

HAWK

JUNE 1968



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1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

VOLUME 1

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HAWK

THIS MONTH



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2. Combat Art...p. 10



3. Delta Group...p. 13

Front Cover: "Pathfinders"—a sketch By John Kurtz.

Back Cover: The giant CH-54 "Skycranes" of the 222nd Combat Support Aviation Battalion are the backbone of heavy lift in the III Corps Tactical Zone.

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COMMANDING GENERAL

MG Robert R. Williams
DEPUTY BRIGADE COMMANDER COL. Jack W. Hemingway
DEPUTY BRIGADE COMMANDER FOR ADMINISTRATION

COL. Eugene B. Conrad

COMMANDER 12th COMBAT AVIATION GROUP

COL. Robert O. Lambert

COMMANDER 17th COMBAT AVIATION GROUP

COL. John A. Todd

COMMANDER 16th COMBAT AVIATION GROUP

COL. Daniel Gust

COMMANDER 164th COMBAT AVIATION GROUP

COL. Robert L. McDaniel

MAJ. J. Barry McDermott

1LT Robert J. Sinner

SP4 William J. Blakely

INFORMATION OFFICER

OFFICER IN CHARGE

EDITOR

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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



THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE 1ST Aviation Brigade's "Golden Hawks" was recently presented aviation's highest award.

Lieutenant General Bruce Palmer, Jr., Deputy Commanding General, United States Army, Vietnam, presented Major General Robert R. Williams the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism.

General Williams was commended for his voluntary actions above and beyond the call of duty during the recent "Tet" offensive. Taking to the air as soon as the savage fighting began, General Williams bolstered the confidence of his men, and provided guidance and direction to supporting aviation units.

The CG travelled throughout the country, landing day and night at installations under attack without heed of withering fire. Identifying critical problem areas, he took the necessary actions to apply the available resources in the most effective manner possible.

During the fierce fighting at Bien Hoa, General Williams was airborne through most of six nights monitoring and coordinating Army gunships. In the same way, he acted with speed and precision in defense of friendly forces throughout Vietnam. Through his insight and experience, General Williams was instrumental in preventing the V.C. offensive from overrunning friendly perimeter defenses.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AVIATION SAFETY officers are increasing. Eighty-five percent of the quotas for the Army Aviation Safety Course conducted at the University of Southern California have been allocated to company grade officers and warrant officers. Prerequisites for this training are outlined in DA Circular 350-45.

ON MAY 10 1968, THE 1ST AVIATION brigade welcomed its new Chief of Staff, Colonel Herb D. Prather. A native of Colorado, COL. Prather now makes his home in Tacoma, Washington. A 1961 graduate of the US Army War College, COL. Prather also has a Master's Degree from the George Washington University. He has served on the CINCPAC Staff, the Department of Army Staff and has had many troop command and staff assignment. Other assignments have been instructor positions with the Infantry School and the Command and General Staff College. As an Army Aviator, COL Prather is qualified in the 0-1, U-6A, U-8D, U-8F, T-41B, OH-13 and UH-1 aircraft.

IN A CEREMONY ON MARCH 23 OF THIS year, the 187th Assault Helicopter Company based at Tay Ninh, Viet Nam was redesignated the "Crusaders." On this their first "In-country Anniversary," the members of the 187th (formerly the Blackhawks) witnessed 36 aviators awarded medals ranging from the Distinguished Flying Cross to the Air Medal with "V" device. Attending were Colonel Nicolas Psaki, then 12th Combat Aviation Group Commander and Lieutenant Colonel Edgar Todd, Commander of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion. The ceremony was interrupted however, as the crews of the 187th scrambled to their aircraft to depart on a ready reaction combat assault. Following the successful completion of their mission, the "Crusaders" continued their ceremony and a "good time was had by all."

THE U.S. ARMY HAS JUST GIVEN BOEING Company a new contract for 33 additional CH-47C Chinook helicopters. Boeing's third generation of the battle-tested Chinook, the CH-47C, was accepted into the Army's inventory in March 1968. The CH-47C is powered by two Lycoming turbine engines, each developing 3,750 horsepower. Improved features of the 'C' model include improved dynamic system components and an operating gross weight capability of 44,800 pounds. Payload of the CH-47C on a 100 mile radius mission is 19,100 pounds. The speed has been increased from 110 knots in the 'A' model to 164 in the 'C', and fuel capacity has increased 84 per cent. (BOEING NEWS RELEASE)

YOU CAN NOW LISTEN TO THE 1ST Aviation Brigade in action every Sunday on AFVN's "Panorama" radio program. During "Panorama", broadcast at 00: 05 a.m. and 1: 05 p.m., 1st Brigade reporter Private Alex Trapp takes you throughout Vietnam to meet the men who carry out the missions of the 1st Aviation Brigade.

Editorial :

A FREE BALLOT

A FREE BALLOT—A FREE COUNTRY! Our nation was founded upon this precept. It is a creed that has permeated American thought and literature since the arrival of the first colonists to their new land. During the more than 300 years since then, it has been expressed in many ways and by many of our nation's leaders. The concept has been a fundamental factor in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, Amendments, and the developing governmental structure of the United States.

How would you express your thoughts on a creed that still kindles hope for a better life the world over? The Freedom Foundation, an independent nonprofit organization, dedicated to building an understanding of the spirit and philosophy of the Constitution and Bill of Rights wants your letter now as an entry in its Letter Awards Program. Top award is \$1,000, with fifty \$100 and fifty \$50 awards as well for men on active duty. Letters must not exceed 500 words, and must include the following printed or typed information; full name, rank, service number, military address, service, and home address. Mail your letter to: Freedoms Foundation, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 19481. Deadline is November 1, 1968.

The top winners (ARMY) will be invited to attend the Presidential Inauguration in Washington January 20, 1969 to be presented their awards.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chaplain (CPT) Donald Doggett
268TH CAB

James Allen has written a most thought provoking book entitled *As A Man Thinketh*. In this book, he dwells on the fact that purity of mind leads inevitably to purity of life.

He compares a man's mind to a garden. This garden may be intelligently cultivated or allowed to run wild; but whether cultivated or neglected, it must and will bring forth. If no useful seeds are put into it, then an abundance of useless weed seeds will fall therein and will continue to produce their own kind.

It is therefore most important that we place our sense of values on the highest things of life. For, after all, our thoughts today become our deeds of tomorrow. Let us then follow the words of our Lord when He said, "Set your affection, (your love, your thoughts) on things above!"

