

# HAWK

APRIL 1968

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# 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

# HAWK

APRIL 1968

VOLUME 1

NUMBER 8

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FRONT COVER: Photo by William J. Guffey. Elements of 9th Inf. Div. being inserted into an LZ by 'Slicks' of the 191st Assault Helicopter Co. (Boomerangs) of the 12th Group.

BACK COVER: Photo by SP/5 William J. Guffey

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# NEWSLETTER

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HAS approved Army production of the 250-mph "Cheyenne" helicopter.

The OK had been held up for some time due to Army-Air Force debate concerning who should own the controversial \$1 million chopper.

The Air Force claimed the Cheyenne's 27-foot wings, which can carry 2,000 pounds of munitions, made it a fixed-wing craft and therefore Air Force property.

With its 30 mm cannon, grenade launchers and a combination of miniguns, missiles and rockets, the Cheyenne will be able to serve as an escort ship as well as a tactical fire aircraft. (ARMY TIMES)



A NEW GUN SYSTEM, EXPECTED TO save the Army \$4 million a year in helicopter gunnery training costs, has been put into use at the Aviation Center at Ft. Rucker, Ala.

For training purposes only, a single .50 caliber rifle is installed on the HUEYCOBRA and the UH-1 to simulate the 7.62 machine guns and the 2.75-inch rocket pods.

Before the adoption of this system, pilots had to learn the art of firing rockets by practicing with the rockets themselves.

About 70 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition can be fired for the cost of only one rocket.

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THE FIRST PRODUCTION UNITS OF THE Army's new XM129 high speed grenade launcher have been delivered to the Army Weapons Command.

The XM129 fires four hundred and fifty 40 mm grenades per minute. The launcher is only 26.5 inches long, making it smaller and lighter than its predecessor. The new grenade launcher is electrically driven, cam operated and belt fed.

The XM129 will be a part of the beefed-up armament system on the Army's high performance combat helicopters due soon. (ARMY DIGEST)

CREW CHIEFS AND TECHNICAL INSPECTORS are needed to fill non-rated Warrant Officers positions in Army aviation maintenance. Qualified enlisted men can get a direct appointment to Warrant Officer.

Check AR 135-100 and DA circular 601-13 for the full details and qualifications. (ARMY DIGEST)

A NEW FAST-PACED SYSTEM FOR MAILING packages to or from APO' began early this year. The sender pays the regular parcel post rates plus \$2, and gets air mail all the way.

Parcels are limited to 30 pounds, and 60 inches in combined length and girth.

The new system is not only faster, but cheaper, too. For example, the ordinary air parcel post charge for a 15-pound package from Vietnam to Chicago is \$12.08. Using the new system, the cost is only \$4.30. (ARMY DIGEST)

ARMY HELICOPTERS HAVE ALWAYS been called upon to handle a variety of missions, and soon they can be equipped to handle another unusual task.

The Army Medical Service, with Air Force help, has developed a helicopter-mounted insecticide dispenser for use in Vietnam.

Tests show the sprayer to be effective in controlling mosquitoes in areas where malaria has been a problem.

The dispenser is scheduled to be in supply channels by the end of June. (ARMY DIGEST)



Editorial:

## DON'T MAIL AN ARSENAL

Plan on mailing home a carbine, bayonet, pistol, ammunition magazines, ammunition, or bandoliers? Don't! Detection equipment is now in use at Army postal units throughout the Republic of Vietnam as well as at the Military Airmail Facility in San Francisco, and customs officials are cracking down on violators.

Recently, for example, customs inspectors at San Francisco in one day discovered 38 packages mailed from Vietnam which contained contraband ranging from a live fragmentation grenade to the arsenal listed above, which was mailed from one single APO. It is for this reason that detection equipment will be used throughout the country here and suspicious packages will be opened to determine if contraband is enclosed.

Those that are caught face not only court martial action, but can also be prosecuted for violation of Federal postal and customs laws and for illegal possession of government property.

In addition to installing detection equipment, Army post offices will display posters and signs warning customers of the prohibition against mailing contraband; the penalties for violations, and the means used by the APO to discover violators.

The signs and the customs declarations completed by the sender will make it difficult for those apprehended to plead ignorance.



### *Chaplain's Corner*

*Chaplain (LTC) Ellison  
1st Aviation Brigade*

The congregation had finished singing the first hymn and the chaplain had arisen for the invocation when three people entered to worship. Each person was already preoccupied in his thoughts: a jalopy to work on, spring cleaning, and a teacher's lesson plan. Throughout the service, these three continued to work with their problems, and when they met following it, remarked: "You know, I didn't get a thing out of service today."

Worship is not just attending, it is participating. Worship is A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH GOD. It is emptying and cleansing one's mind of fear and worry. It is realigning one's life with the laws and principles of God. A CONSIDERATION OF THE SCRIPTURES. The Bible is not chiefly a record of the past; it tells of God and his dealings with man. GOD IS NOT DEAD; not past. God lives: God speaks through the Scriptures. A RESPONSE TO GOD'S INVITATION. "Many who have met God in public worship will say, come, let us go up to the place of worship, to the house of God our Father. And He will teach us of His ways. And we shall walk in His paths, for the Law shall go forth from Him and righteousness from those who worship in His house."

*from the*

## CAREER COUNSELOR

Each soldier, at the end of 21 months duty, is eligible for a bonus, if he re-ups, through the Variable Reenlistment Plan. Specialist 6 Ronald C. Wood found how profitable this reenlistment bonus can be.

