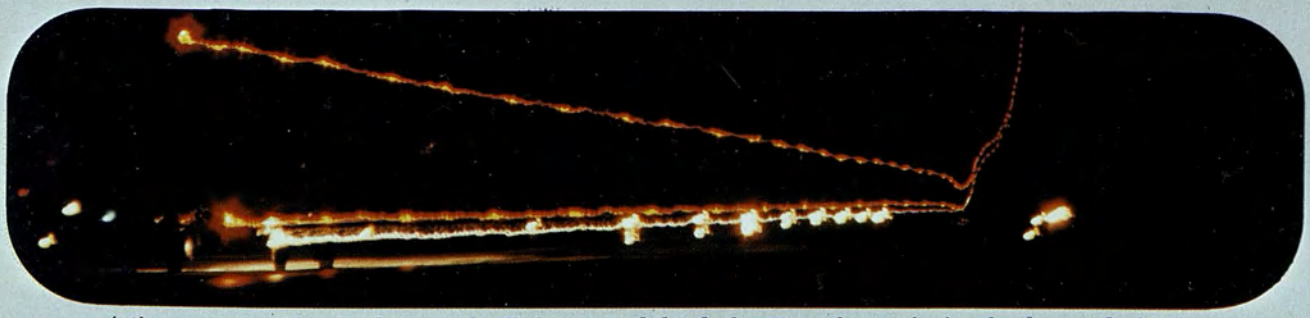
A hard time, indeed. Without the air traffic controller and his compatriots in the airfield detachments throughout Vietnam, the pilot would be like a motorist going on a long trip without a map or a knowledge of the weather ahead, doing most of his driving at night.

The personnel of the airfield detachments perform an indispensible function in Vietnam. The pilot relies on their directions to navigate his aircraft with precision and safety. The controller's instructions must therefore be completely accurate; this is no place for approximations. Perfection is the standard these men are measured against. The unprecedented safety record of Army Aviation in Vietnam shows that they have consistently reached this standard.

DESTEFANO

WO 1 Dave Bitterman preflights his Mohawk for a mission.

A Shot In The Dark



DESTEFANO

A time exposure of a fixed wing takeoff shows a red dot-dash pattern from spinning fuselage and wingtip lights.

DESTEFANO

M-60 tracers shoot up the berm around the airfield.

DESTEFANO

Going out of focus on runway lights yields an unusual design.

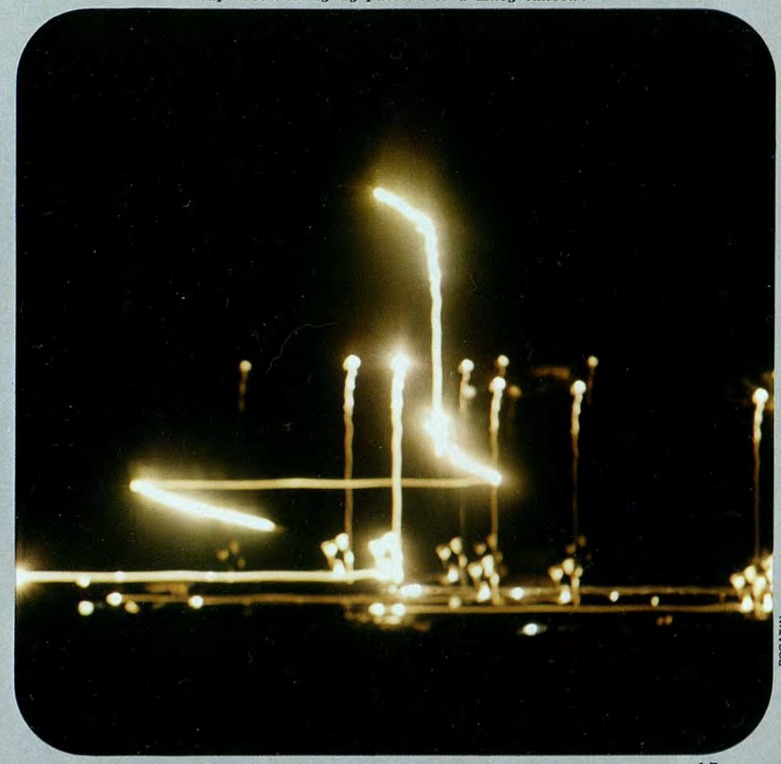
BOGATIN

A gunship returns home after a long day.

A Mohawk waits for the morning photo mission.

DESTEFANO

Flares go off in the background as a time exposure captures the zigzag pattern of a Huey takeoff.



BOGATIN

DESTEFANO

While others sleep at night, the maintenance crew is hard at work taking care of the ships that flew during the day.

HAWK HONEY

EDITORIAL

SMACK THE WHITE RABBIT

Do you pop pills? When you're feeling down like many of us do and you haven't had a letter from your girl, do you drop a couple tablets to break away from it all? Maybe you were never big on barbiturates before Vietnam, but now you rationalize "what the hell." You're away from family and friends and things can't get much worse. But maybe you worry, just a little, about becoming addicted or getting caught and putting in some bad time at LBJ.

Well, if you are in this category or you think you know someone who is, pass the following message along. Brigade has a Drug Amnesty Policy. This policy permits an individual with a drug problem to turn himself in for help and rehabilitation to any person or agency who may be able to assist him. Experience has shown that the majority of individuals taking advantage of the amnesty policy have turned themselves in to their unit leader, company commander, chaplain, or flight surgeon.

Individuals taking advantage of this policy will not be subjected to any form of disciplinary action. Anyone can qualify as long as they are not already under investigation for drug abuse. No official records will be created or marked to identify the individual requesting amnesty as a drug user. However, it may be necessary for medical officers to maintain confidential medical records for the purpose of treatment. These confidential medical records must be kept separately from the regular medical records and will be destroyed when no longer required.

All the facilities of the Army will be used to help the individual and he will receive no repercussions with regard to changes in rank. If the particular case warrants it, hospitalization will be provided until such time as he has been judged able to return to work.