This does not mean that we go around in a "heavenly daze" all the time. Certainly not! But it does mean that a man's thoughts and a man's character can only manifest and discover itself through environment and circumstances, and the outer conditions of a person's life will always be found to be harmoniously related to his inner state, his thoughts.

Guard your thoughts carefully; THEY ARE YOU!

From the

CAREER COUNSELOR

An Army reenlistment option for overseas returnees, effective October 31, 1967, permits individuals completing a normal overseas tour to reenlist in the Regular Army for a 12 month stabilized tour for a CONUS station or area of choice provided a requirement exists within current priorities.

Personnel, grades E-1 through E-6 serving in all overseas areas and personnel in grades E-7 through E-9 serving in Vietnam may select the option. All eligible individuals, regardless of pay grade, years of service, or time remaining on present enlistment may take a "short discharge" for immediate reenlistment for this option.

The reenlistment term under the new option is a minimum of four years and the reenlistment must take place no earlier than 180 days before, nor later than 90 days after, leaving the overseas area. Personnel with four years or less service for pay purposes who complete a normal tour and are being returned to CONUS for immediate separation and who do not elect the option overseas may reenlist for this option after they arrive in CONUS or within three months after separation.

Individuals who completed a normal overseas tour and are reassigned in CONUS for a period of time prior to ETS will not be eligible for this option at ETS or after separation.

For further details—SEE YOUR UNIT CAREER COUNSELOR.

BUY GOODFLINCH*

UH-1 TAKE OFF WHEELS



When you can't get it off on guts alone.....

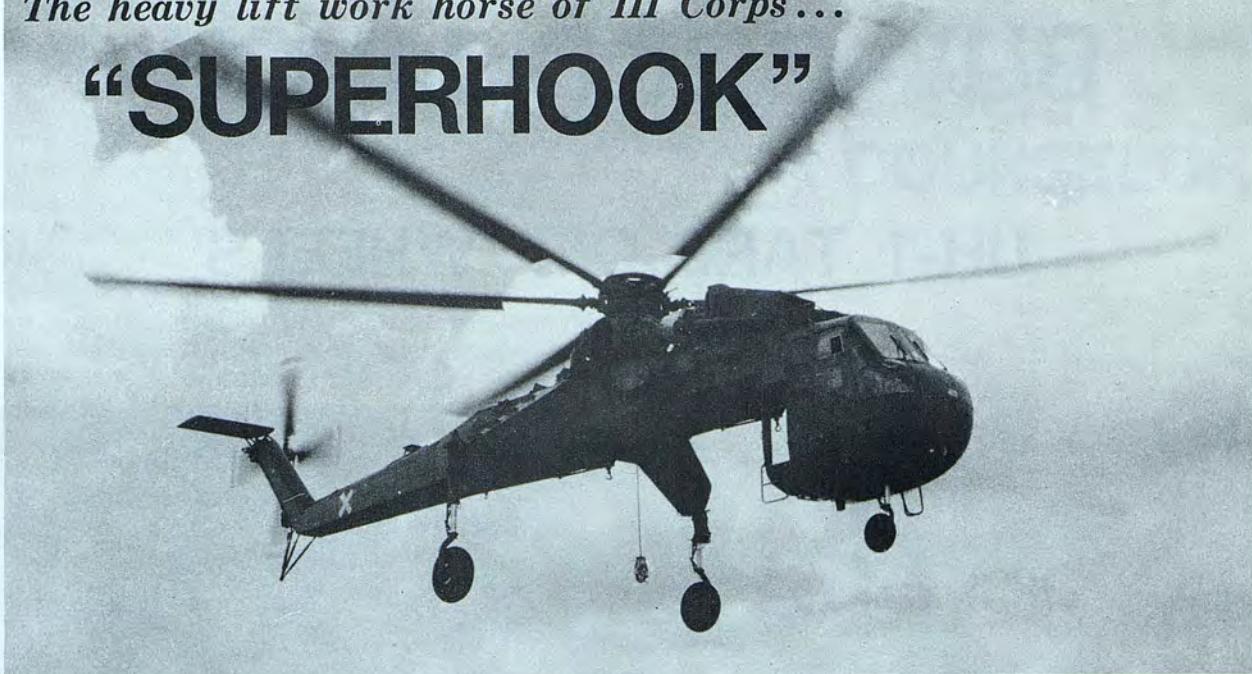
If you never want to bother with figuring your
weight and balance, fly with our take-off
wheels all of the time
.....they help a little.....

WHEN YOU CRASH.

Hawk does NOT indorse this product: The final choice belongs to the pilot.

The heavy lift work horse of III Corps...

“SUPERHOOK”



In some people's dictionaries, security is spelled *AIRCRAFT*—especially the direct support aircraft of the United States Army. Over the jungles and byways of South Vietnam, even the most big, some small; some long and

casual observer will notice the skies speckled with fixed and rotary wing aircraft—flying security.

These Army aircraft come in some short. Overshadowing all the others in the skies of III Corps Tactical Zone, with a remarkable resemblance to a Giant Praying Mantis, are the CH-54 “Superhook” skycranes of the 273rd Heavy Helicopter Company of the 1st Aviation Brigade, commanded by Major Gary R. Heffner.

Much has been written concerning the troops in the field, their air and artillery fire support, and the helicopter “slicks” and gunships, who pound the V.C. every day. But very little attention has been given to the silent partners—the men who fly the giant cranes. While seldom participating in fire fights, the Superhooks have the vital mission of resupplying the combat troops with the all necessary vehicles, ammo and heavy equipment. Skycranes carry engineer equipment, artillery, munitions, vehicles, and even other aircraft daily. Cranes are called upon to lift disabled Hueys, fixed wing craft, and even their junior heavy lift brothers—the Chinooks. It is a common sight to see a crane

Cleaning a giant crane is no small task.



...the helicopter with the power to lift three slicks...

where the action is, bringing vital equipment and evacuating damaged equipment.

The 273rd was activated in April 1967. It was deployed to Viet Nam in late December of the same year. Within seven days of its arrival, the company received its first operational mission. Since that time the cranes of the company have carried out their work tirelessly.

The question is inevitably asked—"But who lifts out the giant cranes when necessary?" The answer is simply—another crane. The downed craft is stripped and then lifted by a fellow "Superhook."

Cranes generally employ single point suspension when using the central hook to lift the entire load. If necessary, however, a four point load leveler system using four suspension cables for difficult jobs can be used. In this set-up there are four units, two on each side of the fuselage, fore and aft of the rotary mast centerline. Each unit has a cable wound on a spring-loaded drum which are operated separately by manipulating controls in-



The large 155 mm howitzer—a typical load for a crane.

side the cockpit.

