

HAWK

SEPTEMBER 1968



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1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

HAWK

SEPTEMBER 1968

VOLUME II

NUMBER 1



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Cover: A 1st Aviation Brigade "Ute" takes off into the dusk as Can Tho. Painting by SP4 Ray Kazura.

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COMMANDING GENERAL
DEPUTY BRIGADE COMMANDER
DEPUTY BRIGADE COMMANDER FOR ADMINISTRATION

COMMANDER 12th CAG
COMMANDER 16th CAG
COMMANDER 17th CAG
COMMANDER 164th CAG
INFORMATION OFFICER
OFFICER IN CHARGE
EDITOR

MG Robert R. Williams
COL James C. Smith
COL Eugene B. Conrad
COL Robert O. Lambert
COL William C. Tyrrell
COL John A. Todd
COL Worthington M. Mahone
MAJ J. Barry McDermott
1LT Robert J. Sinner
SP4 William J. Blakely

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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. HAWK is published at Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan.

NEWSLETTER



IT CAN PAY TO RE-UP. SERGEANT Charles Estes of the 222nd CSAB can vouch for it. Sergeant Estes recently received \$10,084.02 when he reenlisted in the United States Army for six years as a teletype operator. Actually, \$9,486.00 was reenlistment bonus money, with the remainder travel and accrued leave pay. But to Sergeant Estes it was a big round sum. He announced that he would put most of the bonus into Soldier's Deposit which will earn him about \$1,000 more while he is in Vietnam. (222nd CSAB IO)

EMERGENCY CRASH RESCUE PROCEDURE is often the only thing which can mean the difference of life or death for crews of downed aircraft. For this reason, the 271st Assault Helicopter Company recently sent Warrant Officer Michael H. Bain to give classes at key areas throughout the Delta. Classes were given not only to Brigade units, but to Army, Air Force and Vietnamese crash rescue teams throughout the Delta region.

WO Bain explained and demonstrated the emergency procedures and techniques used in huge Chinook helicopters. He emphasized safety features and stressed the all important fact that an accident prevented is one less crash rescue operation necessary.

THE "THUNDERBIRDS" OF THE 336TH Assault Helicopter Company recently received a plaque from the US Air Force's world famous Aerobatic Thunderbird Flight team.

The "Thunderbird" gunship platoon based at Soc Trang, RVN presented the USAF Thunderbirds with a plaque in May. The plaques were exchanged in mutual admiration for the exceptional job being done by both Thunderbird teams. The USAF team wished their Army counterparts "Good hunting and luck" in the letter accompanying their plaque. The 336th wished their sister unit much success and fame.

The "Thunderbird" name will always be held in the highest esteem by the men from both branches who have used it. (336th AHC IO)

IN RECENT CEREMONIES AT SOC TRANG, Captan Robert C. Knight of the 336th Assault Helicopter Company received the nation's second highest award for the role he played during this year's TET offensive.

General Creighton W. Abrams, COMUS MACV, presented the aviator with the award. The award was given for Captain Knight's valorous actions in support of Soc Trang Army Airfield which had come under intense enemy fire. His actions had been instrumental in repelling the Viet Cong attack.

Following the presentation, General Abrams addressed the men of the 336th stating he was honored to serve with the men in Vietnam today. He stressed that the final outcome in any battle always lies, not with equipment, but with men like Captain Knight.

THE SELECTION OF ENLISTED MEN FOR promotions to grades E-8 and E-9 will be centralized at Department of the Army Headquarters.

DA Message 871517, sent to the field July 9, announced that the centralized system was approved to assure the most equitable system for the selection and promotion of the best qualified individuals to the top enlisted grades in the Army.

Promotions to the grade of E-9 under the new system are scheduled to begin on or about Jan. 1, 1969. Promotions to E-8 under this plan are scheduled to begin on or about March 1.

Enlisted promotion selection boards will not be convened after July 31 for the purpose of selecting individuals for first-time inclusion on a standing promotion list to the grade of E-9. For E-8, the cutoff date will be September 30.

Individuals who now have promotion list status to those grades, or who gain it before the respective cutoff dates, will retain that status and upon transfer will continue to be integrated on existing promotion lists of gaining commands until further notice.

THREE MEMBERS OF THE "BLACK CATS" of the 213th Assault Support Helicopter Company have been presented with Certificates of Achievement by the Boeing Vertol Corporation (manufacturers of the CH-47 Chinook) for having accumulated over 1000 combat hours of accident free flying time over the rugged terrain of the Republic of Vietnam. None of the three aviators have completed their tours in Vietnam to date. CW2 Richard G. Johnson has flown 1001 hours, CW2 Timothy L. Stott 1039 hours and CW2 Wallace D. Givens 1160 hours. Johnson and Scott still have two months in country, while Givens expects to go home this month.

All three pilots actively participated in the Battles of Loc Ninh, Hill 881, Dak To, and the First and Second Tet Offensives. (11th CAB IO)

HIGH FLIERS

Awards of Silver Star and above awarded 14 June—1 July 1968 in order by date awarded.

Major Richard A. Thompson
First Lieutenant David M. Dial
Specialist Four Monserrate Aviles
Major Robert S. Jones, Jr.
First Lieutenant James H. Kenton
Chief Warrant Officer Hoye D. Tibbets
Colonel Robert L. McDaniel
First Lieutenant James R. Bazzell
Specialist Four Arthur W. Gross
Specialist Four David W. Kinard
Specialist Four Thomas L. Osborne
Sergeant George E. Wright
Specialist Four Philip L. McKarns
Captain Gregory N. Patulea
Captain James J. Mills

