

THE HURRICANE

SEPTEMBER 1968

NUMBER ELEVEN

A PUBLICATION OF II FIELD FORCE VIETNAM

Smokey Saves Lives

See page 16





Read a helicopter pilot's story on page 23.

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The front cover this month is a painting by Koichi Ando of a Smoke Ship from the 190th Assault Helicopter Company protecting ships as they land. Read "Smokey," beginning on page 16.

The back cover highlights Perspective's subject this month—Education in Vietnam. That story, illustrated by SP4 Paul Temple, begins on page six.

Other stories this month include the story of a combat assault, told by the man who makes it possible—the helicopter pilot. Read WO Larry McIntosh's impressions starting on page 23.

If you wish to send the Hurricane home, you may do so for free in an 8½×11 inch envelope, provided it is an inclosure to a personal letter. If you like the Hurricane, let the folks back home enjoy it also.

The Editor

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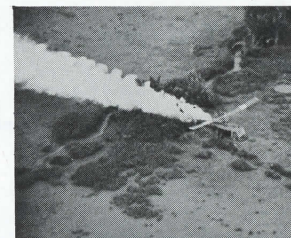
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II FIELD FORCE VIETNAM
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Air Cushion Vehicles

ACV'S Chase the Enemy

in His Swampy Lair

by SP4 Ron Pejsa

Bell photos

The Plain of Reeds, a swamp-mired area comprising about 150 square miles of delta region along the southwestern boundary of the III Corps Tactical Zone, has been a Viet Cong sanctuary since the early 1960's. Its intertwined green rice paddies and muddy Mekong Delta tributaries have made Allied land maneuvers nearly impossible. The land is too dry for Navy ships and too wet for Army tracked vehicles.

A 10-ton armored monster capable of traveling on land, water and marshes at speeds of more than 70 miles per hour while firing four machineguns and a grenade launcher was developed by the Army to change this situation. The first three green monsters, known as air cushion vehicles, were received by the 9th Infantry Division in mid-May and are presently operating out of Dong Tam. The Air Cushion Vehicle Unit is commanded by Major David G. Moore.

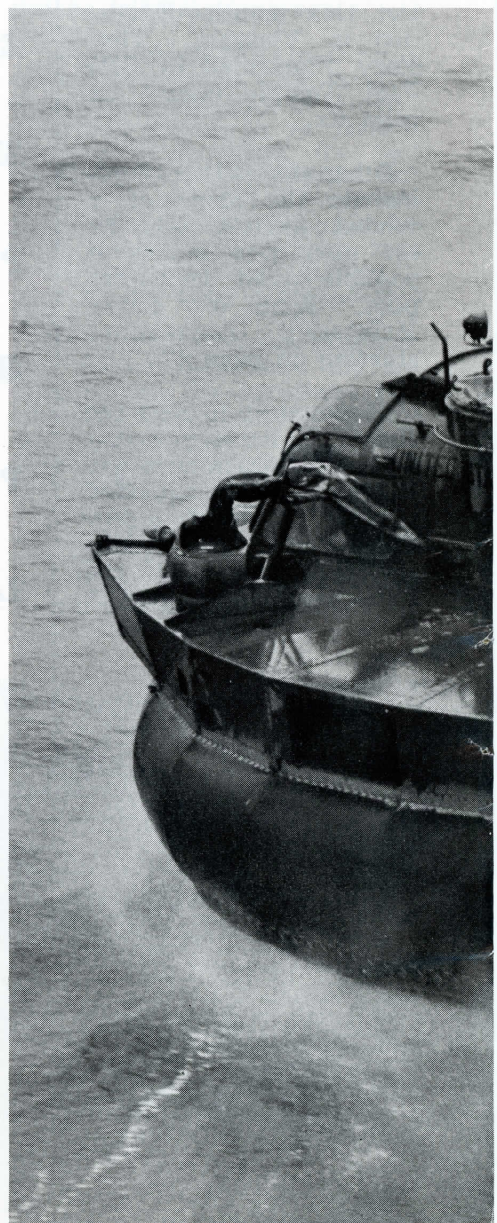
The ACV's are driven by a nine-foot, three-bladed propeller with reversible pitch. Its turbocraft

engine also powers a seven-foot centrifugal lift fan which creates a four-foot cushion of air upon which the craft rides. Craft control is achieved primarily by four puff ports and twin tail rudders. Puff ports are small horizontal air ducts built into the sides of the craft. They operate essentially as spacecraft thrusters. When air is allowed to escape through them, the craft is pushed in the opposite direction.