The skycrane can lift 18,000 pounds dead weight—but precision cooperation is necessary between the pilots up front and the flight engineer in the tail in order to manipulate such loads smoothly.

The "Superhooks" of the 222nd Combat support Aviation Batta-

lion are constantly on the "go" lending a helping hook where needed. You never know when you may need a "Superhook" to bail you out. As Major Heffner said of his super unit: "It may look like a Praying Mantis but it lifts like a **SUPER HOOK!**"

Heavy cargo . . .



. . . no great problem—to giant "Superhooks."



HIGH FLIERS

This column is dedicated to those members of the First Aviation Brigade who deserve special recognition for distinguishing themselves both in action and in service. Beginning with this issue of *HAWK* all decorations of the rank of Legion of Merit and above dating from 6 March 1968 will be listed.

The Distinguished Service Cross—Awarded March 68

Major Raymond R. Rau

221st Reconnaissance Airplane Co.

The Silver Star

Awarded March 68

Captain Robert C. Stack, Jr.
Warrant Officer Ricky J. Gay
Warrant Officer Roger S. Cameron
Specialist Four Leo W. Letellier
Specialist Four William P. Hall
Major Jessie E. Stewart

191st Assault Helicopter Co.
118th Assault Helicopter Co.
334th Aviation Company
175th Assault Helicopter Co.
175th Assault Helicopter Co.
170th Assault Helicopter Co.

Awarded April 68

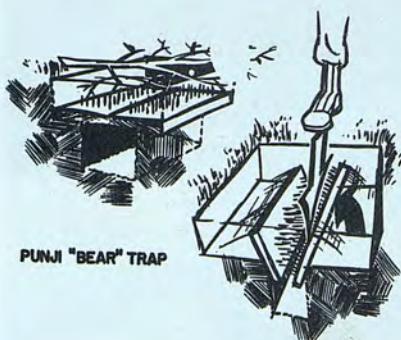
Specialist Four Frank E. Nusser
Specialist Four Thomas P. Sala
Specialist Five John A. Talbot
Specialist Four Jose Quintanilla
Major Alfred J. Lillen
Specialist Four Jack Peniska
Warrant Officer William T. Shipp
Warrant Officer Lester H. Howell

52nd Security Detachment
199th Reconnaissance Airplane Co.
114th Assault Helicopter Co.
189th Aviation Company.
7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry
190th Assault Helicopter Co.
190th Assault Helicopter Co.
190th Assault Helicopter Co.

The Legion of Merit—Awarded March 68

Major Carl H. MaNair, Jr.

121st Assault Helicopter Co.



PUNJI "BEAR" TRAP
PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE AGAINST SINGLE MAN. VICTIM WALKS ON TIP OF "T" - TRIPS BOARDS. BOARDS THEN PIVOT WOUNDING THE LEG ABOVE THE AREA OF THE BOOT. MAY BE FOUND PRIMARILY ALONG TRAILS, DIKES, AND AROUND HEAVILY FOLIAGED AREAS.

**E & E
TIP
VC
Booby
Trap**



GOOD NEWS FROM YOUR FRIENDLY SURGEON

All personnel will be delighted to learn that reimmunization requirements have recently been relaxed. This historic event was made official with the publication of AR40-562 dated 21 December 1967. Whereas prior to that date, the typhoid immunization had to be taken annually in Vietnam, the requirement now is that it be taken only every three years. Additionally, the yellow fever shot, formerly required every six years, is now required every ten years. And, to dispel any doubt that the Surgeon General has his heart in the right place, the typhus reimmunization has been altered from an annual requirement to none at all (except when directed by the area commander).

There is no change in the plague and cholera requirements. Sorry about that. They both must be taken every six months in Vietnam. Smallpox and influenza will continue to be administered once a year. Finally, tetanus, as in the past is required every six years. Everything must be current for R & R trips.

HAWK HONEY



Chris Noel

Photo by Bruno Bernard Ent.

ABOUT VIETNAM

THE INFANT NATION

Coming to power as Prime Minister of South Vietnam in 1954, Ngo Dinh Diem inherited what was generally regarded as a hopeless situation. Ravaged by 13 years of war and foreign occupation, Viet Nam had become a land divided geographically, ideologically, politically and economically with the 1954 Geneva settlement. With the withdrawal of the French, governmental authority seemed to dissolve, and in the north, Ho Chi Mihn's regime had already taken formal control of Hanoi.

Restoration of central power and authority was clearly the first necessary step to be taken. To accomplish this, Diem had to gain complete control over the military forces and the several independent private armies. Only after crushing an attempted coup d'etat (1954) and pitched battles in the streets of Saigon (1955) did he gain complete control over the military and police forces. After a brief challenge from the militant religious sects (the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai) he gained their backing, and incorporated many of their troops in his own forces. Then with the assistance afforded him by the United States under the Pentagonal Agreement of December 5, 1954, he began to consolidate his gains.

Once in actual authority, Diem began to lay the basis for orderly administration and establish the governmental institutions. Following a national referendum in October 1955, Diem replaced Emperor Bao Dai as the Chief of

State and proclaimed the Republic of Vietnam with himself as President.

By 1956, the "Diem Miracle" had begun to take shape. By March of that year a National Constituent Assembly was elected to draft a Constitution in the first national election based upon popular suffrage ever held in Vietnam. On October 26, the Assembly ratified a constitution closely modeled after those of the United States and the Phillipines, and so doing became the official National Assembly of South Vietnam. Diem won an overwhelming victory in the first Presidential election in Vietnamese history shortly thereafter.

The Communist Viet Minh which had been relatively inactive for the previous few years suddenly began an aggressive propaganda and sabotage campaign in 1955 as numerous agents began infiltrating across the 17th Parallel. These Viet Miinh guerillas constituted the bulk of the new Viet Cong forces which began expanding their terrorist activities in earnest. Viet Cong strength doubled in 1959, again in 1960 and a third time in 1961. By 1962 hard core Viet Cong troops numbered between 17,000 and 19,000.

Due to the desperate situation, President Diem found it necessary to proclaim a State of Emergency in October 1961 and to call for increased American economic and military assistance in December. Based on the findings of a mission

headed by General Maxwell Taylor, President John F. Kennedy ordered increased amounts of United States assistance to South Vietnam.

But the Viet Cong were not the only source of dissension in Vietnam. Soon after assuming the Presidency, Diem had installed members of his family in key positions in the government. Ngo Dinh Nhu, who became the President's chief adviser and his wife Madame Ngo Dinh Ngu, who became the official hostess for the bachelor president, were particularly influential.