D Troop, 7th Squadron, 1st Cavalry
D Troop, 7th Squadron, 1st Cavalry
B Troop, 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry
199th Reconnaissance Airplane Company
235th Assault Helicopter Company
235th Assault Helicopter Company
164th Combat Aviation Group
183rd Reconnaissance Airplane Company
176th Assault Helicopter Company
176th Assault Helicopter Company
17th Assault Helicopter Company
B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry
17th Assault Helicopter Company
B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry
B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry

from the CAREER COUNSELOR

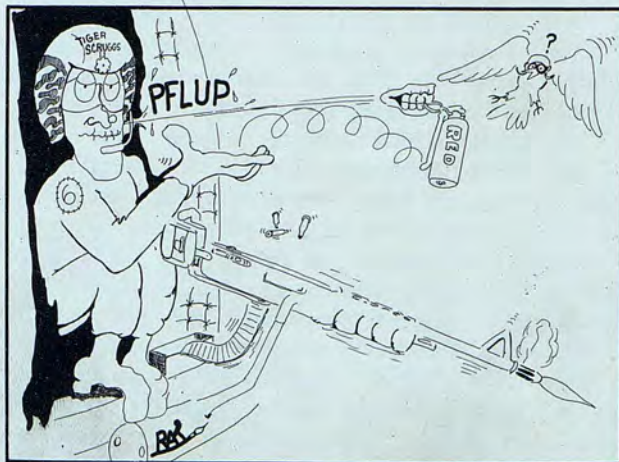
Do you have your eyes on the sky? Here's the field for you. Army Aviation's role is to augment the Army's capability to conduct prompt and sustained combat in conjunction with land operations. While this field is not a reenlistment option, it is an exciting, demanding life for in-service men who qualify. You'll learn maneuvers, formation flying, and many other aspects of combat support flying in either fixed-wing or rotary-wing aircraft. Upon completion of the course you'll receive your wings and an appointment as Warrant Officer. This means extra prestige and extra pay. Here are the areas in which you may qualify for training in this exciting field.

Rotary Wing Training consists of 4 weeks of Pre-flight training at Fort Wolters, Texas, and 33 weeks of Primary Flight Training, Advanced Contact and Tactics, and instrument training at Fort Wolters and Fort Rucker, Alabama.

Fixed Wing Training consists of 4 weeks of Pre-flight training at Fort Wolters and 34 weeks of Primary Flight Training, Advanced Contact and Tactics, and instrument training at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

To qualify, applicants for this program must: (1) Be a citizen of the United States. (2) Be a High School graduate or equivalent thereof. (3) Be not

less than 18 years of age nor have reached their 30th birthday. (4) Be between 5'5" and 6'4". (5) Weigh not more than 200 lbs. (6) Pass the required physical and mental tests. (7) Attain a standard score of 115 or higher on Aptitude Area GT test. (8) Have at least 2 years' service remaining at time of notice of selection. (Individuals who do not meet this requirement may amend, extend, or reenlist in order to obligate sufficient service). (9) Be willing to accept an appointment as a Warrant Officer for an indefinite term and serve on active duty for 36 months following successful completion of the flight training course. SEE YOU CAREER COUNSELOR FOR DETAILS NOW.



HAWK

TO KNOW THE ENEMY

The Brigade and Long Range Patrols

by SSG Edward Cannata

The fluid battlefronts of Vietnam warfare are hunting grounds for the US Army's heliborne Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrols who are employing essentially the same guerilla tactics for gathering information that the American Indians used against the US Cavalry in the Early West.

Dubbed LURPs from the phonetic initials of *Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrols*, these specialists in guerilla activities are inserted deep into enemy controlled sectors by helicopters to provide accurate high level intelligence reports on the enemy's location, movement, strength, vulnerability, and weaknesses. When their reconnaissance mission is completed,

they are extracted by helicopter for return to their home base for debriefing.

In shadowing the enemy throughout the battlefields of Vietnam, the LURPs are guided by what the Chinese philosopher-strategist Sun Tzu said many years ago: "If you know your enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the results of a hundred battles. If you know yourself, but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat."

To Major Donald R. Ruskauff, Commanding Officer of the Brigade's 281st Assault Helicopter Company at Nha Trang, the LURPs are professionals who expect and get professionalism from

the pilots and crews who fly them to and from their landing zones.

"The camaraderie that exists between pilot and recon team is based upon mutual trust in accumulated skills," noted Major Ruskauff. "The Lurps are keenly aware of the challenges our pilots face when they insert and extract during darkness, and sometimes under intense small arms and heavy automatic weapons fire from an enemy attack.

"The pilots are equally aware of the team's professionalism in hunting for those 'safe' areas where the enemy stages his striking forces; in studying his sabotage, espionage and terror techniques; in gathering terrain information and how the weather will affect covert and open operations; and in determining the logistical support available or potentially available to the enemy."

A study of a representative Lurp heliborne mission provides some insight into what a team does after it leaves the security of Brigade choppers.

The tranquility of a quiet Wednesday afternoon is jarred by a telephone call to Major Ruskauff from an S-3 requesting assistance in a scheduled Lurp mission. The message is brief. "We will conduct a briefing for a nighttime insertion within three days. Prepare your selected aircraft commander to move at that time for the operation." At this stage the mission area remains unidentified. The request alone is known.

The pilot makes a joint study

Only hours of relentless practice perfects that combat essential skill of rappelling from an airborne chopper.



with the patrol leader at the briefing. They make tentative selections for a landing zone and alternates in case the original plan is aborted by enemy fire. They then fly visual reconnaissance of the area and make their final selections. Returning to their base camp, the pilot and team leader brief the Lurps on the location of the objective area, alternate areas, radio frequencies and, if necessary, artillery support.

Two days later at dusk, the helicopter lifts the patrol out of a muddled meadow into a rainy sky.

The pilot maneuvers the Huey through one valley after another, turning left and right at though driving along a road. As the last light fades from the sky the aircraft inserts the team in a wide valley.

Satisfied by the silence, he flies to the base camp where he will monitor the patrol's progress in the Tactical Operations Center. Now the hard part starts—the long wait on call, not knowing how the patrol is progressing. Thinking back, the pilot recalls the moment when the team leaped from his

aircraft and ran through the tall elephant grass to the bordering tree line where they dropped to their knees and checked their stubby CAR-15s.

His last glance had been to count their number one last time. He hoped that he would find the same number when extraction time came.

When the helicopter whirled out of sight, the patrol moved out toward their objective—a village which was suspected of being a depot for caches of ammunition and food for enemy forces. They were to scout the village and avoid all contact with the enemy. Between them and the objective: an unyielding foe—the jungle. To a patrol, the jungle is a network of almost invisible paths and trails filled with jagged roots, stone outcroppings and dark ground that is a morass of decaying vegetable matter, emitting a waterlogged stench. Lining most of the jungle trails are bushes from which blood-sucking leeches drop onto the perspiring members, embedding themselves in clothes, hair and skin, while a variety of poisonous snakes await unwary feet.

They walk with weapons at ready, a tiring procedure, but a necessary one, for quick reaction to an ambush or sudden attack.