He received the highest bonus ever paid in the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion: \$10,000, the maximum allowed by law.

Specialist Wood, a flight engineer with the 205th Assault Support Helicopter Company, entered the Army in December 1965, after a two and one half year break in service. He was graduated from the Multi Engine Tandem Rotor Helicopter Repair Course at Fort Eustis, Va., in July 1966. He arrived in Vietnam in June 1967.

When asked what he was going to do with his reenlistment bonus, Specialist Wood said, "The majority of it will be put into the Soldier's Saving Deposit Program and the rest will be used to clean up some current bills."

Much money is spent training personnel in critical MOS's requiring highly skilled individuals like Specialist Wood. Uncle Sam wants your skills and your experience, and he is willing to give you a good bonus to keep you in the Army.

Not every soldier qualifies for a \$10,000 bonus like Specialist Wood received, but if your ETS is approaching, it would be worth your while to see your career counselor and find out how profitable reenlistment could be for you.



# ABOUT VIETNAM:

## PROFILE OF AN ERA

The history of Vietnam and its people is one of a struggle for freedom; a struggle which continues today. Due to its fertile lands, which are some of the most productive in Asia, its rich natural resources, and accessibility to trade routes, the small nation has always been considered a prize by larger nations.

The earliest recorded history of Vietnam goes back to 213 B.C., when the forces of the Chinese Empire invaded what is now North Vietnam and began a slow but systematic advance to the south. The people, scattered and disorganized, could offer only token resistance, and by 186 A.D. the Chinese had completed their conquest. They gave the newly conquered people the name "Viet Nam," which means "the Southern People," and the land was called "Annam"—the Pacific South.

The Chinese rule lasted more than 750 years. During that period, the Vietnamese absorbed much of

the Chinese culture, an influence that is still evident. But they were restive under Chinese rule, and rebelled frequently. One of the most famous revolts was led by two sisters, Trung Trac and Trung Nhi. The fact that they succeeded in defeating the Chinese and ruled briefly is marked by anniversary celebrations to this day.

But independence was only temporary. The Chinese returned with a powerful army, led by one of their oldest and best generals, and regained control. It was not until 939, after several more unsuccessful attempts, that the Chinese were finally overthrown. Under the leadership of a Vietnamese general, Ngo Quyen, the Vietnamese defeated the Chinese forces and drove them back up north. For only a few years during the 15th century were the Chinese able to reoccupy the country. From then until the mid-19th century, Vietnam enjoyed virtual freedom and independence.

It was also during this period, from 1428-1865, that Vietnamese cultural life went through its most brilliant development. Under the dynasty founded by Emperor Le, a code of law was written and remained in effect until the late 19th century. Arts and crafts, agriculture, and commerce were encouraged and grew.

The country became strong enough to expand and push further south, conquering the once great kingdom of Champa. The Khmers, or Cambodians as they are now known, were also defeated and forced to retreat to their present boundaries. By 1780, the Vietnamese occupied all of the territory which today comprises Vietnam.

(Next month: French Rule)



## TET OFFENSIVE

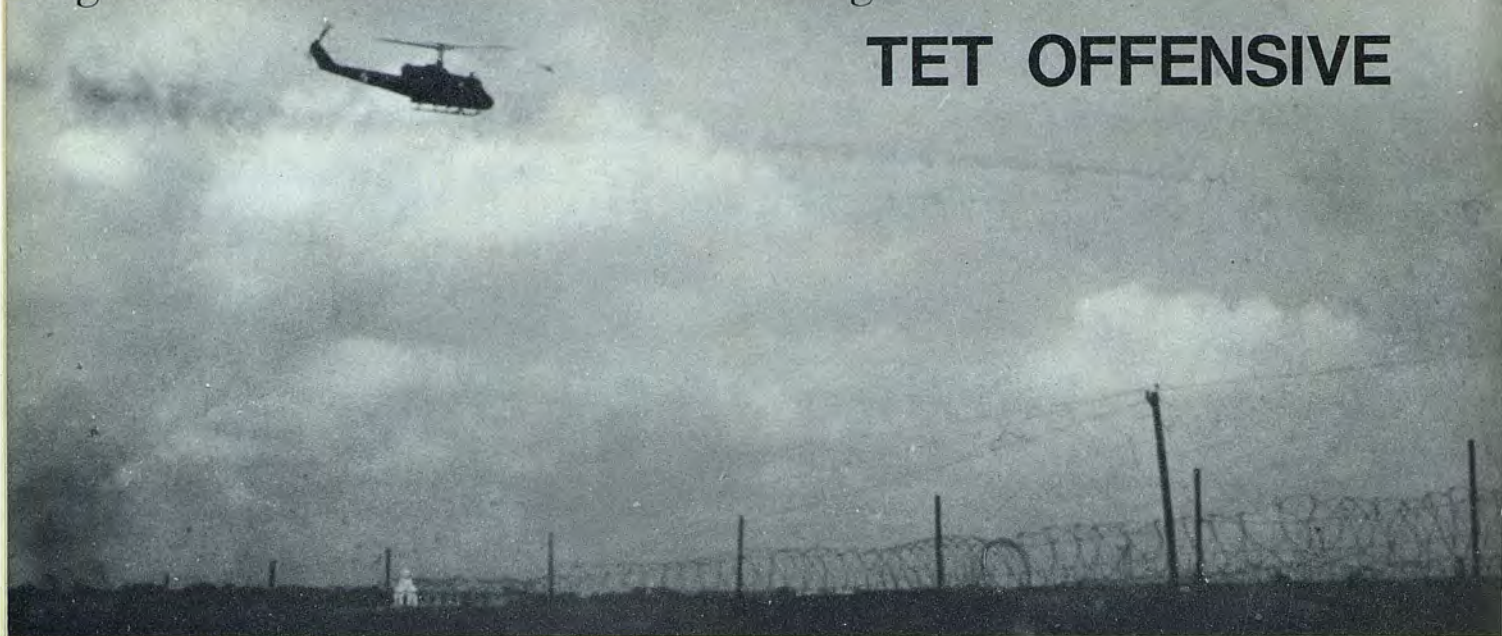


Photo by WO Beightol, 12th C.A.G.