According to LTC William G. Caput, brigade flight surgeon, the program has been very successful thus far. He states that most of the rehabilitation is done at the individual's unit level. Many units have set up half-way house facilities within the unit area where the drug user can go during his withdrawal period. LTC Caput feels that the most successful proponents of the program have been those people who have kicked the habit through the program. He says that they go out and inform their buddies of the Amnesty Policy and thus play an important role in channeling other drug users into the program. With regard to the actual rehabilitation, Doctor Caput states that the stress is placed on motivation and psychological aspects rather than medication, but that each flight surgeon develops a program tailored to the individual's needs.

We are all responsible beings; while in Vietnam the nature of our responsibility is of a greater degree because human lives are at stake. The misuse of drugs represents a potential disaster because of the physical and mental effects they produce. The user is letting his family, his buddies, and his country down. Moreover, he is letting himself down and opening the door to the possible destruction of both his character and body.

The Amnesty Program was designed specifically to help those with a drug problem and not to punish them. If you're having drug problems give the amnesty program some thought. It may be the way out you've been looking for.

from the chaplain:

Chaplain (LTC) August Limkemann

12th Combat Aviation Group

We find ourselves in the midst of disengagement, contact, stand-down, personnel turbulence, and questions of early outs and drops—all of which can easily lead to frustration and to boredom with its inherent problems. As a result, DEROS takes on added significance. Sometimes one senses a feeling, "Oh, to be back in the world!" Preoccupied with counting days, one easily misses the significance of today.

"DEROS," that magic abbreviation, need not become an obsession. There are better things to do than to concentrate on counting days.

In light of the tremendous value our Creator places on each individual, wherever you happen to be stationed, let me suggest another interpretation of the familiar abbreviation, an interpretation which will make your return from overseas all the more wonderful and rewarding. When you think of "DEROS," I suggest you "Direct your Energies to the Rededication Of your Soul." This rededication to the Almighty will do wonders for you now and in the future. It will help you return from overseas a better person than you were when you came. You know, we do not stand still; we move in one direction or the other so far as character is concerned. During your tour in Vietnam, you are not just marking time. You are either growing or you are deteriorating. The direction you go is determined by you. By this rededication, you can come to appreciate the principle expressed so beautifully by David (in Psalm 37: 23); "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and He delights in his way." Certainly this is worthy of your energies. This rededication means you will look for opportunities to help someone; it means you will do your job well; and above all, it means you will seek Divine guidance daily. He will respond by 'special ordering' your steps. You'll grow and be a better person when you "DEROS."

To Win Men's Minds

Story and Photos by
SP4 Tony DeStefano

"Dear Friends still in the ranks of the Viet Cong. I am Ky. I rallied on March 4, 1969, in Bao Dong Province. I would like to advise those of you still in the Viet Cong to rally quickly to the Government of Vietnam. When I rallied I was treated well. I hope you will compare what life is like with the GVN to what it is like with the Viet Cong. Return to your loved ones and your government. We warmly welcome you. . . ."

Millions of messages like the one above have fallen from the skies of South Vietnam. It's an aerial assault of the mind. The Army calls it PSY-OPS (psychological operations), a means to deplete the ranks of the VC and NVA. Army Aviation plays a role in this war for the mind.

CPT Kendall Coen sums up the job done by JUSPAO (Joint United States Public Affairs Office). "Originally we were supposed to be a cultural exchange between the Far East and the United States . . . . the situation in Vietnam has turned us, instead, to direct support of the Ministry of Information . . . . our job, at the risk of sounding trite, is to win the minds and hearts of the people." JUSPAO helps spread the printed and electronic words, and the filmed images, all over Vietnam for the benefit of the Vietnamese government. It is all part of an attempt to build allegiance among the Vietnamese for the national government and counter-attack years of VC propaganda. Propaganda is a dirty word to some Americans but it is a neutral concept, something neither good nor bad, but dependent on your view for judgement. A MACV Directive defines propaganda as, ". . . Any information, ideas, doctrines, or special appeals in support of national objectives, designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any specified group in order to benefit the sponsor . . ." The long range propaganda is a form of psychological operation. It is political and Army Aviation is in this political war.

It is unlikely that a clerk typist at Long Binh Post would defect to the nearest local VC unit after listening to a half-hour harangue by

"Hanoi Hannah". But a VC soldier who just sat through a B-52 strike would have second thoughts about his future. PSY-OPS techniques are used to capitalize on the weakness of a battered and demoralized opposition. Well-fed, well-rested, and well-supplied troops would not be open to suggestion of surrender.

After an operation, for instance, an Otter utility aircraft, or Huey gunship, or perhaps Air Force C-130s, pass over or near a battle site. It might be hours or days after a fight. The Otter's crew chief removes the back door of the plane and once airborne tosses boxes of paper leaflets overboard. Splitting in the air, the boxes unleash a long, fluttering stream of messages. The white slips of paper that resemble a flock of birds carry the call for surrender and defection into the jungle. These messages are often written by former VC cadre and soldiers and are targeted sometimes for a particular region or enemy unit. To remove doubt about conditions on the "other" side, the leaflets promise good treatment. Possession of the leaflet is often the equivalent of a safe conduct pass. Sometimes, the messages are multi-lingual, printed in Vietnamese, Korean, Thai, or English so a VC may surrender to any Allied force. The technique works. One case reported a VC platoon surrendering on a single safe conduct pass which was torn into pieces, one for each man in the platoon.

Suspected base camp areas are sometimes blanketed with leaflets. Here, the emphasis may be on the threat of future hardship, the not too subtle hint being a picture of a B-52. An even less subtle hint was used in Ninh Hoa province a few years back. After a VC district chief was killed in an ambush, his slain body was photographed and put on air-drop leaflets. Thirty-seven defectors said that death notice made them defect.