There are only two ways to move in the jungle and survive: quickly and quietly. Communication is done by hand signals, especially at night when sounds are amplified.

As the patrol crosses a swiftly moving stream, the point man on shore signals 'Enemy!' The recon men hug the bank of the stream and pull overhanging brush onto their half-submerged bodies as eight Viet Cong pass within 12 feet of them and head for the objective village.

While awaiting the point man's "All Clear," an explosion shatters the quiet. The team clambers over the bank and picks its way slowly

When terrain or time necessitate it, LURPS rappell into an LZ. (photo by IFF IO)





Communications are held to an absolute minimum.

along the well-worn path leading to the village.

Thirty meters from the village clearing looms the shattered, smoking structure of a bridge. The team moves catlike across the twisted steel beams and regroups all too aware of the unnatural quiet.

Then begins the long wait so essential to this type of patrol. Eyes and ears strain for the slightest betrayal of enemy presence in the silent village.

At dawn, the patrol thoroughly sweeps through the deserted row of thatched huts. The enemy is gone, but 80 bags of rice and 40 boxes of ammunition for automatic weapons indicate their return.

The reason for the destruction of the bridge remains unknown. But, the mission is accomplished for the Lurps. The enemy was seen, but not contacted. The village was

identified as a supply point and staging area for striking forces.

The radioman contacts base camp for extraction and the patrol heads downstream for the rendezvous.

Within an hour, the mission helicopter chugs into view and the pilot acknowledges the operator's "Pickup, Pickup, this is Lonesome. Do you read me?"

The pilot lowers the Huey so that the toes of the skids just touch the ground. Counting the heads, he smiles and pulls pitch, chuffing down the valley to the east where a cloud cover rests on the mountain peaks.

The men on the ground and the men in the air have both earned their bowl of rice. Another Lurp mission successful through teamwork between the men on the ground and men of the 1st Aviation Brigade.

The patrol pointman moves catlike across a shattered bridge.



SAFETY: MIDAIR!

by LTC Jack D. Peavy



Painting by PFC David S. Lewis, III.

It is impossible to describe the sensation created by that word "Mid-air" coming through the earphones in a crewman's helmet. Only those who have heard this word can really know what I mean. It is a nerve jangling expression portending utter chaos and destruction. It is tragedy. This Brigade has experienced two such catastrophes in the last 60 days. No attempt will be made here to discuss these two specific instances, but rather mid-air collisions will be discussed in general terms.

Great progress has been made in the field of aviation safety. Considerable time and money are expended every year in support of the Spectrometric Oil Analysis Program. A significant allotment of funds is also appropriated annually in support of the engine and parts analysis program. It is no wonder, with the development of all these sophisticated techniques, that significant advancements have been made in detecting incipient failures before they occur and in determining if an engine or part was a contributing factor in an accident that already had occurred. But how do these techniques apply to Mid-air accidents? Simple—they don't! In short, this the most tragic of all types of accidents can not be detected by analysis before it occurs, nor does extensive analysis reveal anything afterwards.

The tragic irony of the Mid-air is that it is one of the easiest types of accidents to avoid. What is

the secret ingredient to prevent this type of accident? ALERTNESS! The simple requirement to see and be seen. Here the key factor is a human failing. In a recent mid-air, eight sets of eyes failed to detect the presence of another aircraft. If only one man had seen the other craft and had given the alarm the accident might have been prevented. In the crowded skies of Vietnam, one would assume crew members would be particularly wary. But apparently complacency has crept in and created that sense of well-being which so often preceeds disaster. How many times have you scanned the skies while flying and not seen another craft in sight? Then, suddenly there was another aircraft. Where had it been before? Why had you failed to see it? In this business, the perfunctory glance simply is not sufficient. Scan the field of vision, return, and scan it again. Even with the relatively slow closure rate of helicopters you can be on top of that other bird before you know it.

Of course there is considerable hazard involved in all aircraft operations in Vietnam. Unfortunately and to a great extent needlessly, one of the greatest hazards is the potential for mid-air collisions. With this as a recognized fact, it remains for the pilot and crew to do all in their power to influence the situation when they can: to avoid preventable accidents, to remain constantly alert and insure others do the same. In short: *Look and Look again and LIVE!*

HAWK

HAWK HONEY



Baby Rae

*Visits the Brigade on tour of
Vietnam with "Little Chief and the Warriors" Band.*

Editorial:

A SECOND TOUR FOR HAWK

Three hundred and sixty-five days—the length of a tour in Vietnam (366 for those who were fortunate enough to be here February 29). In some ways it is the longest year in a man's life, in others the shortest. DEROS is a welcome word to almost every GI in Vietnam. It means home, family and a return to the good ole USA. *Hawk* magazine has passed its DEROS, has completed its first tour and has extended for a second. With this issue, Volume II has begun and a long hard year of trial and experimentation has come to an end. As could be expected, the results have been as diverse as the colors of the rainbow, but the general reaction has been favorable.

Paralleling the Brigade's rapid expansion since last September, *Hawk* has increased its circulation from 3,500 to 6,000 copies and has added four pages to its monthly format. To keep apace of the Brigade's increasing activities, *Hawk* has widened its scope of coverage and in May initiated a number of new columns.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chaplain (CPT)
Robert Orling
11th CAB

In the 1st Aviation Brigade, there are many people from various backgrounds with vastly differing personalities. But in at least one area of their lives they are all the same. All of them want happiness. On that quest for happiness there are four main types of people. They may be referred to as Mr. Griper, Mr. Groper, Mr. Grouper, and Mr. Gripper.

Mr. Griper is a chronic complainer. Nothing goes right for him. He is never satisfied. He gripes at the decisions of his CO (never when the "Old Man" is around, of course) and always thinks he could do better if he were in command. He gripes because he thinks he is working harder than anyone else, flying more hours than anyone else. Mr. Griper can't find any worthwhile purpose for, or enjoyment of, his sojourn in Vietnam, because he is too busy complaining. Mr. Griper does not thank God. He doesn't pray to God; he complains to God.

Mr. Groper has no plan or goal for his year in Vietnam. He is never happy with what he has; he is always looking for something he does not have. Fortunately much of his leisure time is scheduled for him by the Army, but when he has some free time he



While it is the Brigade command information publication, *Hawk* has also attempted to bring features of general interest to you, the men of the Brigade. For this reason, we need your help: your stories, photos and ideas. A magazine is only as good as the support that it receives. If you have gripes, let us hear them, and of course if you have a word of praise, it is always welcome.