It is virtually impossible to pay proper tribute to all the men and units of the 1st Aviation Brigade who played such vital roles in the quick reaction to the communist onslaught of the Tet Offensive. During that now famous offensive, the Brigade units dealt the Viet Cong a devastating blow throughout the length and breadth of Vietnam Units from the big CH54 Skycrane Heavy Helicopter Company to the little Birddog Reconnaissance Airplane Company responded to VC threats quickly with dramatic results. Typical of this rapid, efficient and spirited response throughout the Brigade was the action which took place in and around the Saigon-Long Binh area.

"At 0315 hours, January 31, I received a call from an aircraft requesting to know if we were secure," said Richard O. Stark, tower operator at Hotel 3, the Tan Son Nhut heliport. "I replied in the affirmative. Minutes later, when a C-47 departed from Tan Son Nhut and drew heavy ground fire, I realized that this was not nervous guards, but actual enemy contact."

Tan Son Nhut Air Base was under attack. Almost simultaneously, similar attacks were launched against military installations and

population centers throughout the Republic of Vietnam. These attacks marked an all-out communist offensive that continued throughout the Tet Holidays.

The attack on Tan Son Nhut was spearheaded by several Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army battalions. The VC-NVA elements attacked at eight strategic points around the air base.

"The extent of the enemy buildup was surprising," said Major Ronald K. Kollhoff, commander of the 4th Gunship Platoon of the 120th Assault Helicopter Company. "When it first started, we expected a small diversionary force—a suicide squad—to divert attention from an expected mortar attack. But after a while it became evident that the VC wanted to actually take Tan Son Nhut very badly."

Major Kollhoff's two "Razorback" fire teams—four gunships—pulled pitch within three minutes after the alert was given. They stayed in the air throughout the day, flying missions in support of the Vietnamese and United States forces defending the base from the ground. Major Kollhoff described flying a combat mission over Saigon as "quite an experience, and often frustrating.

"We flew one mission over an outlying village where VC activity had been reported," he continued, "The VC were there, all right—in a church full of women and children. The VC saw us and decided to leave, and came out of the church using women and children as shields. They would get 10 or 15 women and children grouped around them and then just walk away. All we could do was just sit and watch."

The fighting around Tan Son Nhut was heavy. "The fire directed toward the west end of the airfield was very intense," the major said. "It's a wonder that we didn't take more hits than we did."

"I received fire everywhere I turned," recalls Captain Chad C. Payne, a fire team leader and commander of Razorback 45. "My ships received seven hits, but this was nothing considering the amount of ground fire directed toward us."

Captain Payne was in the air for many hours, landing only long enough to rearm, refuel and take off again.

A tribute to the effectiveness of the gunships comes from Captain Nelson J. Garcia, commander of Advisory Team 100, Tan Son Nhut Sensitive Area. When he re-



ceived word that Tan Son Nhut was under attack, Captain Garcia took a patrol of 30 men out "and we ran head-on into one of the attack forces. There were approximately 350 men against my 30. We were certainly outnumbered," he said.

"Then those beautiful gunships came in and started circling the area," he continued. "I threw up a pocket flare to mark the position, and the gunship radioed that we were too close to the enemy force, to pull back some if possible. We pulled back and then he went in. He was right on target—he placed the rockets right in the middle of Charlie's position. Altogether, between us and the choppers, we killed over 200 enemy, and I'd estimate that 80 to 85% was attributable to the helicopters."

While the gunships were providing fire support for the fighting ground forces, CH-47 Chinooks and UH-1D "slicks" were bringing in needed reinforcements in troops and supplies. Three Chinooks of the Brigade's 147th Assault Support Helicopter Company "Hillclimbers" flew many troops of the 101st Airborne Division from Lai Khe to Tan Son Nhut.

*CWO Richard Inskeep.*

Photo by SP/5 Bill Guffey



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*VC stronghold smolders after gunships attack. Photo by SP/5 Bill Guffey*

Two of the ships continued to fly missions throughout the day, lifting a total of 452 passengers, 48 tons of supplies and ammunition and evacuating casualties in support of actions at Tan Son Nhut and Long Binh.

Another area of heavy activity was at the United States Embassy in Saigon. A pilot from the 191st Assault Helicopter Company was the first to land a chopper on the embassy during the heavy fighting, bringing ammunition and evacuating one wounded man.

Fighting had been raging all around the embassy when Chief Warrant Officer Richard Inskeep brought his UH-1D "Boomerang" slick onto the top of the building.

"We were receiving fire from all sides," said Mr. Inskeep. "We came in and set down once, but we couldn't see anybody around, so we lifted off again. Just as we lifted off, my gunner spotted someone in a hole (stairwell) in the roof, so we made a tight turn and came back onto the pad. The fire was so intense that the gunner and crew

chief had to pull the ammunition out of the ship and crawl across the roof as they pushed the ammunition in front of them. They pushed it down the hole and helped bring the wounded man back across the roof to the ship."