Discontent changed to action. As early as 1960 there had been an abortive attempt at a coup. The chief motive of the rebels appears to have been to force reforms upon the administration, especially in the prosecution of the war. In Saigon, intellectuals, student associations, small opposition groups, and even members of the government itself criticized the President for not making more rapid strides toward Democracy. In the rural areas Diem had little if any support at all. The problems facing Diem's regime came to a climax in 1963 as clashes with Buddhists and students from Saigon University brought a United Nations fact finding mission into the country to investigate accusations of the government's violations of human rights.

At last the wave broke loose. The government's failure to cope with the mounting Buddhist crisis culmi-

nated in the sudden overthrow of the regime. At noon of November 1, 1963, elements of the Vietnamese army under the command of Major General Ton That Dihn seized the Presidential Palace. By 8 P.M. of the Second, Saigon Radio announced the downfall of the Diem regime was complete and a provisional 23 man council under the tutelage of Major General Duong Van Minh would begin framing a new constitution. The United States recognized the council as the official government four days later. In a second, this time bloodless, coup, on January 30, 1964 a new military revolutionary council under the leadership of Major General Nguyen Khanh overthrew the Minh junta.

By August General Khanh had consolidated power and had himself named President under a new constitution which gave him extraordinary emergency powers. The new constitution changed the governmental format from the European system of a strong Prime Minister and weak President to the American system of a strong President and no Prime Minister at all. But General Khanh was little more popular than his predecessor, and Buddhists and students, quick to react, began demonstrations and fighting in the streets. In response to the pressure, on August 24, 1964, General Khanh resigned for 'reasons of health', the constitution was withdrawn, and Nguyen Xuan Oanh, a civilian, became acting Prime Minister. But a week of absolute chaos quickly returned Khanh to power. After weathering another abortive coup, Khanh established a High National Council as a legislative body to guide the nation to civilian rule. After a four month rule by the ensuing unpopular civilian facade government led by Tran Van Huong, Khanh once again seized power outright and established the Armed Forces Council as the interrum government. In the next few



President Nguyen Van Thieu was instrumental in establishing the present stable government.

months, in spite of numerous outbreaks of violence, demonstrations, and attempted coups General Khanh kept a tight rein on power. As demonstrations began to take a definite anti-American character in early 1965, the White House ordered the 1,800 United States dependents in South Vietnam to return home.

In May, the Armed Forces Council dissolved itself, and for the first time a truly civilian government took office with Phan Huy Quat as Prime minister. But external pressure, this time from the nation's Catholic minority, and inability to work smoothly with the Chief of State forced the Prime Minister to step down.

Two days later, June, 14 a National Leadership Committee, frequently termed the Directorate, was formed under the chairmanship of Major General Nguyen Van Thieu. The Committee paved the way to a new "war cabinet" of 14 civilians and three military officers under Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky as Prime Minister.

The new Prime Minister began to direct his government slowly toward

a stable democratic system. American aid and guidance and riots in Saigon and Hue in March 1966 sped the process up. By early April 1966 Ky summoned a National Political Congress to recommend appropriate procedures for establishing an elected civil government. The conference announced a decree that general elections for a constituent assembly would be held in three to five months. The rest is recent and known history—the highly successful Assembly elections, and later the Presidential elections as well. The tiny Southeast Asian nation had found its way to a free and democratic system in spite of the obstacles placed before it by the dissident elements, the political factions, and of course the Viet Cong. U.S. aid held no little part in the final accomplishment, but it must not be forgotten that the government is first and foremost Vietnamese, run by Vietnamese. A long hard history, with a long hard fight remaining against the V.C., poverty, hunger, and ignorance, but Vietnam is now equipped with a system which makes success no longer a mere dream.



Painting by CPT Philip J. Hickok.

United States Army soldier-artists have been recording their impressions of the war in Vietnam for some time now. It was to be expected that Army Aviation which has played such a significant role in the war, would draw considerable attention from these artists—both the professional artist in uniform working under the Army's Chief of Military History and the duty soldier who paints as well as fights.

A large section of the combat art in a recent exhibition at Headquarters USARV was aviation oriented. On these pages are just a

few examples of aviation in art drawn from both the USARV exhibition and other collections. They range from the photolike sketch of UH-1D Huey "Slicks" landing into an LZ to a highly impressionistic version of an AH-1G HueyCobra in the attack.

Interpretations range as widely as the capabilities of the aircraft themselves. These artists have captured a certain flavor of Army aviation in Vietnam for future generations to learn from and appreciate as no other media could.



Painting by Robert Coleman.

ARMY AVIATION IN COMBAT ART



Painting by David Fairrington.



Sketch by John Kurtz.



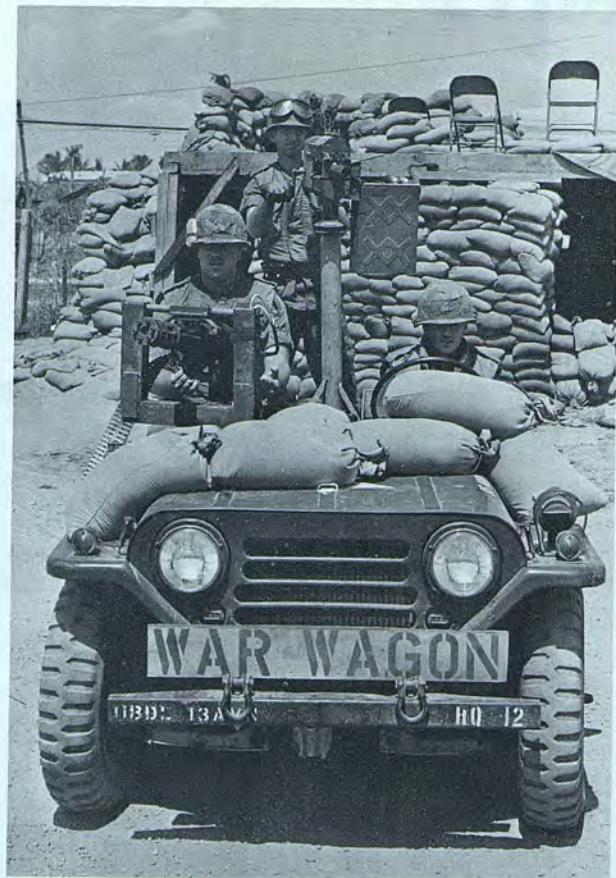
Painting by CPT Philip J. Hickok.