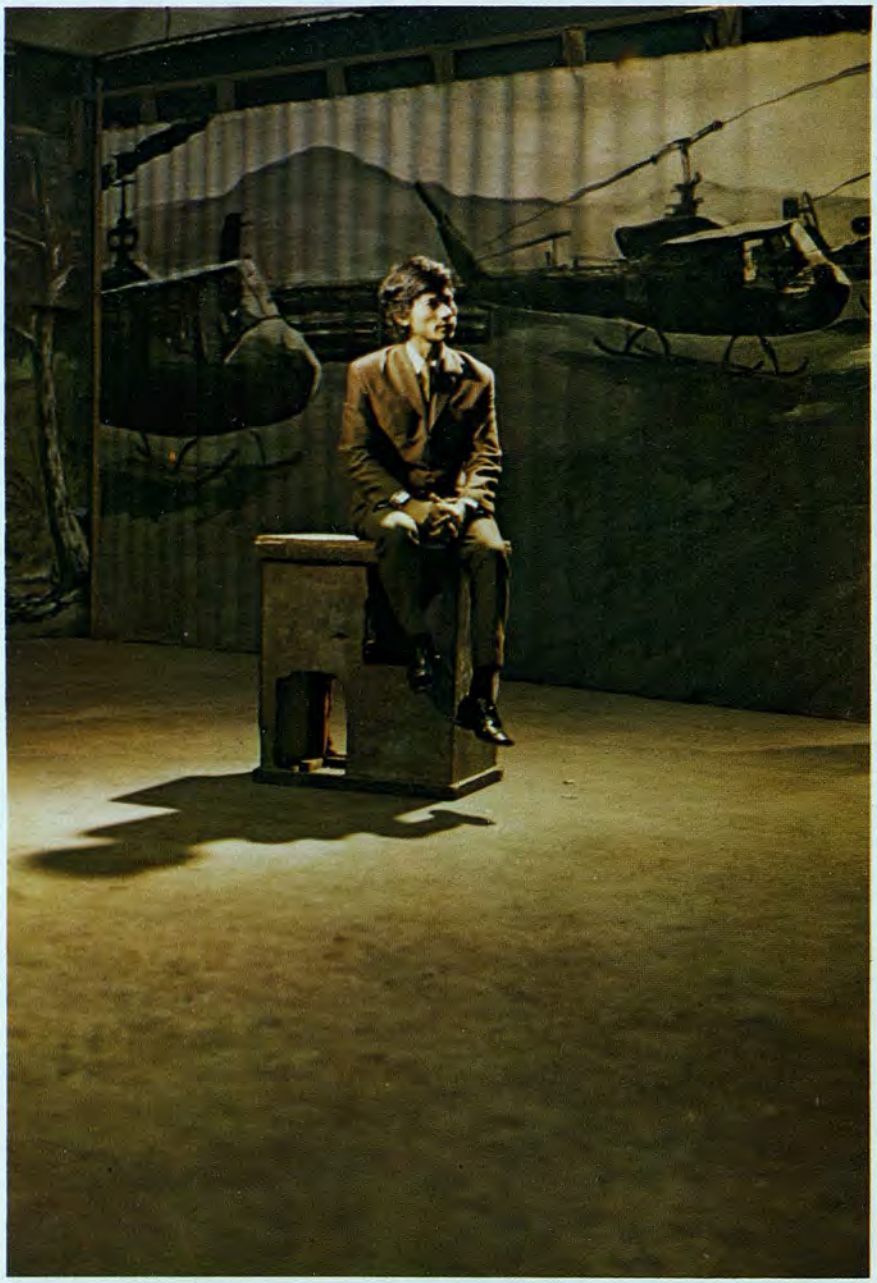
The benefits of the Chieu Hoi program are sometimes spoken of in the PSY-OPS leaflets. For it is those VC who surrender that are usually channeled into the program which tries to make loyal citizens out of former enemies. There comes a point where the wounds, the blood, the death, the poor food, and the fugitive existence become too much for a man. His resolve gone and ideology unravelled and contradicted, a Chieu Hoi leaflet is finally taken seriously. Citing figures, U.S. advisors claim Chieu Hoi to be a success, although some appear cautious and say it is still too early to measure success. Since 1963, 168,000 former enemy have defected (rallied), about 65 percent of these once having been military personnel.

What happens to the ralliers? After having wounds nursed and receiving an allotment of new clothes and money (1000 piasters), the Chieu Hoi can go several ways. American advisors in the Chieu Hoi Directorate say 47 percent go into farming, 25 percent into the military, and the rest into a trade or perhaps drift. Special centers have been established to provide homes and livelihood for those who cannot return to insecure areas. After political reindoctrination, the Chieu Hoi has all the rights that are guaranteed South Vietnamese civilians. About 2,500 have become Kit Carson Scouts for the U.S. Army. There have also been instances of ralliers returning to the VC ranks and working as double agents, a danger which always exists in any program of this type.

Other PSY-OPS techniques employ electronic media. Loudspeakers are mounted on gunships or fixed wing aircraft, sampans, and the backs of troops. These speaker systems blare messages into enemy areas. Former VC sometimes speak to their comrades urging surrender. This technique is often used in battle situations—a loud speaker is used to coax VC hiding in a cave to come out and surrender. Occasionally a PSY-OPS team will take to an up-beat harrassing technique.

Political posters are produced in large quantities and dot the walls of Vietnamese cities.

Each week, popular Vietnamese singers video tape songs that express the emotions of a people caught in war.



Psychedelic rock music is blared over speakers late at night. GIs are used to these sounds, but a cacophony from "Woodstock" might easily keep awake the VC, if they're close by.

PSY-OPS is serious for the VC. U.S. figures say 168,000 have defected from the VC ranks. A very large percentage of the defectors are guerillas and not North Vietnamese regulars. The NVA have a reputation of being "hard core", supposedly tougher mentally to withstand psychological assault. This is understandable after years of life within the social-political system of North Vietnam, and because of the vigilant officer cadre. The VC claim ". . . these efforts surely influence our troops, if we do not closely control cadre and soldier thought . . . we shall face many difficulties." To counter PSY-OPS, the VC and NVA practice several controls. Orders are issued that forbid the reading of PSY-OPS material. Radios cannot be tuned to propaganda broadcasts. In one instance troops were told to make any kind of noise, shout, beat drums, or shuffle rice in trays, to drown out loudspeaker ships. Frequent political lectures also are used by the VC /NVA to maintain high morale and dedication to the cause.

To quote Mao Tse Tung—"Guerillas are fish that swim in the sea of the people." That is a simple axiom of guerilla warfare. The guerilla army must rely on support from the people. Turn the people against the guerilla, deny him contact with the people, and you remove the grassroot support that he needs. As Vietnam has shown, such a simple remedy is not easy to find. The difficult task is building allegiance for the South Vietnamese government. This is the job of the pacification program. Adjunct to pacification is the long range PSY-OPS, perhaps more accurately labeled POL–WAR (political warfare).