Watching from below was Mr. George Jacobson, Embassy Mission Coordinator. "He came in low and I thought for a minute he was going to hit the building," said Mr. Jacobson, "but at the last minute he pulled up and made a beautiful landing on the roof. Afterward, I realized that he did it on purpose to avoid the heavy fire. It was a tremendous job of airmanship."

One of the newer additions to the Brigade inventory of aircraft, the HueyCobra, proved itself to be accurate and hardhitting in sustained combat operations. "Playboy" Cobra gunships of the 334th Armed Helicopter Company flew missions in Bien Hoa, Long Binh and Saigon during the heavy enemy offensive.

When the sun rose on the first day of February, fighting was still





crews of the gunships and their accuracy in placing the fire on the enemy within 100 meters of friendly troops, and their courage in the face of the intense fire contributed to the defeat of the enemy force.

"If the gunships had not displayed such courage and determination in breaking the enemy attack," he added, "the possibility existed that the VC could have penetrated the Plantation complex."

In the fighting that raged throughout the Republic of Vietnam during the Tet Holidays, the teamwork demonstrated by the men of the Brigade was the crucial factor. While the gunships were the most obvious members in the limelight, the "slicks" and the Chinooks, which provided troop lift and supply, the Bird dogs and the Mohawks, which provided reconnaissance and surveillance, and most important of all: the entire personnel of the First Aviation Brigade, who provided the spirit, determination, and teamwork necessary made that victory possible.

Photo by SP/5 Bill Guffey  
*HueyCobras fire 2.75 inch rockets in defense of Bien Hoa.*

raging around the Bien Hoa Air Base. Small bands of VC had managed to penetrate the southeast and southwest areas of the airbase, and reaction forces were sent out to stop them.

334th Cobras were called into action to suppress the infiltrators. Air Force Lieutenant John A. Novac was in command of the ground security force sent to stop the VC.

"As the Cobras came to our support," he said, "they swept down about two feet over our heads and fired into the enemy position, knocking out the enemy that was pinning us down. The Cobras were the turning point in the enemy's penetration and destruction."

The VC attack at Long Binh was directed at the 12th Combat Aviation Group and II Field Force Vietnam. The enemy force was situated across Highway 1A, directing a heavy concentration of fire into the 12th Group and II Field Force compounds. The enemy was too close for artillery, so gunships were called in. The Cobras arrived in the area at the time the fighting was most intense.

Major John Anderson, 12th Group Assistant S-3, recalls the Battle: "As defined targets were obtained, the aircraft rolled in on them. With complete disregard for their own safety, the "Playboys" took the VC under fire. The professionalism displayed by all the

*A Gunship fires on VC attacking 12th Group Headquarters.*

Photo by WO Beightol, 12th CAG.





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*Barbara Rhoades*

*Photo by Ashley Famous Agency*





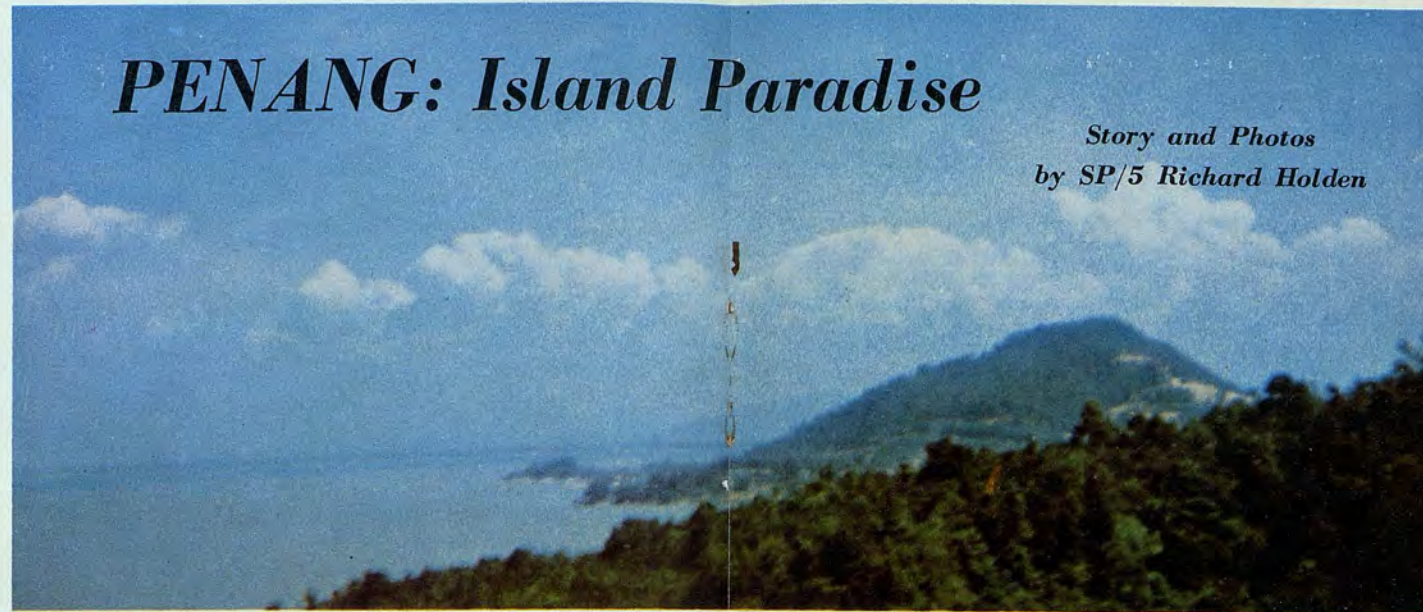
*A beautiful view from your hotel window.*

*The Siamese Temple that houses the Sleeping Buddha.*



## PENANG: Island Paradise

*Story and Photos  
by SP/5 Richard Holden*



Are you tired of the roar and the dust of a Chinook pulling pitch, and the incessant pounding of artillery and the clatter of heavy trucks that keep you awake all night?