There are two different types of craft. One is the assault air cushion vehicle (ACV) which is used primarily for its firepower. It has two .50 caliber machineguns mounted on two forward turrets, two M-60 machineguns mounted on the side doors and a Honeywell M-5 grenade launcher mounted on the left front.

The second type vehicle is the transport air cushion vehicle (TACV). It has one .50 caliber machinegun, one hand-held minigun in the front and two M-60 machineguns on the sides. Both vehicles also can carry 12 combat equipped troops on the outside platform.

Rev 'er up and let 'er go. Capable of blasting along waterways at speeds greater than 70 miles per hour, air cushion vehicles such as this are being used to pursue Viet Cong along Mekong Delta tributaries



The ACV's look like a giant khaki-colored boot heel turned backwards. On top is an armored cockpit and cargo area. The turbine engine and transmission are to the rear with the propeller and steering fins.

"Although the ACV's have been in use only a short period of time, they have far exceeded military expectations. We have not found any obstacles we cannot overcome. We have made at least 40 different contacts with the enemy and have experienced a 75-80 per cent kill ratio against these units," Major Moore said.

The mission of the ACV unit is twofold: to perform reconnaissance and to make contact with major enemy units and hold them

until additional Allied forces can be brought in.

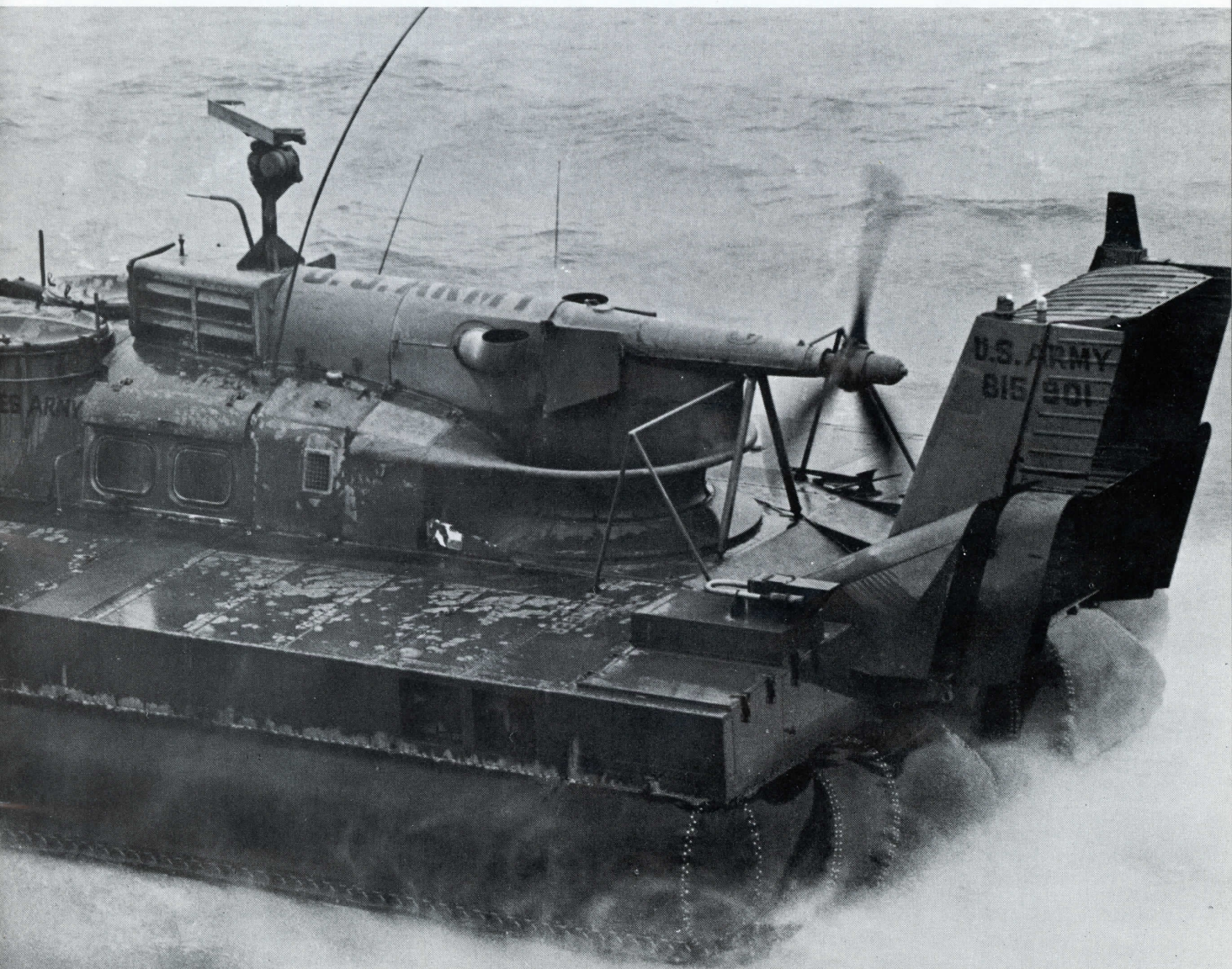
"We'll look for company size and larger enemy elements, using all three of our vehicles at once. Often airborne infantrymen hover above us in choppers until we make contact. Once we do they're quickly brought in. Rarely have we had to wait more than five minutes for assistance. We have had no problem keeping the enemy engaged, however, because our specially designed craft have more firepower than the Huey Cobra," the major said.