THE "WAR WAGON"—GUNSHIP ON WHEELS

In the motor pool of the 164th Combat Aviation (Delta) Group, strange things are happening. Three men dressed in combat gear with goggles on their steel pots emerge from the parts room. In front of them looms a canvas covered object—they remove the tarpaulin, unveiling—a jeep. But this is no ordinary 1/4 ton truck, and these men are preparing for no ordinary mission. Sandbags cover most of the O.D. surface and the rear seat has been removed. A platform has been installed in the seat's place. On it is mounted a Mark 18 Honeywell 40 mm rapid fire grenade launcher. A 7.62 mm. "Minigun" is mounted on the right dash. Hand grenades dangle from easily accessible places. M-79's, AR-15's and M-16's lie across the front seat with additional ammunition ready.

Painted boldly across the front are the words—"War Wagon." The "War Wagon," the brainchild of Warrant Officer Bernard F. Buono of Bunnell, Florida, is Can Tho's answer to Hollywood's "Rat

164th CAG's answer to "Rat Patrol"—the "War Wagon."



Patrol". Its mission is to beef up the airfield's perimeter defenses and deliver firepower that only the Honeywell can produce in such a short time. The "Wagon's" mobility enables it to be at any point on the perimeter for additional support once the alarm has been given. The men of Can Tho testify to the effectiveness of the "Wagon," having seen her in action during Tet. "War Wagon" has been so proficient in accomplishing her mission that reports state that the Viet Cong have offered a large reward for her destruction and the capture of "Mr. Boom-Boom," (Warrant Officer Buono) and his crew.

10% MONEY

While you are overseas, your money can earn 10 per cent interest for you. The Uniformed Services Savings Deposit Program pays 10 per cent interest, compounded quarterly, on money you deposit during your overseas tour. That's the highest rate of interest your money can earn in any savings program.

You may deposit any amount of your unallotted pay and allowances under the program. This includes basic pay, special pay, proficiency pay, incentive pay, Family Separation Allowance, hostile fire pay, and reenlistment bonus.

Deposits can be made by cash or allotment and will continue to draw interest up to 90 days after you return from overseas. All deposits plus interest will be paid to you immediately upon your written request at your port of debarkation, new duty station, or upon separation from active duty.

Your personal affairs or finance officer has full details.

FROM THE S-3 SHOP

Latest from the S-3 Shop—a project of general interest is currently being monitored by the Brigade S-3 section.

A new harness assembly and inertia reel, designed for UH-1 gunners and crew chiefs is being tested and evaluated by Brigade units. The device consists of a harness and inertia reel with ample cable to allow the crew member adequate movement inside the aircraft and even limited movement on the outside, a device to lock the cable in event the crew member should start to fall, and a quick release capability for emergency disconnect. The harness rig should provide a greater degree of safety than now available if adopted.

Brigade Perspective:

164th COMBAT AVIATION GROUP



Out of Laos and through Cambodia, the Mekong River flows 2,800 miles on its voyage to the sea. As it enters Vietnam, it splits and divides and splits again into countless thousands of miles of waterways and canals that crisscross the lowlands of the Mekong Delta.

The rich and fertile land of the Mekong Delta, well irrigated by the river, produces two-thirds of all food grown in Vietnam. Farmers in the area find the many canals and rivers an excellent means of transporting their crops to the market. Some people, however, find the waterways useful for a less peaceful purpose. Rather than carrying rice to market on their sampans, they carry ammunition, rifles and rockets which they use to attack the many ARVN outposts throughout the Delta.

A Viet Cong loads his sampan with mortar rounds and silently begins his journey down one of the canals. Soon, he hears the faint

drone of an airplane flying overhead. He chuckles to himself, feeling secure under the cover of darkness. Suddenly, night is transformed into day as another aircraft drops a flare directly over his sampan. Before he has time to react, Huey Cobras open fire with miniguns and rockets, ending another VC supply mission.

A group of Viet Cong sit around their camp fire discussing the small fixed wing airplane that circled their camp just a few hours before. Suddenly, artillery rounds start to explode near their camp. Running for cover, the VC wonder where the artillery is coming from. They know that they are many miles from any Allied outpost. Just as suddenly, the artillery stops and is replaced with the dreaded sound of Huey slicks and gunships. Only seconds later, the VC camp is sprayed with machinegun and rocket fire. The VC soldiers know that only minutes from now,

soldiers will be on the way to the base camp, giving them little chance for survival.

In each case the Viet Cong were defeated in the Mekong Delta by speed and mobility. In these examples, and many times every day, the speed and mobility needed to bring the war to Charlie's door is provided by the 164th "Delta" Combat Aviation Group.

In the first example, two OV-10 "Mohawks" of the 244th Surveillance Airplane Company teamed up with two Huey Cobras of the 235th Armed Helicopter Company in a night "Delta Falcon" operation designed to interdict Viet Cong movement and resupply missions. In the other example, B-Model Chinooks of the 271st Assault Support Helicopter Company sling loaded artillery within range of the suspected VC camp while slicks from one of the Group's four Assault Helicopter Companies airlifted troops from one of the three

ARVN Divisions in the Delta with their gunship platoon providing cover.

As the only large U.S. Army aviation unit in the Mekong Delta, the 164th Group is responsible for providing aviation support to the 7th, 9th, and 21st ARVN Divisions and elements of the U.S. Special Forces, plus a number of special missions unique to the IV Corps.

With headquarters in Can Tho, the 164th, commanded by COL. Robert L. McDaniel, is comprised of two battalions with a total of nine aviation companies. The 307th "Phantom" Combat Aviation Battalion is basically responsible for aerial observation and surveillance with two Reconnaissance Airplane Companies, a Surveillance Airplane Company and a Huey-Cobra-equipped Armed Helicopter Company. The older 13th "Guardian" Combat Aviation Battalion provides the Group's punch with four Assault Helicopter Companies, the 114th, 121st, 175th, and 336th, plus the 271st Assault Support Helicopter Com-

pany.

The 164th Group is in many ways a unique unit in Army Aviation. One reason for this is the terrain in which the Group operates. The IV Corps consists almost entirely of the low lying Mekong Delta with a slightly higher hill region along the western border. The Delta area, where there is no spot more than 10 feet above sea level, is interlaced with many canals and rivers. The innumerable rice paddys in some areas are flooded with as much as seven feet of water during the rainy season, which makes flying and landings hazardous, especially when the pilots believe the water to be only a foot or two deep.