Wouldn't you rather lie on the white, clean sands of a sunswept beach, beneath palm trees swaying gently in a tropical breeze, with the cool bluegreen waters of the Pacific Ocean slapping at your feet?

Then Penang is for you.

Situated on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula at the northern extremity of the straits of Malacca, the green jewel that is Penang offers a chance for *real* rest and relaxation.

Oblong in shape, the island stretches about 15 miles in length and nine miles in width, and is about five miles from the mainland of Mayala. It was unknown to the western world until Portuguese sailors discovered it about 300 years ago.

In 1786 the British took possession of the island during the reign of King George III, and named the principal city George Town. It was controlled by the East India Company until 1867 when Penang, along with Singapore and Malacca became known as the Straits Settlement, under direct British rule.

When war came to the Far East in 1941, Penang was occupied by the Japanese until 1945, when it was liberated by British forces. However, the occupation had the result of stimulating the desire for independence, and in 1946, Penang became a member of the Malayan Union, comprised of Penang and Malacca.

Now, along with Borneo, it is part of the Federation of Malaysia. The Federation today is a strong and democratic constitutional monarchy, with a population of more than 10 million.

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Penang is a remarkably clean island, and sandy tropical beaches abound, each a new and wonderful experience in itself. Hotels are reasonable, and most are air conditioned, although it is seldom hot, and the service is excellent. You can relax in a hotel lounge or by a pool or travel throughout the countryside. The cleanliness, quietness and overall tranquility that seems to pervade the island makes Penang an ideal spot to just sit back and relax.

At the same time, Penang's location, halfway between China and India, near Indonesia and southern Thailand, makes its port city of George Town one of the world's busiest trading centers. Penang is a free port, where a wide variety of items are available at a fraction of the price in the United States.

For the sightseer, Penang offers many beautiful sights. There is the Siamese Temple, where the second largest Sleeping Buddha in the world reclines; the magnificent ascent on the Penang Hill Railway, where a cable car draws you straight up to the top of the highest point in Penang; the Penang Botanical Gardens, where monkeys snatch bananas from your hands; the Snake Temple, where, if you care to, you can wear a viper in your hair; and peaceful fishing villages where one can just relax in the tranquility.

For the more active, Penang's recreational facilities are excellent. Golf, swimming, bowling, water skiing, deep sea fishing and horse racing are only a few of the ways to enjoy yourself.

For sightseeing, sports, shopping or just plain relaxing, Penang is a perfect place to spend an R and R.

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*A snake charmer displays his talents.*

*Lush vegetation line the many tranquil bays.*





## AMMUNITION SPECIALIST

*Photos by Empire News*

As the "slick" comes into the landing zone, it is greeted by heavy enemy fire. A bullet shatters the windshield, narrowly missing the pilot. The gunner and crew chief open up on the treeline with their M-60 machine guns, spraying the area with suppressive fire. The enemy guns become silent.

An infantry platoon, completely surrounded and pinned down by Viet Cong, radios for help. Help comes within minutes—a Huey gunship. The ship-circles, and spots Charlie. A hollowsounding explosion, a puff of smoke, and two glowing slivers of metal cut a trail toward their target. The infantry-

men are no longer pinned down.

An O-1 "Bird Dog" reconnaissance airplane flies almost leisurely above the jungles. Suddenly the small plane goes into a steep bank and comes around. The pilot has spotted enemy activity. He speaks briefly into the radio, and gunships are on the way. Making another pass over the enemy position, he fires one, then another of his target-marking rockets, pinpointing the enemy for the more lethal gunships.

Each of these aircraft was performing a different function under different circumstances. But all three had one thing in common—the success of their missions was dependent on the effectiveness of their firepower.

For every man who goes into combat and pulls the trigger, there are several behind the lines who contribute to his success. One of the most important of these is the ammunition specialist. He is responsible for making sure that the combatant gets enough of the right kind of ammunition, and that he gets it when and where he needs it most.

Each facet of his job requires a specialized skill. In order to insure that the proper amounts of ammunition get to where they are most needed, he must have clerical talents—he must know the channels of distribution, from supply points and depots to using points. He must also be familiar with the procedures involved in the sometime com-

*Ammo Specialist feeds 7.62 rounds into a minigun.*





## *“static electricity can arm the rockets”*

plicated paperwork necessary for ordering the ammunition.

Each type of ammunition is designed for a specific purpose. To make sure that the right kind of ammunition gets into the right weapon for the right purpose, the ammunition specialist must know all the characteristics and identifying markings of ammunition supplies such as color, code symbols, construction and type of explosive or chemical filler.

The amount of facts and figures he must have at his command for this purpose is appreciated when the scope of the ammunition he works with is considered. The ammunition specialist handles an average of ten basic types of ammunition, from the small 5.56 mm M-16 round to the 2.75 inch rocket. This variety of ammunition is broken down still further according to purpose—target marking, armor piercing, tracer, etc.—and each has an identifying mark that he must recognize at a glance.