The countryside and the airwaves are being canvassed by messages sympathetic to the government to help swing the allegiance towards an identiciation with the national government. This long range PSY OPS campaign must use all the media. The Ministry of Information of the Republic of Vietnam oversees the entire effort. The U.S. government, principally through JUSPAO, but not exclusively, is playing a major logistic and advisory role. Providing mobility for JUSPAO is the 54th Utility Aircraft Company, one of two Otter companies in South Vietnam. JUSPAO maintains a daily schedule of flights by the Otters for transporting PSY-OPS material.

For the South Vietnamese, their "Newsweek" might very well be the two-page paper, "Ngay-Nay", which is published in Saigon and circulated throughout the provinces. "Ngay-Nay" has a circulation of 600,000 and relies almost exclusively on Army aviation for circulation in the IV Corp region. About 96 percent of the Delta circulation is attained by the Otters of the 54th UAC. Air America and trucks deliver the paper to the other military regions. In addition, the Otters distribute tons of printed matter, posters, books, and leaflets to JUSPAO advisors in the provinces of the Delta.

Broadcasting is a recent addition to communication capabilities of the Vietnamese government. The stations are government owned. Programming is often done by government agencies. Originally, South Vietnamese television had to transmit from Air Force planes mounted with transmitters and flying over the

countryside. In four years time, 4 broadcast centers with television have been constructed in Saigon, Can Tho, Qui Nhon, and Hue. These television centers cover 70–75 percent of the geographical limits of South Vietnam with a signal. In addition, some of the television signals from Can Tho and Hue extend into Cambodia and North Vietnam. Television stations average about 4 or 6 hours a day of broadcasting, while radio can extend beyond that. Television staff members are assisted by American advisors. NBC-International is currently training some Vietnamese technicians, and a great deal of the broadcast facilities are provided by the United States.

Motion pictures, which have long been recognized as a powerful device, are not being passed up by the South Vietnamese. The National Motion Picture Center for South Vietnam operates out of a ten year old building in Saigon. JUSPAO originally channeled a great deal of money into the center, says John Henderson, former Foreign Service career officer. Millions of feet of film material has passed through the national center for use in Vietnamese government programs and for private film makers. A comparable program in the United States would be those films put out by the Social Security Administration or Internal Revenue Service. The operation is entirely Vietnamese run, with two JUSPAO advisors on the premises. The staff includes veteran filmmakers with almost two decades of experience and young girls decked out in dungarees and pull-over shirts. Private filmmakers find it advantageous to use the Center since import fees often mark-up filmmaking equipment by 400 percent. Filmmaking is currently undergoing a boom all over the world as more and more people are taking an interest in the media. This is having a bad effect for the Vietnamese. The few people versed in the technical knowledge of film production and equipment want to become producers.

"How do you know we are winning?" John F. Kennedy asked that question eight years ago. Today, it is an equally important and difficult question. Indicators of success in the tactical PSY-OPS program are found in the number of defectors. One hundred and sixty-eight thousand defectors since 1963 make some Americans talk of Chieu Hoi as a success. But, the long term PSY-OPS, the allegiance building and national identification will take a longer time to evaluate. Some estimates, notably that of President Thieu, say 98 percent of the population is under Saigon's control.

It is of course apparent that PSY-OPS is only part of the job of getting allegiance for the Vietnamese government. The other part concerns the Government of South Vietnam's efforts to work for the people. It has to produce, not only in the TV studio, but through deeds; produce itself as a viable alternative for the people. For its worst publicity would be not living up to its own promises. Those billions of paper messages, millions of feet of film, and thousands of air miles flown by Army Otters, would then have been wasted. It is a big job, but indicators show that the Saigon Government is making headway.

Television equipment in South Vietnam stations is the result of American technical assistance and has provided the Vietnamese with top quality black and white broadcasting facilities.

Forging Across The Muddy River

Story by SP4 Phil Terrana

In the Spring of 1968, Pete Seeger went on national T.V. and sang a song entitled "Waist Deep In Muddy Water" which literally depicted troops, but figuratively a nation, trudging across a dirty, muddy river with the deepest and most dangerous part still ahead. The song summed up all the frustration of a four-year involvement which appeared to have no end in sight.

The complexion of the war in Spring, 1968, was grim indeed. On the political front, Presidential hopefuls claimed to have the answer and yet no feasible solutions were reaching the people. On the military front, the TET Offensive a few months earlier had somewhat distorted the image of a withering enemy expiring and admitting defeat to a superior force.

Elections were held and the new president announced to the American people that he had the means of safely bringing the nation across the river and back to solid land. On May 14, 1969, President Nixon presented his plan to the people.

It called for the scheduled withdrawal of American troops coinciding with a more extensive participation of Vietnamese troops. The various means of attaining this goal were lumped under the one word—VIETNAMIZATION.

The question on the lips of all those who had heard the President speak was whether or not the word would be more than just a nice sounding slogan. Was it in fact THE solution?

Phase I, the turnover of all the combat military responsibility to the forces of South Vietnam, was gaining worldwide attention.

The announced withdrawal of 135,000 troops in 1969 was concrete evidence that the plan was working and the country appeared at last to be heading in the right direction. In late October, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird reported "real momentum" being achieved. The number of Vietnamese trainees coming out of 33 training centers and the 25 specialty schools stood at approximately 450,000 for the year—double what it had been in 1966.