The enemy is a different type of foe than the one in the Central Highlands. In the Delta area there are very few, if any, North Vietnamese Regular Army, but the enemy is the highly elusive indigent guerrilla.

Since the land is generally flat, with few large forests, but many narrow tree lines, the enemy is able to see incoming helicopters at a

distance, but the pilot has advantages also. Since the land is flat, it is possible to fly closer to the ground without necessary sudden changes in altitude.

Another problem confronts pilots during the month following the rice harvest. It is common practice for farmers to burn the remains of the rice stalks. When the choppers come in on an insertion, the rotor wash raises huge clouds of ash. These clouds of charcoal dust make it almost impossible to see more than a few feet, a challenge to even the most experienced pilot.

A unique feature of the 164th Group is the 235th Armed Helicopter Company "Delta Devils", the only all-HueyCobra company in Vietnam. Since the Cobra can fly farther and faster, with a much larger payload, than the B and C model Huey gunship, new tactics have become necessary.

With its HueyCobras the 235th has revolutionized the role of aviation direct fire support. Although the Cobras do provide cover for slicks on combat assaults, they often are called on to attack fixed targets.

"The mission of the 235th," said Major Lyle McCarty, 3rd platoon leader, "is to interdict supply lines and destroy the transportation means of the enemy."

One method employed by the 235th to accomplish this mission is an adaptation of the "hunter-killer" tactic designated the "Delta Falcon Operation." Prior to the Delta Falcon technique, first employed in early March, 1968, reconnaissance aircraft would search an area, and if enemy activity was suspected, Huey gunships would suppress the area as reaction force troops were inserted by slicks. Now, a heavy fire team of Cobras does its own reconnaissance, and consequently, it is able to attack an enemy position upon sighting. When needed, a ground troop reaction force is standing by at

V.C. weapons cache uncovered by the 235th A H C during Operation "Delta Falcon." Photo by Major Lyle McCarty.



company headquarters at Can Tho.

During a Delta Falcon operation a team of Huey Cobras searches the enemy's supply routes. "The routes the VC use have been there a long time," Major McCarty stated. "When we started the Delta Falcon operation, we decided to go after Charlie's ammunition and weapons. We feel we can hurt him a lot worse by hitting his supplies."

"First we make a few high passes," said Captain Roderic A. Storrs, a fire team leader with the 235th, "and then we get down on the deck. We get down in the trees and look for something, which isn't as easy as it sounds. Some of the VC huts are so well camouflaged that you can fly over them for 20 minutes without seeing them. But everytime we go out and look for something, we find it."

On one occasion, the Cobras uncovered one of the largest arms caches ever found in the Delta. Working with an O-1 "BirdDog" of the 221st Reconnaissance Airplane Company, the Cobras discovered a large convoy of enemy sampans hidden along the shore line of one of the main VC infiltration routes. "They seemed to be loaded with crates of all sizes," said Major McCarty, "if we didn't sink them, they could have played havoc with the local outposts."

The Cobras attacked the water-borne convoy and continued the attack as more sampans were detected. By the end of the day's operation, 30 VC resupply vessels had been sunk.

The following morning elements of the 21st ARVN Division were air lifted into the area. "This isn't unusual," the Major said. "Everytime we find something that looks good, we put the ground forces in." The soldiers discovered that some of the sampans had been emptied during the night and their contents neatly stacked on the bank



A 221 RAC "Shotgun" on the lookout for Charlie.

of the canal. The VC cargo was then airlifted to the base camp at Rach Gia.

In this combined air-ground reconnaissance, the VC had lost six 57 mm recoilless rifles, five 12.7 mm anti-aircraft weapons, five 82 mm and six 60 mm mortar tubes, enough Chineso "C" rations for a battalion sized mess and much ammunition.

"The main success of the Delta Falcon has been a credit to the Cobra pilots themselves to pick out the VC's meticulously camouflaged areas, supply routes and staging areas," said Captain Storrs.

The Delta Falcon Operation, very successful during daylight hours, does not cease when darkness falls over the Mekong Delta. Then, the deadly Cobras team up with the highly sophisticated twin-engine OV-10 "Mohawks" of the 244th "Delta Hawks" Surveillance Airplane Company to deny Charlie the sancturay of night.

In all of their various missions, the 244th has completed more than 2,000 sorties since arriving in Vietnam in September 1967. The unit has flown more than 6,500 hours, and at the Mohawks average speed, this represents a distance greater than 48 trips around the world.

While the Mohawks do a large part of the surveillance in the 164th Group, the 244th is not the only

unit that continuously searches for Charlie. There are two Reconnaissance Airplane Companies in the Delta probing for enemy activity in their old but reliable O-1 "BirdDogs," the 199th, stationed at Vinh Long, and the 221st at Soc Trang.

The 221st "Shotguns" have one platoon working out of Can Tho and another platoon at Bac Lieu. From these three air strips the "Shotguns" patrol the six southernmost provinces of the Mekong Delta.

"We are not as spectacular as some of the other units in the Group," said First Lieutenant James Keaveny, "but we feel we have an important job to do. Our company motto is "Eyes Over the Delta" and this is our mission, to provide visual reconnaissance in the Mekong Delta."

The company's BirdDogs, armed with marking rockets, usually do not work in groups, but generally do their reconnaissance work in single ship sorties. Each of the six provinces are divided into sectors and two Shotgun pilots work each sector daily in support of ground operations, serving as radio relay and adjusting artillery as well as providing reconnaissance.

"The altitude that the BirdDog pilot flies depends on the amount of ground fire he is receiving at the

“...Chinooks, BirdDogs, Mohawks, Cobras and the Hueys



Slicks from the 121st AHC “Soc Trang Tigers” successfully insert ARVN troops into an LZ.

time,” Lieutenant Keaveny laughed.

“On his reconnaissance patrols the pilot looks for any unusual movement, whether by foot or by sampan,” he stated. “He is also looking for changes in terrain. Since the pilot flies the same area every day, he can spot any change in the landscape. If he notices that a large amount of earth has been moved, this could mean several things. Upon closer reconnaissance, he might notice a few new graves or some new trench work.”

When the BirdDog pilot spots a potential target, he will radio the sector control and request gunships, artillery or air strikes, and “Every day requests for gunship assistance is made,” Lieutenant Keaveny added.

The BirdDog’s calls for gunship assistance are answered by a gun platoon of one of the four Assault Helicopter Companies of the 13th Battalion. Representative of the assault helicopter companies in the Delta is the 336th, the southernmost AHC in Vietnam.