Although the ammunition specialist doesn't encounter the same dangers as the man he supplies, by virtue of his job he is sitting on top of a “bomb” every workday. Without proper precautions, that bomb could easily go off.

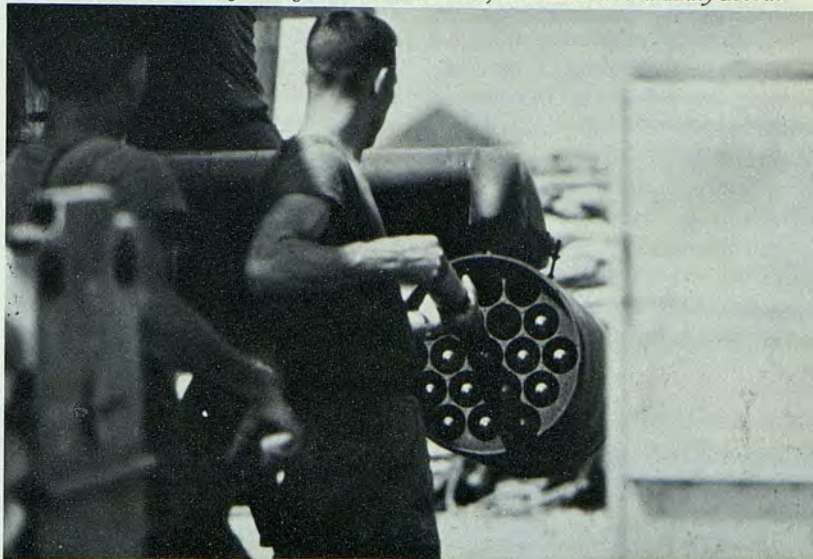
Specialist Four James B. Carroll, of the 334th Armed Helicopter Company at Bien Hoa, puts it simply: “Any kind of ammunition is dangerous if not handled properly.”

Specialist Four Michael J. Schultz, with the 191st Assault Helicopter Company at Bear Cat, is even more graphic. “Most of the exploding types of ammo are not armed until fired. But it doesn't take much to fire them. It takes 1/2 volt of static electricity to arm the rockets.”

The ammunition specialist must therefore know the safety precautions for each type of ammunition he handles. This includes proper methods of storage and layout.

The scope of his job makes the ammunition specialist an important part of the Army Aviation team in Vietnam.

*Firepower, in the form of 2.75 inch rockets, is loaded into a HueyCobra.*



*Rockets are stored in each ship's revetment to lower turn-around time.*





# IN I CORPS: 16th COMBAT AVIATION GROUP

Major General Robert R. Williams presided over the formal Activation Day Ceremonies of the new 16th Combat Aviation Group at Marble Mountain, Danang, January 23, 1967. The Group had been activated by USARPAC General Order number 131 dated December 14, 1967.

Before the assembled subordinate commanders of the units under the 16th Group, Colonel Daniel G. Gust accepted the colors of the new group.

With the activation of the 16th Group, the 1st Aviation Brigade has gained a major subordinate command in the I Corps Tactical Zone. The two battalions that presently comprise the 16th Group are the only Army aviation units in I Corps.

The 16th Group is composed of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion and the 212th Combat Support Aviation Battalion.

The 14th Battalion, located at Chu Lai, has the 71st, 174th, and

176th Assault Helicopter Companies and the 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company. Previously part of Task Force Oregon, the 14th now supports the Americal Division.

The 212th Battalion is the "eyes" of Army aviation in the I Corps. Formerly assigned to the 17th Group, the 212th consists of the 21st and 220th Reconnaissance Airplane Companies, the 131st and 245th Surveillance Airplane Companies plus the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company.

*Col. Gust, flanked by Gen. Williams and Col. Smith, comments on the new group . . . . as the color guard stands by.*





# IN IV CORPS: 164th COMBAT AVIATION GROUP

The 164th Combat Aviation Group joined the ranks of Army Aviation in a formal activation ceremony on February 1 of this year. The Group had been activated by USARPAC General Order number 311 dated December 14 1967.

The new group is essentially the old 13th Combat Aviation "Delta" Battalion with a new name. The new group is composed of the 13th Battalion and the 307th Combat Aviation Battalion, formerly the provisional Phantom Battalion.

Colonel Robert D. McDaniel, who has commanded the 13th Battalion since July 1967, assumed command of the new group.

In the new organization, the 13th Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James L. Tow, will move its headquarters to Vinh Long. The 307th will remain at Soc Trang, and the group headquarters will be at Can Tho.

With the establishment of the 164th, surveillance and target acquisition capabilities have been grouped under the Phantom Battalion and the assault and transport capabilities are under the 13th Battalion's control.

The 307th retains control of the 199th and 221st Reconnaissance Airplane Companies, the 244th Surveillance Airplane Company, and the 235th Huey Cobra equipped Armed Helicopter Company. The 13th Battalion consists of the 114th, 121st, 175th, and 336th Assault Helicopter Companies.

The new group will provide greater flexibility and capability for the entire Delta region.

Working closely together during the past months, the assault helicopters and reconnaissance airplanes have dealt the Viet Cong many damaging blows. Logging more than 90,000 flying hours in the last half of 1967, the Delta Battalion has sunk more than 3,000 sampans and destroyed more than 2,000 enemy structures. In support of Vietnamese forces, they

have airlifted an average of 60,000 troops each month on numerous operations in the IV Corps area.