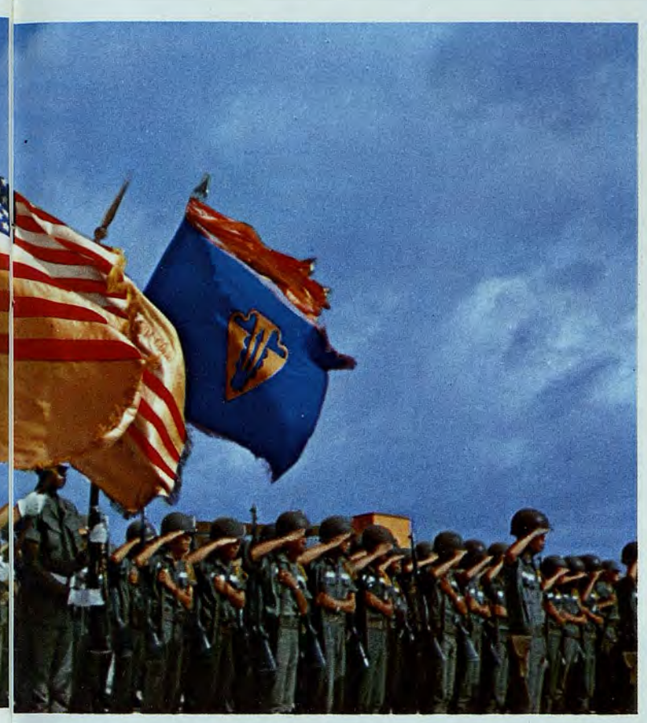
But the Vietnamese War is a helicopter war and it is in the air that Vietnamization had to be successful. While ground reductions were taking place, the 1st Aviation Brigade was actively engaged in Phase II, the turnover of air, artillery and logistics support to the forces of the South Vietnamese. This phase, labeled Improvement & Modernization (I&M), would proceed concurrently with Phase I, according to Secretary Laird, but would take a little longer time because of the training involved. In the past, the Vietnamese had not been as actively involved in the air war as they had been in the ground fighting and it would be many months before the effects of Vietnamization could be seen in aviation. On April 28, Phase II was initiated in the Brigade. "The VNAF selected the airfields and general locations from which they felt they could best support the ground troops," explained MAJ George D. Fuller, Brigade I&M Project Officer. "They then notified the American officials who would see which units they had in the selected areas."

Even as the units were being chosen, training of the personnel was taking place. Vietnamese pilots were attending the same Stateside flight schools which American pilots had been attending for years. They received the same instruction as American pilots with the vital addition of an English course. Upon returning to Vietnam, the new pilots were assigned to various companies—some designated to be turned over while others not—where they received very important practical experience.

"Three months before the actual turnover is scheduled to go into effect, twenty pilots would arrive at the company," added MAJ Fuller. "After taking their standardization flight, a requirement for all pilots, they begin flying alongside their American counterparts."

The maintenance personnel also received their training in the States before being assigned to a company. For four months, they attended the U.S. Army Transportation School at Ft. Eustis, Virginia, where they were taught how the helicopter operates and what they as mechanics would be required to do in order to keep them operating. Since this program has started, an in-country maintenance school has been established at Bien Hoa.

These mechanics would arrive at the designated companies about a month after the pilots where they would undergo much the same type of training. They



SCHODOWSKI

work alongside the American crews, gradually assuming a larger role in the upkeep of the aircraft.

Not all of the Brigade's activities were behind the scenes during this period. In conjunction with his Vietnamization program, President Nixon also called for a pacification effort on the part of the military forces. Pacification is, in effect, a basic step towards the final goal of complete Vietnamization. It is aimed at winning the confidence and trust of the people and also at helping the people to solve the many problems which have long plagued them.

While Vietnamese pilots and maintenance crews were going to schools in the United States, units such as the 185th Reconnaissance Airplane Company were busy constructing a two-story, six-room school in Ban Me Thout. "Operation Little Lift" conducted by the 147th Assault Support Helicopter Company succeeded in transporting 99 orphans from Vinh Long to the An Phong Orphanage in Vung Tau.

In June of 1969, the 17th Combat Aviation Group was instrumental in returning a complete hamlet—approximately 800 people—back to their Central Highlands homeland which they were forced to abandon 11 years earlier. W.H. (Bill) Bailey, a retired military man serving as senior district advisor, attributed their return to the direct success of the pacification program.

Civic action programs of this nature continued throughout the rest of 1969 and into 1970 while all the time the military was moving ahead towards completion of its goal.

A small step was taken on Aug 28, 1969, when it was announced that Vietnamese civilians would replace Army air traffic controllers at the Qui Nhon Airfield. The controllers had been receiving OJT and classroom instructions from the 165th Combat Aviation Group.

A more significant event occured at Bien Hoa on Sept 2, 1970, when the aviation assets of the 190th Assault Helicopter Company were turned over to the VNAF. The newly created 223rd Squadron (Tactical Helicopter) became the first squadron of the 3rd VNAF Air Division's Fourth Wing. The twenty pilots, who for three months had trained with the 190th, were joined by eleven other pilots who had received their practical experience with other units. They, along with 31 co-pilots, crew chiefs, and gunners, would man the 31 aircraft assigned to the squadron. Their mission would be the same as the 190th's had been—support of ARVN ground troops in the 3rd Military Region.

The VNAF is in complete control once the turnover has gone into effect. The only American involvement comes from the U.S. Army Operations Cadre and Maintenance Augmentation Team. "They are there only to assist the VNAF," explained MAJ Fuller, "and they do not take an active role in running the squadrons."

The pace picked up now that the first company had turned over. On the second of October the assets of the 121st Assault Helicopter Company, oldest aviation unit in the Mekong Delta, were turned over to the 225th Squadron, 84th Wing, 4th VNAF Air Division. A month later, on November 4, another milestone was reached when the 336th Assault Helicopter Company was inactivated and the 227th Squadron activated in its place. Combined with the 121st turnover, it represented the first complete turnover of an Army Airfield. The Soc Trang Army Airfield was redesignated the Soc Trang Air Base.

About the same time, the 205th Assault Support Helicopter Company, a CH-47 Chinook outfit, was also being turned over and the role of the Vietnamese in the aviation war was becoming more apparent.

In recent months the brigade has seen the 68th AHC at Bien Hoa, and the 189th AHC at Pleiku added to the list of units turned over. The VNAF now have at least one assault helicopter company in each of the four Military Regions.

"Vietnamization does not take the place of negotiations," Secretary Laird cautions, "but it does prepare the South Vietnamese to assume their responsibility should negotiations fail. As we go through the steps of this program, it will not be the complete total responsibility of the American government as it was prior to 1968," he goes on to add. Vietnamization is in fact becoming the solution which the nation was searching for in the Spring of 1968. The way to the other bank of that muddy river is becoming clearer every day.

BACK OUT FOR MORE

Story by CPT Stephen Wilder

Kennedy, Silva, Hale, and Miller finished up the pre-flight check of their Huey gunship and prepared to take off on their mission. The afternoon's activities were to be a continuation of what they had been doing that morning—extracting Republic of Korea (ROK) soldiers from tiny, makeshift LZs spread over an area in the Phu Yen province in the Central Highlands.