“Our main mission,” said First Lieutenant Hubert Rechner, a UH-1D pilot with the 336th, “is to provide aviation support to the

operation, they work throughout the Corps.

Another mission of the 336th is inserting reaction forces into specified landing zones. “At least five days out of the week we have something going with the reaction forces,” the Lieutenant said.

The unit also supports the numerous Special Forces outposts throughout the Delta area.

The majority of the T-Birds’ work is providing cover for insertions. They recon the landing zone and provide suppressive fire as needed. The T-Birds also support outposts and provide airfield security at night.

The troops, when safely on the ground, must be resupplied by air as must the many ARVN outposts. The big job of resupply falls to the “Chinooks” of the 271st Assault Support Helicopter Company “Innkeepers,” the only all B-Model Chinook company in Vietnam.

The Innkeepers have Chinooks flying resupply missions everyday throughout the entire IV Corps. Though a large task, the mission

Huey Cobras search for Charlie in “Delta Falcon” Operations.



make the 164th a well integrated aviation team..."

is made easier by the great lifting ability of the CH-47B. The normal load on the new Chinook is 10,000 pounds, one ton more than the A-Model could lift. When an exceedingly heavy load has to be moved, the B-Model can be "stripped down," boosting its load capacity to 16,000 pounds.

On one occasion, a "stripped" Innkeeper Chinook airlifted a 15,000 pound bulldozer for the Special Forces, possibly the largest Chinook load ever carried in Vietnam.

Ships work daily for the IV Corps Senior Advisory Group resupplying outposts while the other ships work on divisional support, airlifting ammunition, troops, and 105 mm and 155 mm artillery pieces. This spring the Chinooks lifted 44,000 pounds of rice for Delta farmers so they could begin their planting.

The Innkeepers' other principle mission is recovery of downed aircraft. While the Chinooks are out flying resupply missions, one craft is kept on a 30 minute stand-



271st ASHC Chinooks are the backbone of the 164th CAG's cargo team.

by for immediate recovery response.

When a call for recovery is placed, a professional rigging team from the 611th Transportation Company at Vinh Long precedes the Chinook and prepares the downed craft to be lifted out.

If the craft is downed in a hot area, gunships will recon the area and prepare the way for the Chinook. "The gunships give us good cover," said Warrant Officer

Michael H. Bain, the assistant operations officer. "They work real close with the Chinooks. They seem to feel we are their big brother."

With the Chinooks flying resupply, combined with the Bird-Dogs and Mohawks providing reconnaissance and surveillance, and the Cobras and Hueys providing troop mobility and devastating firepower, the 164th Group is a well integrated combat aviation team and a formidable opponent for any foe.

Upon activation, the 164th Group inherited from its subordinate units an impressive history of achievements and honors. The Delta Group has conducted as many as 34 airmobile operations in one month.

The 13th Battalion received the first Valorous Unit Citation of the Vietnam conflict and was cited as the Outstanding Army Aviation Unit of 1965. Captain Jerome Daly, then a Chief Warrant Officer, of the 121st Assault Helicopter Company was selected the Army Aviation Association's Aviator of the year in 1967. The personal honors won by the men of the 164th make it one of the most highly decorated units in Vietnam.

But most important of all is the Group's willing attitude of "Here am I, send me."

Viking gunships patrol the many waterways of the Delta.



MOS Spotlight:

AVIONICS SPECIALIST

Avionics—the practical science of aviation electronics. Communications, navigation, weapon's systems, and even aircraft control systems, all rely upon the ability of the various avionics specialists to keep this all important equipment in top condition.

Avionics, a field understood by few, is a prime factor in the success and safety of many. When an aircraft's avionic equipment malfunctions a number of things can happen—the pilot may lose communication with other unit ships, the control tower, and artillery data processing centers. Guidance systems may fail to respond, navigation may become difficult or even impossible. In some of the more sophisticated craft, control of the craft itself may become threatened. The pilot might have to navigate by dead reckoning because the ship's radar, radios and guidance systems would not respond properly. In short, when a craft's avionic equipment malfunctions, whether the basic radar—radio set-up of the Huey models or the extremely complicated TACAN system of a U-21, the craft becomes more of a liability than an asset.

An outpost is under attack and needs support from helicopter gun ships—a radio call brings them. A unit in the field needs ammunition urgently and has wounded soldiers to evacuate—a radio call summons helicopters carrying tons

of ammunition and medevac ships for the wounded. The helicopter crews get, and deserve, much credit for this, but none of these life saving actions would be possible without one of the good avionics specialist working behind the scenes. Rapid communications, complex navigation, accurate firing systems are all taken for granted today by the average soldier. But without proper maintenance and repair of the delicate equipment that does these jobs aviation would soon be back to nape of the earth flying.

Night flying in particular is almost completely dependent upon electronic gear for guidance. Minus his instruments a pilot would risk his life and craft every time he took off after dusk.