"The chartering of the 164th Combat Aviation Group promises to better these achievements," stated Colonel McDaniel in his speech during the ceremonies. He then added, "I feel a certain sadness at turning over my command of the Delta Battalion, but I look forward to the challenges of commanding the 164th Aviation Group."

*General Williams pins the 164th Group crest on Col. McDaniel.*





*Denying the enemy a target...*

## **SMOKEY the BARON**

*Photos by SP/4 William Blakely*

The tension begins to show on the faces of the infantrymen as the slicks they are riding in approach the landing zone. As the helicopters make their approach, a single ship breaks off from the back of the formation. It passes the rest of the formation, and then slowly flies along the edge of the LZ, only a few feet from where Charlie might be hiding.

Suddenly, a huge cloud of white smoke belches from the exhaust of the low flying chopper. Within seconds, the LZ is obscured by a wall of smoke. Using the added seconds provided by the smoke screen, the ground commanders get their squads together and break for the tree line.

Still under the cover of the smoke, the slicks pull pitch and

leave the LZ, another insertion successfully, and safely, completed, thanks to "Smokey the Baron," the smoke ship of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion "Black Barons."

Designed to obstruct the enemy's vision, thereby denying him a target, smoke ships are relative newcomers to the skies of Vietnam.

Operational since August 1967, Smokey the Baron was one of the first smoke ships in Vietnam. "Other units had a smoke ship before we did," said Captain Matthew R. Kambron, one of the originators of Smokey the Baron, "but we were the first unit to implement it to the extent we do."

When Smokey the Baron was in the novelty stage, the infantry was hesitant to use the smoke screen,

calling on Smokey only in an emergency. "At first, we had to beg, I mean really beg, to use Smokey," said Specialist 5 Paul Geving, Smokey's door gunner, "but now they won't make an operation without us."

Smokey the Baron now flies every day, totaling more than 100 hours a month providing cover for airmobile assaults by the 25th Infantry Division, 199th Light Infantry Brigade, Vietnamese forces and med-evacs.

"On an insertion, one layer of smoke does it," Captain Kambron said, "but on an extraction, we try put to a horseshoe seal around the troops."

Although the smoke ship is a rare breed of Huey gunship, the mechanics involved are relatively

*Troop-carrying slicks, silhouetted against dust raised by artillery, prepare to set down behind Smokey's white wall of smoke.*







*Skimming a few feet off the ground, Smokey starts his run.*

simple. A circular tube with many small jets is fitted around the exhaust "stovepipe." Two fuel tanks, containing a total of more than 100 gallons of smoke oil, are fitted inside the chopper. The smoke oil is comparable to a #10 weight motor oil.

When smoke is desired, the oil is pumped to the jets and sprayed into the exhaust. The intense heat of the exhaust vaporizes the oil creating billowing clouds of smoke.

The total weight of the smoke oil and the generator is nearly 1,000

pounds, and good for eight minutes of continuous smoke.

Since Smokey the Baron has been flying, there have been very few people injured, and two of these injuries happened on the same day.

"I remember that day vividly," said Warrant Officer Russell Sanderson. "I was the aircraft commander and my pilot was Lieutenant Colonel Irwin K. Cockett, our battalion executive officer.

"We were going in to lay down a smoke cover about 10 miles north east of Fire Support Base 'Bert.' We made one run and received no fire. The next time, mortars and machine guns opened up on us.

"Colonel Cockett had the stick and did an amazing job. He laid down a smoke screen while the enemy was firing on us from about 25 meters away.

"It was during this run that the crew chief got hit in the leg and Colonel Cockett got hit in the foot. I took control of the ship and flew to 'Bert' while the Colonel put a tourniquet on his leg."

For his action that day, completing his smoke run through heavy enemy fire, Colonel Cockett was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Even though flying Smokey the Baron gets a bit dangerous at times, its pilots and crew are intensely proud of the ship and the job it does.

And the infantry is glad to have Smokey the Baron around when they need it.

*SP/5 Philip Busby fills the smoke oil tanks . . .*



HAWK

*. . . as SP/5 Paul Geving works on the smoke generator.*





*In an unarmed chopper,*

## A VICTORY OVER CHARLIE

During the Tet offensive, many pilots, crew chiefs and door gunners risked their lives to hand the enemy a stunning defeat. But one pilot, while not on a combat mission and not using his weapons, won a victory that saved the lives of 200 Vietnamese children.

When the Viet Cong attacked Vinh Long, Captain Robin Miller, a UH-1D pilot of the 114th Assault Helicopter Company, realized that not only the Army complex was in danger. Nearby was a Catholic convent and orphanage.

Captain Miller tried to reach the orphanage to evacuate the seven Irish nuns and 200 children, but heavy enemy gunfire around the orphanage walls forced him back.

Circling the area, Captain Miller called on the 114th gunship platoon, the "Cobras," to lay down

suppressive fire so he could get to the orphanage.

Responding instantly, the gunships subdued the enemy ground fire enough for the Captain to reach the surrounded orphanage.

Landing on the tennis court, Captain Miller instructed the nuns to get ready to evacuate. Considering the intensity of the enemy attack, the Captain told his crew chief and door gunner to dismount their machine guns and remain in the orphanage, just in case the Viet Cong breached the walls before the evacuation was completed.

With the gunships circling the orphanage walls, Captain Miller began evacuating the children in his unarmed chopper.

In trip after trip the Captain managed to evacuate, without casualties, all 200 children, seven

nuns and three pet dogs. The nuns had told the Captain they would not leave the orphanage unless the dogs came along too.

Minutes after the last lift was completed, the gunships reported that the Viet Cong had broken through the walls and were in control of the now empty orphanage.