Aside from the poor weather, influenced by the monsoon rains and winds along the coast of the South China Sea, the day's mission, so far, had been "cake." The "Gunrunners," members of the 238th Aerial Weapons Company, based at Tuy Hoa, were operating close to home. The pick-ups were being made in an area about five or six miles northwest of the air base.

Flying fire support missions like today's run usually presented no major difficulties. But things could and often did get touchy when the gunships had to fly missions far from home in rough weather. The 238th is a general support unit and its area of operations ranges over 47 percent of the total land mass in South Vietnam.

Fog banks, unpredictable winds, extremely low ceilings, radical terrain situations and a battle-hardened enemy below who doesn't run when he hears the sound of approaching gunships—all ingredients that make for a tough, demanding tour for any aviator. But the "Gunrunners" approach any situation with a style of coolness and self assurance that makes those they support and those they challenge respect them.

CPT Dennis DePaul, operations officer for the 238th, referred to the area of operations (AO) and the conditions which make it one of the most challenging in Vietnam. "Flying in a general support capacity over an area as large as 2d MR presents special problems. Of course the weather is, more often than not, our biggest headache. But, in addition to that, the very nature of our mission makes it even more difficult.

We fly virtually every type of mission conceivable within the limits of our physical capacity."

Bucking the eighteen mile per hour wind gusts, Kennedy managed to jockey his ship into take-off position on the runway.

Fifteen minutes later, the ship was in an orbiting pattern over the first of two PZs where it would be working. On three consecutive sweeps, aircraft commander Silva and doorgunners Hale and Williams scanned the countryside below. Moments later a Huey slick swooped in and eased to a hover. No sooner had its skids touched ground when a small group of ROK soldiers hustled across the small clearing and jumped on board. In no time, the slick was again climbing and banking left for the trip home.

Silva turned to Kennedy. "Man, that went real smooth. Let's hope the second one's that easy."

The second PZ was located about halfway on the route back to Tuy Hoa. One more quick pickup and the "Gunrunners" would be heading in for the afternoon. On his approach Kennedy spotted the smoke grenade identifying the PZ and swung into his orbit. Ahead of him in the second "Gunrunner" ship, Bill Sparks and Bill Tucker were banking right to come back on a second swing over the PZ.

Suddenly Sparks' voice crackled over the radio. "... taking fire, taking heavy ground fire at eleven o'clock. Stay three hundred meters west."

Kennedy reacted instantly, banking sharp right to avoid passing over the spot where Sparks and Tucker had taken fire. But two hundred meters out his own ship came under fire. Now he was on the radio to Sparks, "... taking fire here too. Cut back and stay clear of the two knolls."

After a few anxious moments, the two ships had established a pattern clear of the two knolls and sized up the situation. The enemy ground fire presented no serious problem to the ROK extraction. The PZ was well clear of the knolls so the pickup could be made easily. When word of the ground fire had reached operations the decision was made to request an air strike. But the low ceiling made the strike impossible.

By now both ships were running low on fuel. The best way to handle the situation would be to call out two relief ships to allow time for refueling. The first two ships would then return and work the area with the reliefs.

Back on the refueling pad the crew moved swiftly. Miller and Hale refueled the ship while Silva inspected for damage caused by the ground fire. There was none. When Sparks and Tucker made the same inspection of their aircraft they found it had taken five hits. Fortunately, the damage was light and would cause no mechanical problems.

Fifteen minutes later both crews were in the air again, hustling back out to join the relief ships. Together the two teams worked the area thoroughly for an hour and a half. The volume of fire put out was more than enough to make the enemy wish he had never chosen to engage them.

As dusk fell and ammo began running low the ships broke from the knolls and returned home to shut down for the night.

Later on, in the crew room of the operations building, several "Gunrunners" on standby talked about their company and its operations. Had they been polled on mission preferences the response would have been unanimously in favor of "Snoopy" and "Scorpion" missions. 1LT George Warzecha referred to them as "... the most exciting missions you can fly. When you're flying Snoopies and Scorpions, there's never a dull moment."

Basically, the Snoopy mission entails low flight over suspected enemy locations. A special "low slick"

equipped with sensing equipment operates at tree top level plotting targets. The slick is accompanied by two Huey gunships. Should the slick come under fire the gunships will engage and protect the unarmed slick.

The Scorpion mission differs only slightly. On this type of mission the gunships do not wait to be engaged. As soon as the slick has located a target the two gun models come in "hot" on it.

But Warzecha was quick to caution that, "Snoopies and Scorpions are also by far the most dangerous missions we fly. On these two missions the low ships have to fly at tree top level. The problem here is that in the event of a mechanical failure there's not enough time to pick out a clear zone for emergency landing."

After a few hands of poker and another hour of small talk the lights went out and the standby crew bedded down.

Early next morning the "Gunrunners" were back in the air flying cover for Charlie Company Ranger Team insertions. The operation had gone smoothly and two hours later the primary duty crew was back in the operations building standing by for anything else that might come up.

At ten in the morning CPT DePaul received word that one of the six-man ranger teams had run into a platoon-size enemy unit and was pinned down by heavy fire. Again an Air Force strike was requested. This time the answer was yes.

In the five minutes of orderly confusion that followed the scramble order, two crews, headed by CPT Bob Spencer and 1LT Barry Root, went out to the line to crank. The plan called for their two ships to hang off to the south until the air strike had been completed. They were then to engage enemy targets and cover the ranger team extraction.

The view from the gunships was spectacular. A couple of miles out the two Fast Movers (F-100 Supersabres) looked like sleek birds streaking down gracefully through the sky and soaring back up again at the last possible moment. Seconds later though, the picture of grace and beauty was shattered as the five hundred pound bombs impacted and ruptured the countryside below. And even the racking noise of the helicopter rotors was not enough to drown out the terrific boom that followed moments after.

As abruptly as the air strike began, however, it was over and the Air Force crafts were gone. Spencer gave them a few moments to clear the area and said to his pilot, "Keep a close eye on the instruments; we're going in."