Here at the threshold of *Hawk's* second year, we of the staff are faced with an opportunity to apply the lessons learned from the past to the future editions. We intend to do so.

says: "There is nothing to do." Mr. Groper is groping around for some meaning and purpose in his life. Mr. Groper does not thank God, nor does he pray to Him, for he has not found God.

Mr. Grouper doesn't think for himself, he follows the group. Back in the States Mr. Grouper was a happy, morally exemplary individual; he has convinced himself that in Vietnam he has good reasons for lowering his moral standards. If the group "gets high" during happy hour, so does Mr. Grouper. If the group communicates by means of swearing, so does Mr. Grouper. If the group is disrespectful of women and misuses them for self-satisfying sexual release, so does Mr. Grouper. If the group becomes a band of "goldbrickers," who do as little as possible "because of the heat," "because we're forced to be here," "because we'll only be here for one year," Mr. Grouper suddenly becomes lethargic. Mr. Grouper is too busy following the group, pleasing the Group, to thank God or even pray to Him.

Mr. Gripper grasps hold of faith in God, and that faith becomes the basis for his joyful philosophy of life. He has learned, in whatever state he finds himself, to be content. He grasps goals to accomplish in Vietnam. He has a positive attitude toward his tour of duty here. He has a basic concern for other people. Mr. Gripper is thankful for his faith in God. He is thankful that the love of God would not let him go—let him stray. Mr. Gripper is happy in Vietnam. Mr. Gripper is thankful in Vietnam. Mr. Gripper thanks God for all the blessings of every day, in Vietnam as well as at home.

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HAWK:

A year at a glance



Photo by CWO Jay G Goldsberry

1967 SEPTEMBER 1968

MISSION:

Build a Bridge

Long a lifeline between the Delta and Saigon, Route Four has become increasingly important each year as the allied war effort against the Viet Cong has escalated. When the V.C. knocked out the Route Four bridge across the Song Van Co Dong (River) recently at Ben Luc, this lifecord was severed. It was essential to the war effort and the local economies of the Long An and Delta Provinces that a passageway across the river be reestablished immediately. In order to build a bridge in record time, the 100th Engineer Company (Floating Bridge) called for outside help. Aid came in the form of a 273rd Heavy Helicopter Company "Superhook" CH-54A Crane from the 222nd Combat Support Aviation Battalion at Vung Tau.

The Engineers had assembled approximately half of the pontoons by the time the crane arrived. The Superhook immediately set to transporting the completed sections from the road near Ben Luc, where they were assembled, to the river. At the river, they set the pontoons into the water where push boats guided the floats into place.

Working with an average turn around time of one and a half minutes per trip, the crane easily out-distanced the engineers and set down periodically while the engineers caught up in their assembly work. During the mission, the Skycrane carried a total of 364 tons. Due to the close teamwork between the crane and engineers, the bridge was open to traffic in three days.

The old meets the new as "Superhook" 437 comes in to pick up another pontoon section.



The pontoon bridge is to replace the old Rt. 4 bridge across the Van Co Dong River knocked out by V.C.

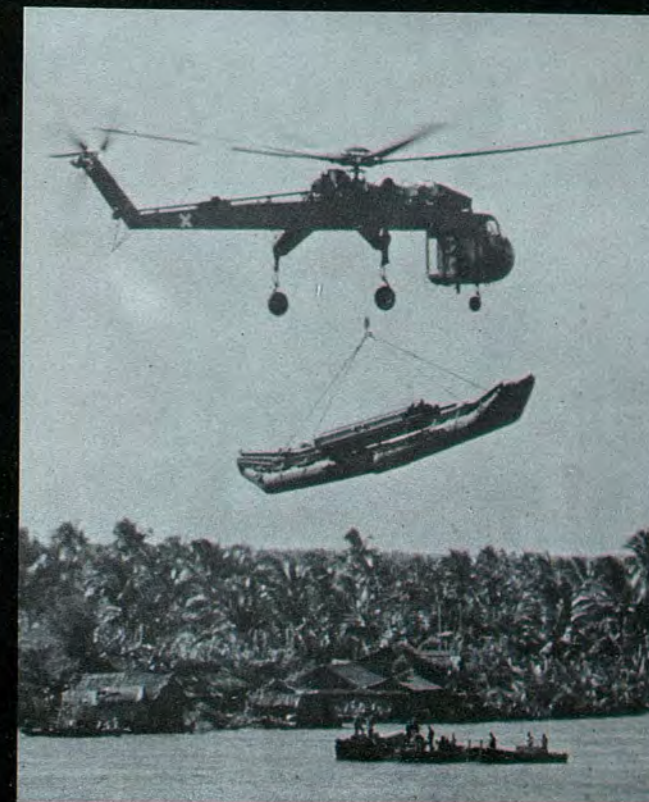


The legendary Skyhook of jokes and dreams has been realized in the CH-54 Skycrane.

Push boats move the pontoon sections into place for assembly.

Photos by
SGT Alan C. Garratt
222nd CSAB

HAWK



The crane brings a 9 ton pontoon section in for a splashdown.





On May 27, 1967, General Cao Van Vien, then Minister of Defense, Republic of South Vietnam, presented the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm to the 1st Aviation Brigade for outstanding service during the period March 1, 1966 to May 26, 1967. United States Army General Order Number 22 dated 24 May 1968 confirmed this award.

Personnel *presently assigned* to units which were assigned or attached to the Brigade during that period are authorized to wear the Cross of Gallantry on the right side of their Class A uniform while they are assigned to the Brigade. Members of units which were not assigned or attached to the Brigade during this period are not eligible. Check with your S-1 section as to eligibility. Let no person assume the privilege of wearing the award until he is certain

of his right.

Members of the Brigade should also note that the award was made to the unit, and not to individuals. Therefore, the award may only be worn while a member of the Brigade. Upon PCS, the award must be relinquished. The Cross of Gallantry may be worn out of country on leave and R & R.

During May 1968, the Vietnamese Government gave a unit second award Cross of Gallantry with Palm to the Brigade, and individual award to its commander Major General Robert R. Williams. The wearing of this second award *has not* yet been approved by Department of the Army and is not authorized. A wait of eight to twelve months is expected prior to its approval by DA.