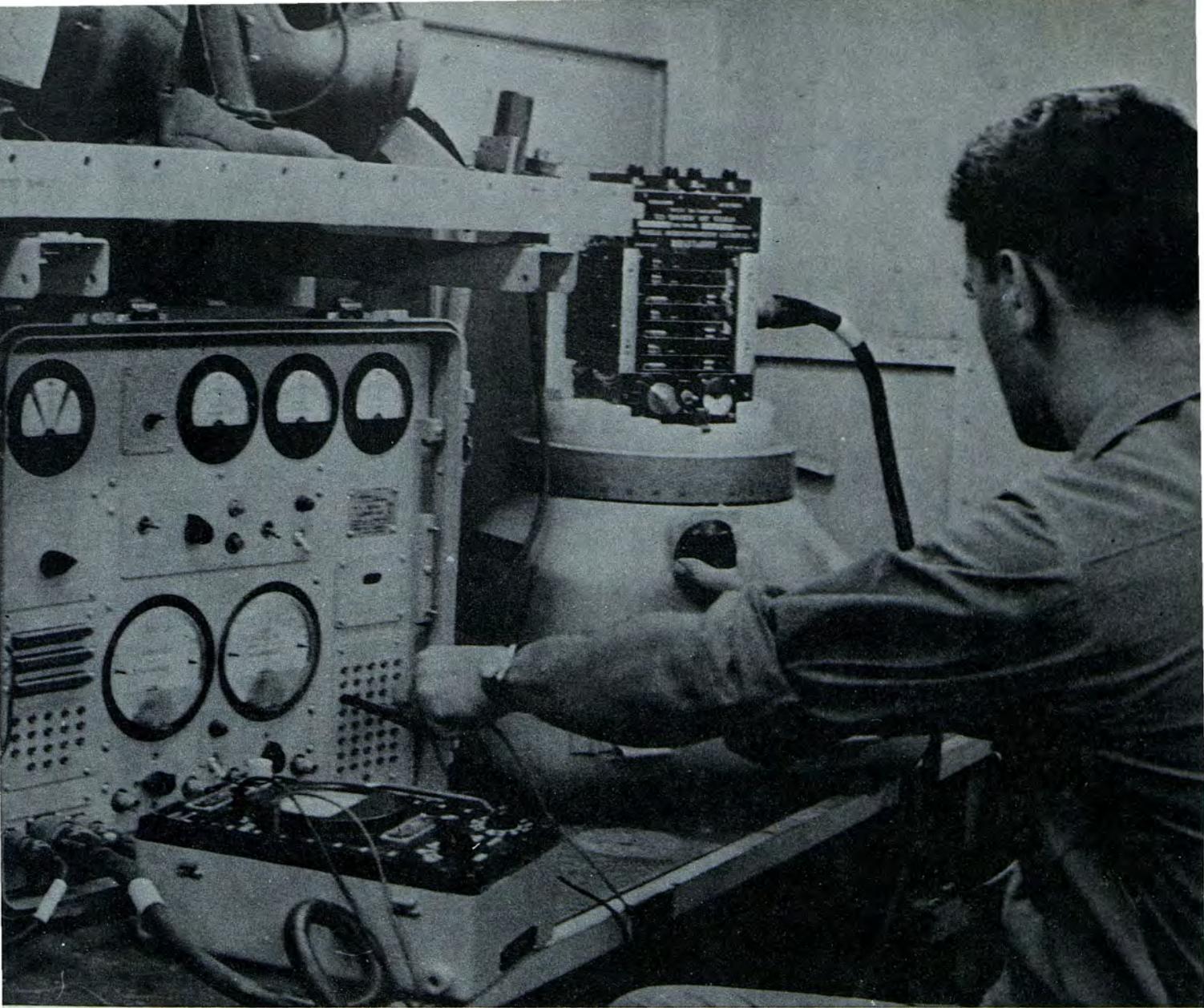
When a part of the avionic gear on an Army aircraft does not function properly, it is an avionics specialist who goes to the aircraft to determine what equipment is malfunctioning. He takes the defective piece of equipment out of the aircraft and replaces it immediately with a functional one to enable the craft to return to duty as quickly as possible. The malfunctioning part is then taken back to the shop for repair. Upon completion of repairs the part is put into stock for use once again.

The type of equipment involved determines which specialist will do the repair work, though there is a

definite overlap of fields. Radios and other items of communication equipment are the specialty of the Avionics Communication Equipment Repairman, while the Avionics Navigation Equipment Repairmen are responsible for the maintenance of all navigational aids. An example of the overlap between fields can be found in the maintenance of radio equipment which can be employed for both communications and navigational purposes. Then there is the Avionics Flight Control equipment repairman and the jack of all trades—the Avionics Mechanic. There are also numerous related fields in basic communications, electronics, computers, and radar.

Typical of the avionics sections found throughout the 1st Aviation Brigade, serving Cobras and Chinooks, Mohawks and Bird-dogs alike, are the avionics specialists of the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company and the Avionics Communications Equipment Repairmen of the 621st Transportation Corps Detachment, both stationed at Cu Chi.

The two units work together in a compact shop built around the shop vans which are filled with sensitive test equipment and tools needed to repair the various different types of electronic components. The shop operates on a 24 hour a day basis, and the specialists are ready, any time of day or night,



Avionics mechanic Specialist Four Thomas Hartman tests radio equipment from a CH-47 Chinook. Photo by CWO-2 Clyde Scott

to replace malfunctioning equipment as necessary.

"Southeast Asia is not the most ideal place on earth for avionics equipment," said Specialist Four Thomas G. Hartman, one of the avionics mechanics with the 242nd. During the dry season there is the heat and dust that could easily cause a radio malfunction. "The ever present dust manages to work its way into the most dust resistant places, where it causes short circuits and jams delicate gears. And

then during the wet season, the heat and high humidity are the enemy," continued Specialist Hartman. "The high humidity causes condensation to form, turning the dust of the dry season into effective electrical conductors that divert the electric current to places other than where it was intended. Needless to say, that puts another piece of equipment out of commission."

But in spite of weather or enemy activity, the avionics mechanics,

and communications, navigation and flight control equipment repairmen keep their equipment—be it radar, TACAN, VOR, DECCA or weapon's systems—in top operating condition.

Specialist Hartman, and numerous other avionics specialists like him throughout Vietnam do an important job in keeping the 1st Aviation Brigade's aircraft flying. The avionics specialist is a key man on the Army aviation team.

WHISKERS—

YOU DONE GOOD !

The "Stinger" gunship platoon of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, is making plans to honor a fallen comrade who was killed recently in action when a single enemy rocket struck the 116th's company area in Cu Chi.

Whiskers embodied in his canine torso, all the qualities so desired in a good soldier and in a good friend. Rarely did this wirehaired

Stinger miss a formation, always sitting, head erect, ears rigid, eyes to the front, until "At Ease" was given, when he would relax slightly, allowing his ears to lose their rigidity.

Whiskers was an honored guest at all parties, where the practice of giving "You Done Good" plaques to departing members originated. But, he was not willing to be a Stinger in name alone. Entirely on

his own, he would attach himself to some gunship, and fly as observer throughout the day's mission.

He continued to fly until shortly after "Operation Junction City," when for reasons of his own, Whiskers chose to discontinue flying. He did, however, maintain as his official duty, seeing the gunships off, and greeting them on their return.

By some system, known only to Whiskers, himself, he could distinguish by sound alone, the Stinger aircraft from any other helicopters that might be in the area. His daily greeting became a real morale builder for the crews and aviators. Upon returning to their base after a long day which had left them tired, hungry, and battle-weary, the men could always look forward to being welcomed by one of their own—Whiskers.

As time went on, repeated enemy mortar attacks made Whiskers extremely cautious, and at the start of a siren, he would dash to a bunker or into one of two spider holes that he had dug in the area.

Once during the Tet Offensive there was no siren. A single enemy rocket landed in the area, and the only appreciable damage that it did was to take the life of the Stinger's closest friend—Whiskers.

A small grave was dug for him with a view of the flight line. A marker was placed there that bore this brief inscription: "Whiskers—You Done Good!"

Whiskers' daily greeting was a real morale booster for the "Stingers".





Drawn by Specialist Four Ray Kazura