The following thirty minutes could easily have passed for a chopper trip through a hurricane. There was enemy ground fire from all sides, deafening clatter of M-60 machine guns raking the ground below and the jolts of the ship as its rockets were fired, followed by their fantastic slamming impact. In that half hour period, it seemed as though the world would shatter and blow apart. And then, out of nowhere, a slick appeared dropping in between the two gunships, picking its way gingerly through the smoke and confusion. In a final prolonged burst, the M-60s showered the area with a stream of lead.

Even before the slick could touch down, six figures moved across a clearing and within seconds were on board. With the extraction completed, all three ships broke quickly from the area for the flight back to Tuy Hoa. After a short time the two "Gunrunner" ships would return along with the Fast Movers to hit the area again. But right now it was time to go back to rearm and refuel.

Before they were even five minutes into the return flight, Bob Spencer was on the radio to Barry Root. The two were already planning their return trip; how they would come in on the target, what areas should be avoided, the direction they would bank to and follow.

Something about their conversation illustrated their approach to their job and the sense of pride that grows out of their accomplishments. Perhaps unknowingly, Spencer and Root, on their return to the base exhibited just what it is that makes the 238th one of the most competent aviation units in Vietnam—persistence.

Like the other members of the "Gunrunners", they did not leave the job unfinished. Constant planning and coordination coupled with a drive to "go back out for more"—this is the way they work.

RACE

TRACK—SAIGON

Story and Photos by SP5 Chuck Winer

Although horseracing has long been referred to as the "sport of kings," a simple jaunt out to your local track will quickly dispel any notion that it is primarily a spectator sport for the elite. No doubt the sport attracted its share of rich blood when it began sometime around the 16th century in England, but today it is enjoyed by the young, old, wealthy, and poor alike throughout the world. If you suspect the plausibility of this statement go to Saigon some Saturday or Sunday afternoon, hop on the nearest mini-bus and ask the driver to take you to the Truong Dua Phu Tho Racetrack.

There are old men crouched in corners studying the day's program, elderly women patiently waiting in line to place bets, young children wandering about sipping cold drinks of crushed ice saturated with syrup, and soldiers just relaxing.

Before the start of each race, the horses, which are smaller than American thoroughbreds, prance around the walking circle. For those interested in wagering bets, there are facilities available beneath a two-tier concrete grandstand. The bets range from 10 to 200 piasters but a large part of the crowd seems content to spend their money on refreshments. The track is more than a place to bet and watch the horses. It's a gathering place where friends can relax and forget the pressures of the city.

When the loud speakers fill the air, the crowd stares intently at the track. Some of the more energetic fans sit on a fence near the finish line in order to have a good vantage point of the stretch run. The most striking distinction between American and Vietnamese racing is the direction in which the horses run. In the States the race is run counterclockwise whereas here the horses run clockwise.

Although the jockeys, who are between 15 and 18 years old, attend a school sponsored by the track, it is obvious that they lack the polish and finesse of the great Western jockeys. For example, they often lose valuable yardage by swinging wide on the turns instead of hugging the rail. But, what they lack in experience, they make up for in determination.

The cracking of a whip against the horse's flesh and the sound of hoofs pounding the dirt carries with it all the excitement of American racing. They may swing wide around the far turn, but the drive to the finish line is as fierce a battle as was ever seen at Churchill Downs. The crowd is up, pulses pound, noise mounts with every stride, and a flurry of torn ticket stubs settles to the ground. Like all other tracks around the world this one has its share of losers. But no true racing fan is ever discouraged. There is always the "next" race to bail him out.

So it is weekend after weekend, and race after race. They keep coming back. Back to their friends, the sunshine, refreshments, excitement, and torn stubs—all part of a good afternoon at the Truong Dua Phu Tho Racetrack in Saigon.

NEWSLETTER

BE A SKY MARSHAL

If you are interested in flying and you are nearing the end of your military service, you may be eligible for a 90-day early out for sky marshal duty. It's all part of a recently announced program in which the Army is helping the Department of The Treasury hire 2,100 men. The air guards will be trained to replace the temporary agents now serving as armed guards on many international and some domestic flights. They will enforce customs laws and serve as Security Officers at airports and in the air. The President has requested that a permanent force of security officers be recruited and trained within the next six months. To qualify as a Customs Security Officer, you must:

. . . be a U.S. citizen
. . . be a male and at least 21 years old
. . . have at least 20/40—20/70 vision (correctable to 20/20)
. . . be able to pass a civil service examination

Any overseas soldier who wishes to apply should check with his unit 1SG and the installation project officer. All candidates will receive consideration without regard to race, color, creed,or national origin.

SCHOLARSHIP AID

The Army Aviation Association of America Scholarship Foundation has announced the availability of $4,100 in 1971 scholarship assistance funds for the sons and daughters of members and deceased members with an effective date of membership on or before March 31, 1970. Student applicants are asked to request the appropriate application forms by writing to: AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc., 1 Crestwood Road, Westport, Connecticut 06880. The applications, together with other supporting application data, must be returned to the Foundation on or before March 1, 1971 to receive Awards Committee consideration.

SOLDIER OF THE YEAR NAMED

SP5 Dennis L. Jantz, Littleton, Colorado, was named "Army Aviation Soldier of the Year" for 1969–1970 during award ceremonies at the twelfth Annual Honors Luncheon of the Army Aviation Association of America. The Honorable Stanley R. Resor, Secretary of the Army, made the award citing Specialist Jantz' achievements as a UH-1 helicopter crewchief with the 240th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) in the Republic of Vietnam. SP5 Jantz flew over 1200 combat hours and 1000 combat missions in an 18-month period in UH-1C gunships and UH-1H helicopters in Vietnam. His actions have earned him two Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Air Medals with "V" Device and one Army Commendation Medal with "V" Device. He had also been awarded two Army Commendation Medals for meritorious service. Sponsored by the Army Aviation Association of America, the award is presented annually to the soldier who has made an outstanding individual contribution during the previous year.