Dramatic rescues seem to be a common occurrence to Captain Miller.

Barely three weeks before the Tet offensive, he was flying along a canal in the Mekong Delta when he spotted two VC sampans. Accurate machine gun fire wounded a man in one sampan and caused another, who had been covered in the bottom of the craft, to stand up and frantically wave at Miller's gunship. Another chopper opened up on the man who ran for cover in the thick foliage on the canal bank.

Captain Miller realized that the man must be an American soldier and immediately ceased fire to keep from injuring him.

The Captain repeatedly hovered low over the bushes in an effort to blow them aside so he could spot the individual, even though he knew there was a wounded VC in the same clump of bushes.

As Captain Miller searched the area, the American soldier realized that the chopper was looking for him and he ran from his hiding position.

The rescued soldier, a private from the 9th Infantry Division, reported the presence of several more Viet Cong within a short distance of where he had been rescued.

All of the VC positions were well within small arms range at the time Captain Miller searched for the captured soldier.

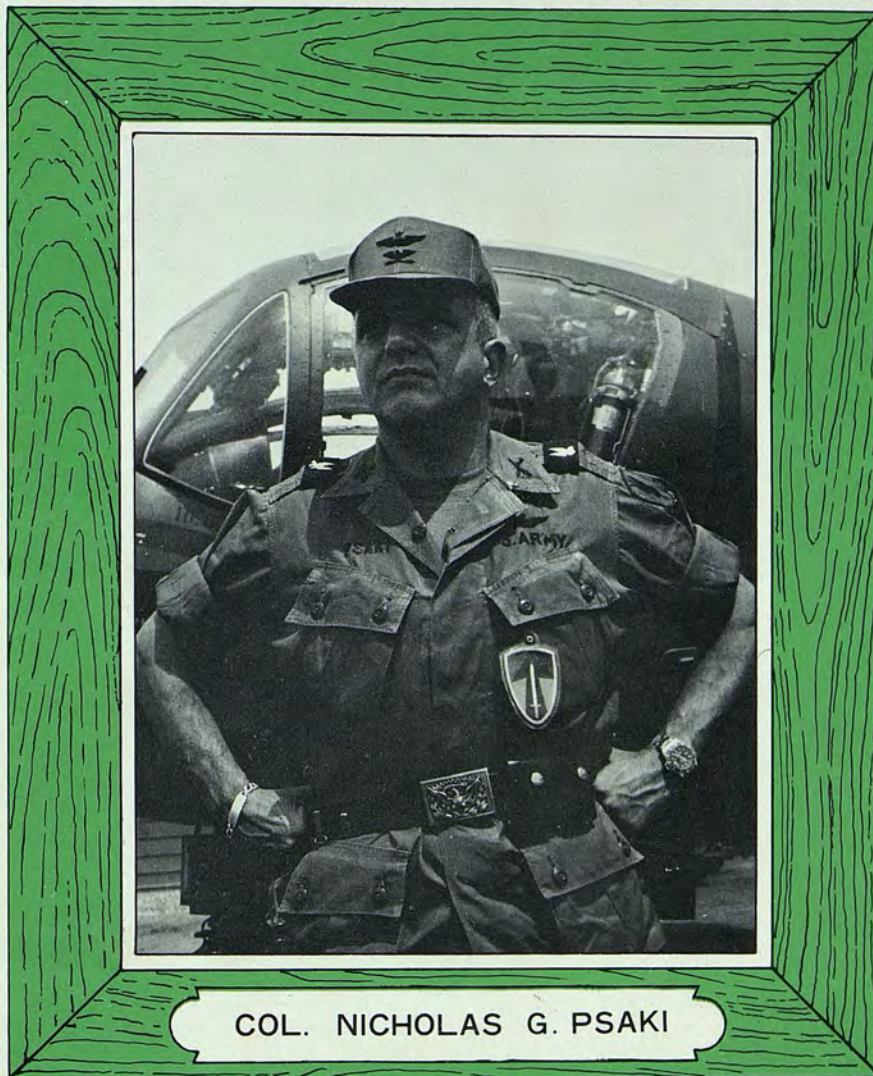
*General Mihn congratulates Captain Miller after presenting him the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for his outstanding contributions to the war effort.*

Photo by SP/4 Michael McIntosh





# FAREWELL TO COLONEL PSAKI



COMMANDING OFFICER 12TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP

Colonel Nicholas G. Psaki leaves Vietnam this month after serving six months as Chief of the Army Aviation Division, MACV J3, and a year of directing the buildup and operations of the Army's largest combat aviation group.

During his year as commander of the 12th Combat Aviation Group, the 48 year-old Colonel Psaki oversaw the buildup from four established battalions and one provisional battalion to the present level of seven battalions and two air cavalry squadrons. The expansion saw an increase in manpower from a little more than 6,300 men to its present strength of almost 10,000.

Serving as II Field Force aviation officer as well as group commander, Colonel Psaki directed the avia-

tion support of four U.S. Infantry Divisions and three Vietnamese Divisions in a total of more than 500 operations.

During these operations, the 12th Group flew nearly 500,000 hours and lifted more than 2,066,000 troops in more than 1,180,000 sorties.

Under his command, 12th Group choppers accounted for more than 2,800 VC by body count and destroyed more than 4,500 enemy sampans and 3,400 structures.

For his accomplishments as 12th Group commander, Colonel Psaki has been presented the Legion of Merit. A fond farewell Colonel Psaki. The men of the Group and the Brigade will miss you.