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VIET NAM CÔNG HÒA

"The U.S. First Aviation Brigade, an outstanding collection of professional soldiers under the command of Brigadier General GEORGE P. SENEFF, has consistently shown a remarkable fighting spirit which, allied with its members' collective and individual gallantry and readiness to sacrifice, has been of great help to the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces throughout the nation's four Corps areas.

Since its inception for Vietnam duty on March 1st, 1966, the First Aviation Brigade has been instrumental in innumerable victories, especially in the course of the following operations:

- Long-Phi 511 (December 13—15th, 1966)
- Khe-Sanh (November 28th—December 25th, 1966)
- Cedar Falls (January 8—26th, 1967)
- Attleboro II (November 4—20th, 1966)
- Tea Pong III (December 17—20th, 1966) and
- Sam Houston (January 1—31st, 1967).

On these and other equally memorable occasions, most noticed was the role of the First Aviation Brigade in the course of Operation Long-Phi 999G, which was initiated last March 3rd, 1967 in Hoa-Binh, Vinh-Long province. In the course of this action, members of the brigade most courageously flew dozens of sorties in conditions of greatest risks for their personal safety, landed friendly troops amidst a rain of deadly anti-aircraft bullets, and supported elements of the 9th Vietnamese Infantry Division in their efforts to take the targets assigned to them. The First Aviation Brigade, on this occasion, must also be credited for the heavy losses suffered by the enemy, as may be seen shown on the following list:

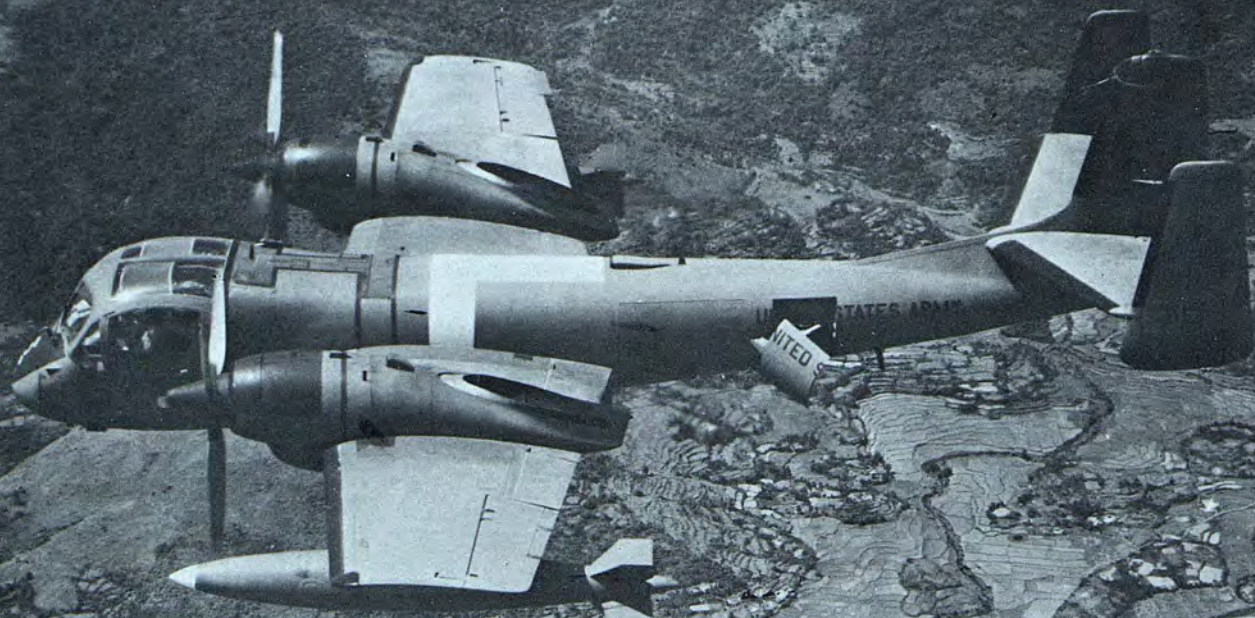
Enemy casualties: 142 dead by body count,
4 made prisoners.

Weapons captured: 13 crew-served weapons,
24 individual weapons and a large amount of
military gears and documents were also seized.

With the above feats of arms wholly or partly attributed to it, the First Aviation Brigade has contributed greatly to the many glorious victories gained by the Republic of Vietnam Forces and enhanced the great prestige of the United States fighting men."

“Born in Battle:” Perspective:

16th COMBAT AVIATION GROUP



To the uninitiated, the I Corps Tactical Zone of Vietnam is basically a Marine area of operation. But anyone who has been in Vietnam for a while knows different.

Fighting in the northernmost Corps of Vietnam are not only Marines, but elements of the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force. Not only United States forces are involved in the heavy fighting in I Corps, but forces from Korea and, of course, Vietnam.

I Corps, with some of the most rugged terrain in Vietnam, poses great problems for the ground troops in their desire to pursue the enemy to his most inaccessible positions. Mobility is the key, and as every combat unit knows, when mobility is needed, the 1st Aviation Brigade is there.

Supplying the mobility and direct air support needed by such units as the Americal and 2nd ARVN Divisions, is one of the Brigade's newest units, the 16th Combat Aviation Group.

Officially activated by USAR-

PAC in mid-December, 1967, the 16th Group held formal activation ceremonies on January 23, 1968, just one week before the Tet offensive exploded throughout Vietnam. The 16th Group, as their motto points out, was truly “Born in Battle.”

Equipped with almost every type of Army aircraft found in Vietnam, the 16th Group is composed of two combat aviation battalions, the 212th CAB and the 14th CAB.

The 212th Combat Aviation Battalion, with headquarters at Da Nang, is a unique battalion in the 1st Brigade. Comprised of the 245th and 131st Surveillance Airplane Companies, the 21st and 220th Reconnaissance Airplane Companies, the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company and the Corps Aviation Company, the Battalion has the standard mission of other aviation battalions, with one major exception—the Battalion does not have operational control over any of the assigned companies.

The 282nd AHC “Black Cats”, 21st RAC “Black Aces” and the 220th RAC “Cat Killers” are under the operational control of the I Corps Advisory Group. The Corps Aviation Company “Royal Coachmen” is under the operational control of the Provisional Corps, Vietnam. The 245th SAC “Red Eyes” is OPCON to the III Marine Amphibious Force and the 131st SAC “Night Hawks” is OPCON to MACV J-2.