BRIGADE POLICIES CONCERNING LEAVES

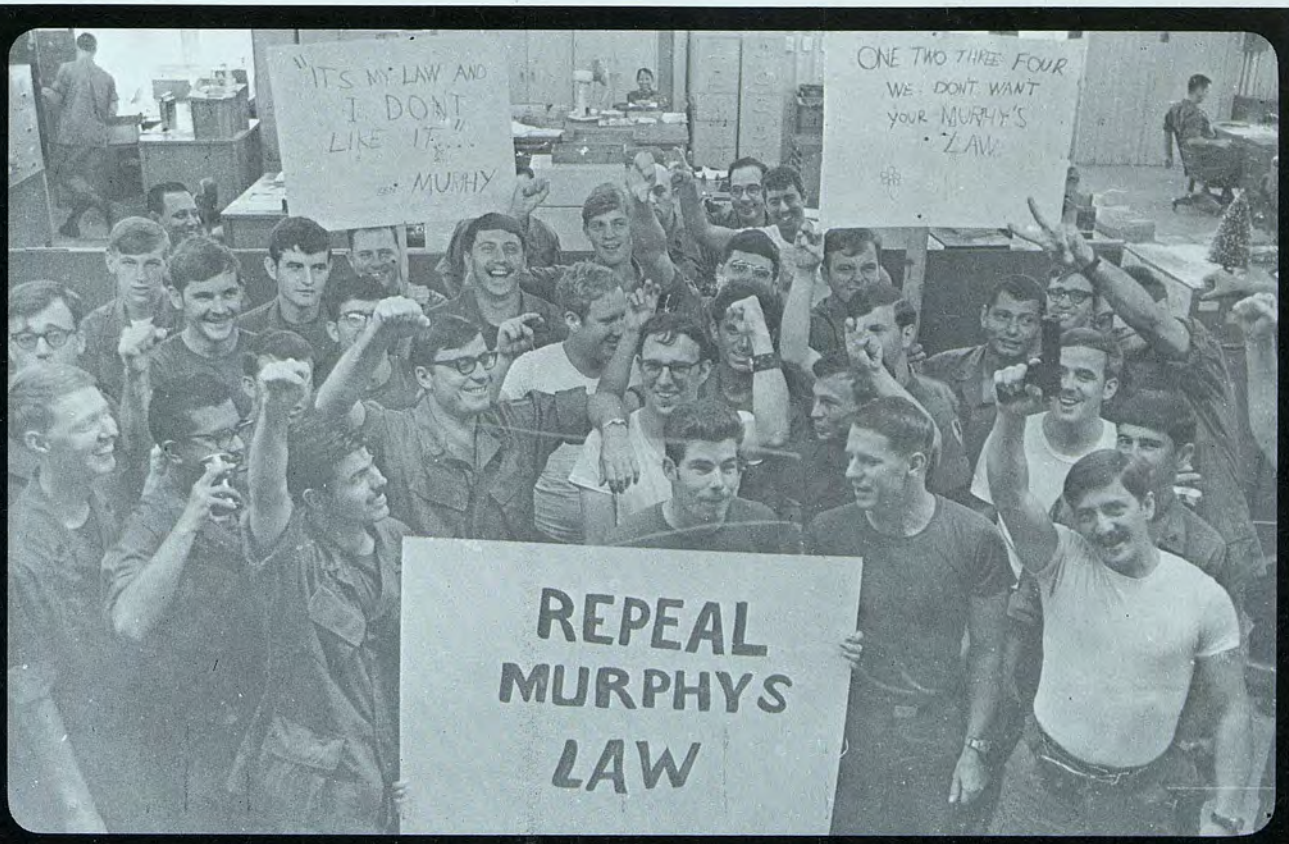
Fourteen days leave is now authorized during the 12 month tour. It may be taken either as one fourteen day leave or as two seven day leaves. Seven additional days are authorized for those personnel who extend for six months. However, leave time which has been authorized but not taken during a twelve month tour may not be taken during any subsequent extensions.

Personnel wishing to return to the States on their leave may do so if it falls between the fourth and eighth month of a normal tour. To do so, personnel must present evidence of a return commercial air ticket and confirmed reservations that insures timely return to their organization.

As part of its incentive program, leaves are also authorized to individuals who reenlist. Details concerning such programs may be had from your reenlistment counselor.

SILVER STARS

SP4	John V. Good, Jr.	1LT	Bruce A. Lawonn
SGT	Eddie C. Walls, Jr.	CWO	Robert H. Litwinski
SP4	Steven T. Bollers	CPT	George P. McGee
COL	Leo E. Soucek	WO1	James F. Ross
SP4	Dennis D. Springer	WO1	Michael M. Sikes
CPT	Harry D. Silsby IV	WO1	Gregory S. Helsel
CW2	Jesse A. Falcon	WO1	John P. Davis
CW3	Anthony G. Rezendes	1LT	Stephen L. Black
SP4	Jimmy D. Wilson	CW2	Randall C. Willis
SP5	Jack H. Talkington	CPT	William J. Staffa
1LT	Larry G. Brown	WO1	Robert L. Parker
1LT	David W. Gibbons	*WO1	Jeffrey A. Coffin
SP4	Charles W. McGuire	LTC	Robert L. Sauers
SP4	David D. Chambers	MAJ	Donald M. Frierson
1LT	George H. White	CW2	Dale A. Sapp
WO1	Gregory F. Hengels	* POSTHUMOUS	



WING TIPS...

TO THE AVIATORS OF THE U.S. ARMY

PROPOSED: That the law, commonly known as "Murphy's Law", be repealed and removed from all areas of aviation.

JUSTIFICATION: This law has created problems since the beginning of aviation. It has accounted for hundreds of lives and millions of dollars worth of damage to aircraft and facilities. Examples include the installation of tail rotors and tail rotor bearings backwards; forgetting to take a wrench out of the intake scoop of a turbine engine; allowing sudden downdrafts of wind to draw low and slow aircraft out of the air. It has caused wing tanks to shrink, allowing only half of the tank to be filled; it has caused safety pins to be left out of oil filler caps; it has caused wheels-up landings, no-flap takeoffs, and the wrong switches to be turned off in flight.

The list of grievances could fill volumes and has filled thousands of pages of accident investigation reports. The law is totally unjust. It strikes indiscriminately, making no provisions for experience, rank, desires, or units. It has only one loophole, a constant desire to beat the law, shown by use of the checklist, double checking, and following the rules.

In addition to all the things listed above, this law is discriminatory to all persons of Irish ancestry, inferring untrue and unkind thoughts to those individuals and causing them great personal embarrassment.

UNITE NOW! STRIKE AGAINST THIS UNJUST LAW! DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE REPEAL OF MURPHY'S LAW!!!!

CPT. Dick Hooper