The reason for this diversity of control becomes evident with the realization that each company has a particular skill to offer and each company is OPCON to a higher command which can best utilize its capabilities.

One of the Battalion's units, the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company, arrived in Vietnam in July, 1966, and was for a while the only Army Aviation unit stationed in I Corps.

The Company's two lift platoons now perform transportation, resupply and many other missions

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supporting the Army, Marines, Navy, ARVN and ROK forces.

The "Alley Cats", the gunship platoon of the 282nd, is in contact with the enemy nearly every day. Authorized six UH-1B's equipped with miniguns and rockets, and two B-models equipped with miniguns and a M-5 40 mm automatic grenade launcher, the "Alley Cats'" principal mission is to support the ARVN ground forces throughout I Corps.

The "Alley Cats" do not like to think of themselves as a separate combat entity from the troops on the ground, but rather as another arm available for the use of the ground commander.

"We are in constant communication with the men on the ground," First Lieutenant Robert Owsley, the gunship platoon leader, commented. "We like to think of ourselves as an extension of the ground forces. Actually, we are another group of highly mobile machine guns which can be placed anywhere in the battle area to give the ground commander the maximum effective firepower."

During the Tet Offensive, the "Alley Cats" primary mission was to provide cover for the Navy landing craft navigating the Perfume River to resupply the forces in Hue Citadel.

Although the "Alley Cat" B-model gunships carry only limited amounts of ammunition due to the lifting capability of the craft, the "Alley Cats" have made an impressive record. In slightly more than one year, the gunships of the 282nd have been credited with 1,559 enemy killed by air.

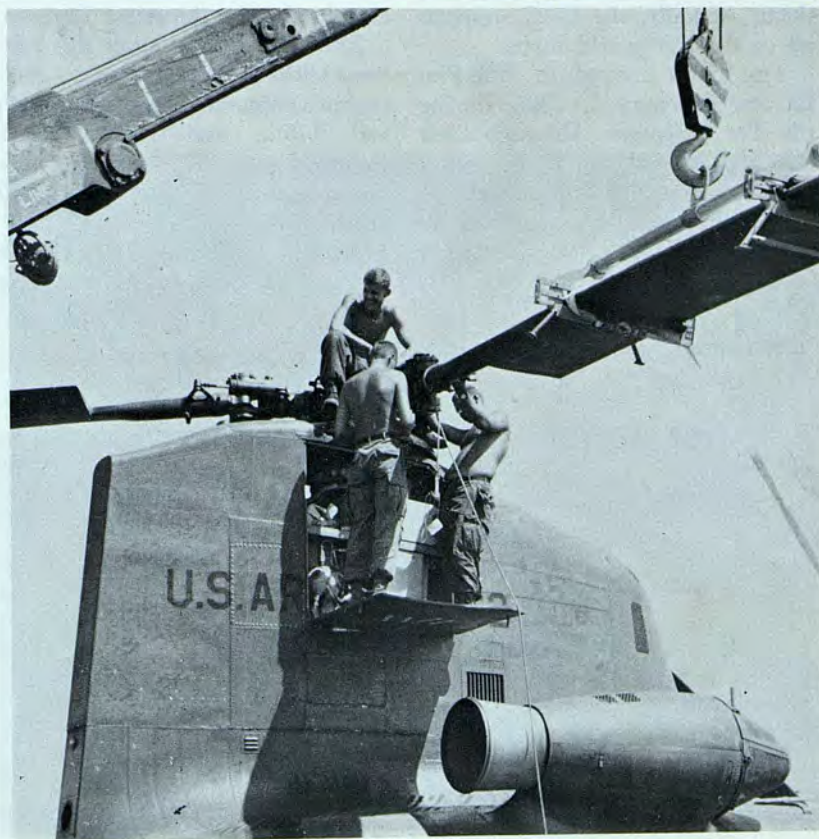
The 282nd often works with the other free world forces stationed in I Corps. Routine mission requirements call for Army gunships to work with Marine gunships on combat support mission, and the use of Army light-ships with Marine and Army gunships on fire-fly missions.

One mission for the 282nd called for extensive interservice—multinational cooperation. The 282nd CO was the air mission commander for a combat assault which inserted two battalions of ARVN infantrymen. The lifts were made using Army slicks and Marine CH-46's. The Army provided two light fire teams, plus aerial reconnaissance while a controller in an Air Force O-2 provided tactical air control. Prior to the insertion of troops, the Air Force prepped the area, followed by artillery from a Korean artillery unit. Due to the intensity of fire in the LZ, additional artillery was called in from ARVN, ROK and US Navy units. Operations such as this would be unusual anywhere else in Vietnam. But the 282nd and the 16th Group are frequently called upon to participate in equally complex operations.

Before the assault companies can engage the enemy, his exact position must be determined. This task is the mission of the two Surveillance Airplane Companies assigned to the 212th Battalion, the 131st stationed at Phu Bai, and the 245th at Da Nang.

The 131st SAC "Night Hawks" have the mission of maintaining surveillance over 23,000 square miles to keep an accurate count of enemy activity. The 131st keeps an eye on Charlie with the OV-1 "Mohawk". They fly both night and day (visual reconnaissance—VR) missions. The ships that fly the VR missions are the only Mohawks in Vietnam authorized to carry armament. Each ship is armed with twenty eight 2.75 inch rockets.

The information gathered by the "Night Hawks" is highlighted by their weekly intelligence sum-



...the 16th Group assists all

mary. The summary, a comprehensive report of the week's entire surveillance effort, is distributed to 56 addressees which include the Defense Intelligence Agency in Washington, D.C., and all major headquarters throughout Vietnam.

Complimenting the 131st in their surveillance efforts in I Corps is the 245th SAC. The "Red Eyes" are under the operational control of the Marines, but they also fly missions for the Americal Division, the 101st Air Cavalry, and other elements in the I Corps Tactical Zone.

The Mohawks of the 245th, dubbed "Silent Death" by enemy troops, fly an average of 900 hours a month.

Probably the most unique unit in the 16th Group is the Corps Aviation Company, stationed at Phu Bai. The mission of the Corps Aviation Company (CAC) is to support the joint Army-Marine Provisional Corps Headquarters and all the people who work for them. Actually, the CAC supports all of the free world forces.

The CAC arrived in Hue-Phu Bai on February 1, 1968, during the Tet Offensive. Although their primary mission is to fly headquarters personnel throughout I Corps, the Company has flown in and out of Khe San, A Shau Valley and Hue, and has per-

formed medevac, surveillance and reconnaissance missions.

The CAC is equipped with seven UH-1H "Hueys", two OH-6's and two U-21's.

Fifty miles southeast of Da Nang, on the coast of Vietnam, is Chu Lai, the headquarters of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, one of the hardest working battalions in the 1st Brigade.

The "Fighting 14th" was activated in the United States in 1964 and later deployed to Nha Trang. In 1966 the battalion moved to Phu Tai Valley and began its evolution into an all helicopter battalion.

In April 1967, the 14th moved to Chu Lai to support Task Force Oregon. The Task Force later became the Americal Division and the 14th remained in support of the newly formed division.

The mission of the 14th Battalion is to provide aircraft command and control, resupply and the mobility needed for combat assaults for the Americal Division.

The 14th accomplishes this mission with its three assault helicopter companies, the 71st, 174th and 176th, and two Chinook equipped assault support helicopter companies, the 132nd and 178th.

The motto of the 174th Assault Helicopter Company — *Nothing*

Impossible—exemplifies the spirit of the 14th Battalion. Last year the 174th, commanded by Major Glen Gibson, flew an average of more than 100 hours a day in support of the 11th Light Infantry Brigade of the Americal Division, and the 2nd ARVN Division.

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 1968, the "Dolphins" (slicks) and the "Sharks" (gunships) of the 174th flew 37,085 hours in 193,003 sorties and carried 242,612 troops in 576 combat assaults.

During the first day of the Tet Offensive, the "Shark" gunship platoon proved they are an extremely effective combat force. At 5:30 a.m. the "Sharks" lifted off from their helipad at Duc Pho and flew to Quang Ngai to stave off enemy troops who were threatening to overrun the base. By the end of the day, ARVN infantrymen and the "Shark" gunships had turned the tide of battle. The gunship platoon of the 174th was credited with 230 enemy troops killed by air.

Piloting a slick or a gunship in I Corps, Major Gibson feels, is more difficult than flying anywhere else in Vietnam. "Each day you are operating in a different terrain," the Major said. "One day you are working along a beach, the next day it's in the flat lands and the next day you are flying in the mountains. Of course, some times you work in all types of terrain in the same day."

"Working in different types of terrain not only means working in different altitudes," Major Gibson noted, "but also different air densities, which greatly affects the performance of your craft."

Finding a suitable landing zone in the heavily wooded mountains also poses a problem to the pilots of the lift ships. "Most of the LZ's we go into are about 2,000 to 3,500 feet above sea level. What makes it even more difficult is that they are usually single ship sized, and low air density requires a clear

The 174th AHC Shark gunships were key in the defence of Quang Nazi during Tet.



free world forces in I Corps...



A proud 16th CAG C&C "Slick" sits on the ramp at Marble Mountain ready for a mission.

avenue of approach," the Major stated.

After the troops are safely in the combat area, it is up to the Battalion's two Chinook equipped assault support helicopter companies to keep them supplied.

The 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company, stationed at Chu Lai, provides medium helicopter support to the Americal Division, primarily moving artillery and providing logistic support.

The 178th "Box Cars" arrived in Vietnam in April 1966, and moved to Chu Lai as a part of Task Force Oregon during Operation Wheeler-Wallowa.

The hard working "Box Cars" set a record envied by all Chinook companies in Vietnam. In February 1968, the "Box Cars" completed 20,000 flying hours in the CH-47A. Just a month and a half later they transitioned to B-model Chinooks. With the new CH-47B's the company has increased its maximum load per ship by 1,000 pounds.

During the last fiscal year, using A and B model Chinooks, the 178th carried a monthly average of 64,299 tons of cargo and 8,483 passengers in 1,022 hours for the Americal Division.

In the past year, the 178th has

often achieved a monthly availability rate of 80 to 90 per cent. About 60 per cent is average for a CH-47 company. "As long as we have the parts," Captain Sturdevant said, "We can keep an availability rate of more than 80 per cent."

The captain gives the credit for the high availability rate to the mechanics. "We are able to maintain such a high rate solely due to the talents of the 400th Transportation Corps Detachment," he said. "They can do things that other units don't even attempt. They have to because we have to commit whatever the Americal wants. When the Americal has to move, it has to move."

The "Box Cars" have to their credit the distinction of being the first unit to move a complete 155 mm howitzer battery in one lift which included a 13,000 pound howitzer plus ammunition.

Recovery of downed aircraft is another important mission accom-

plished by the powerful Chinooks of the 178th. Since the war in I Corps is fought by a multi-service, multi-nation team, the "Box Cars" do not limit their recovery work to just US Army aircraft. Although the majority of recovered aircraft are UH-1's, the "Box Cars" have also retrieved CV-2 "Caribous", A-1E "Skyraiders", O-1 "Bird Dogs" and OV-1 "Mohawks."

Using powerful Chinooks, deadly gunships, searching Mohawks, the reliable BirdDogs and the familiar Hueys, the officers and men of the 16th Combat Aviation Group pride themselves on their ability to get the job done, regardless of the difficulties and obstacles they face.

Supporting all services of the United States, Korean and Vietnamese forces in every possible way the 16th Combat Aviation Group demonstrates the courage, determination and skill that can be found only in a professional unit that was "Born in Battle."

Airlifting artillery is one of the main missions for the 132nd and 178th ASHCs.



THE PATHFINDERS

by CWO Jay Goldsberry

"Semper Primus"

Photo by CWO Jay G. Goldsberry.

Since World War II the Army has provided a team of experts to get airborne troops safely on the ground. Now, with the new airmobile concepts, the "Pathfinders" use their talents to coordinate helicopter operations throughout the Republic of Vietnam. The daily success of the 1st Aviation Brigade's operations is the direct result of the devotion and ability of specialists like the Pathfinders.

During WWII the need for communications and control assistance for para-drop operations was filled with the formation of airborne Pathfinder units. A platoon of Pathfinders was assigned to each airborne division. Their unique patch shows a torch lighting the way, attached to the wings of the airborne. Their motto, "*Semper Primus*" (always first), indicates the nature of their early operations. The first jumpers were always pathfinders equipped with radios, navigational aids, and tools; the guardians of the drop zone for the rest of the troops.

The men jumped with three parachutes because the weight of the equipment was too great for a safe landing. On the way down

the radio had to be detached and its rip cord pulled.

Upon landing, the pathfinders would set up the DZ for a safe and accurate jump for the bulk of the unit. They directed the aircraft with a ground to air radio and watched the weather conditions in the DZ.

In the mid-50's, the pathfinder teams were generally replaced by Air Force *Command and Control* Teams, while only a cadre for Army pathfinder training was retained at Fort Bragg, N.C.. With the advent of helicopter assault operations, the Army turned once again to the "torch and wing".

Ft. Benning, Ga., "the Home of the Infantry," is the training center for all of today's pathfinders. Students enter the five week course only after completing infantry AIT and jump school. Map reading, radio methods, DZ and LZ techniques, pathfinder operations and demolitions are studied. They jump with a T-10 parachute and learn aircraft rappelling. The new concepts of air-mobility and helicopter operations must also be covered. The fifth week brings a 36 hour problem which combines all

their training into a practical exercise.

Men may also become pathfinders by serving with a unit for six months and successfully completing the same battery of tests as school graduates.

The pathfinders primarily provide assistance to Army aircraft through operation of route navigational, air landing, and delivery facilities on or over any spot in Vietnam, friendly or enemy. He also assists the lifted unit in preparation and positioning of loads and then helps the lift elements in pick-up zones. He is assigned to a pathfinder detachment with one of the divisions or a separate brigade. The Brigade receives many pathfinders for assignment with the battalions. Each detachment is equipped with the latest tools, electronic and visual navigational aids, and like the infantrymen they support, their individual weapons.

If pathfinders are to precede the airmobile force they can be delivered by ground, sea, or air transportation. Here in Vietnam they usually land with the first assault element. Occasionally pathfinders will infiltrate into opera-

HAWK

tional areas with long range reconnaissance patrols. These are critical operations that must be carefully planned and executed if secrecy is to be maintained and the mission accomplished according to plan.

Once in the LZ area they guide subsequent lifts in with smoke and radios. Hazards are identified and the enemy situation closely monitored. Their work really begins after the troops have reached the last objective. A pick-up zone must be established for extraction of the weary troops. This could be as simple as spacing the unit into one ship *sticks* on an open paddy or it could require demolition of triple canopy jungle and electronic homing to find the opening. The men would have to be hoisted to safety with the pathfinders being the last ones out.

Most combat operations with pathfinder support have an element at the rear staging area. They call off gun-ship support, medevac



Pathfinders are in the first element in many combat assault missions.

(Photo by CWO Goldsberry)

missions, help re-arm and refuel in emergencies and keep the lift ships operating at maximum utilization and efficiency.

Pathfinders also conduct operations with fixed wing aircraft.

They establish *Low Level Extraction* sites in extremely dangerous tactical situations. These are areas where material can be delivered from an aircraft flying at an altitude of 15 feet or less by means of an extraction parachute attached to a pallet. Such sites mean food and ammo to troops in remote areas.

Perhaps the most important role that the pathfinders play is in connection with Chinook and Sky-crane cargo operations. Whether an artillery battery must be moved or a personnel carrier evacuated, the pathfinder is there to coordinate the lift. He will inspect the sling rigging, make the hook-up and direct the hovering giant to the precise spot for touchdown. The specialized techniques are in many cases so new that special training must be conducted by the detachment in country.

As the airmobile concept is refined and new equipment becomes available, the pathfinder will find his job becoming even more important. The Pathfinder is always up to the job. He is proud to be "Always First." He has the ability to do the best and the pride to settle for nothing less.

The movement of an entire artillery battery is a typical problem facing the pathfinder.

(Photo by 222nd CSAB IO)



ABOUT VIETNAM:

The Armed Forces



The people of Vietnam have a military tradition that can be traced back to the mists of antiquity. The Vietnamese have long prided themselves on the courage and fighting ability of their men. It is not difficult to understand how a cult of military heroes developed after centuries of constant warfare highlighted by numerous victories over the Chinese, Mongols, Chams and Khmers.

This military heritage was momentarily interrupted with the incursion of the French. Vietnamese served primarily as auxiliaries to the French Union forces throughout most of the long period of French Colonial rule. This subordinate status remained essentially unchanged until 1948, when Vietnamese pressure forced the French to alter their policy of not permitting independent indigenous forces by forming the first Vietnamese regular units in nearly two centuries. Even these units were lead by French officers, however.

French cadre were withdrawn after Vietnam became a republic in 1955, but advisors remained until 1957 when they were replaced by Americans.

By 1966, the military establishment composed about 3.6 per cent of the total population of Vietnam (this included the paramilitary as well as regular personnel).

The Armed Forces have the dual mission of defending the nation's sovereignty and eliminating the Communist insurgency within the national boundaries. The Army, the largest component of the armed forces, exerts the main effort in the offensive against the insurgents, while at the same time, it acts as a ready reserve in support of Regional and Popular Forces. The Army also participates in the overall reconstruction program.

Regional forces maintain public order and security in rural areas and assists other components of the armed forces in the reestablishment of internal security throughout Vietnam. They come under control of the Provincial Chiefs rather than directly under Army.

The Local Popular Front groups are recruited from the villages and hamlets in which they serve. They are trained at Province level and then returned to help the local authorities maintain public order and security. They also fill the role of Civil Defense against fire, flood and other natural disasters. They have some very limited police-powers.

The Civilian Irregular Defense Group has the responsibility of maintaining territorial border surveillance.

The general mission of the Navy

is similar to that of the U.S. Coast Guard. It provides security of sea approaches and protection of inland waterways, particularly in the Mekong Delta. It also furnishes water transportation for Army personnel and material. It maintains a marine group similar to that of the U.S. capable of conducting operations alone or in conjunction with Army forces.

The Air Force provides close air support, air strikes on enemy strong points, transport for ground forces and supplies, air lift for airborne troops, aerial reconnaissance, and search and rescue teams. The VNAF as it is often called, is continually expanding its capabilities from strategic bombing to helicopter insertions.

As in the United States, the President is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The Constitution of the Second Republic provides for a National Security Council to advise the President in this vital role, but the Council has not been activated as of yet. The two old cabinet posts of Minister of War and Reconstruction and Secretary of Defense have now been combined into the position of the Minister of National Defense and War Veterans. He is the chief advisor to the President on matters of national security. (Next month: The Services)

HAWK

THIS IS MR. FOD

AND.....



HE HATES HELICOPTERS

Sketch by Sp/4 Ray Kazura