It also is much easier for the ACV crewmembers with their direct line of vision to spot Viet Cong running between trees and along woodlines. More often than not the heavy foliage of the trees

obscures aerial vision, Major Moore said.

The ACV's made their heaviest contact on July 3. "We were returning from a recon mission when we ran head-on into a Viet Cong battalion armed with rocket-propelled grenades, automatic weapons and small arms. We threw everything we had at them for more than 20 minutes. At least 10 of their bodies were observed when we had to withdraw. We were almost out of ammo and couldn't pursue them any further, but we have every reason to believe they sustained very heavy casualties," Major Moore said.

"Ever since then the VC have tried to put us out of commission. They fear us and don't like us around intruding into 'their' ter-





Skirting a shoreline in the Mekong Delta, this ACV is hoping to spot a Viet Cong position. The ACV's have a habit of sneaking up on enemy positions before the enemy spots them. Then it's too late to escape the onslaught

ACV's Have Firepower

Shock Effect

Mobility

ritory. We like it that way," the major said.

It wouldn't be very easy for the enemy to make the ACV's inoperative. "Armor protection for the vehicle," according to the major, "is good enough to make it pretty hard to be put down by small arms fire. Crew protection from the hull up is similar to that of a helicopter. The hull offers protection from the waist down and it would take more than a five foot square hole in the hull to put it in danger of sinking. The engine is protected by a ceramic tile armor."

The ACV's float at an average of 60 mph both when on the water and when going over land. "We can maintain this speed through rice paddies and don't have to adjust until we float over dikes two to three feet high. We also have gone over dikes more than six feet high. It will do anything we have the guts to do with it," according to the major.

Major Moore emphasized another four characteristics of the ACV. "The first is that it has an all-weather, day or night capability. We can take winds up to 25 mph

and can maneuver in even greater gusts with a little difficulty. Our radar also makes it possible to travel in the worst weather conditions.

"Secondly, the craft is capable of remaining on station for long periods of time. With our present fuel capacity we can remain out for up to seven hours at a time. If we would make other adjustments we could add more fuel and stay longer.

"Our third asset is that we carry more firepower and ammunition than helicopters. Lastly, ACV's are

actually on the ground, occupying and holding a piece of it. The helicopters are fine for solid ground and the ships are fine in water. But, we can work on both surfaces plus the swampy middle that neither of the other craft can use," the major concluded.

The men also have several laughs with the ACV's. "Training was the

most humorous, although serious, time. During our three months' special training at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland, one of our drivers lost control of his ACV and parked it half-way inside a frame building. The ACV was removed without any damage, but the building had to be torn down," the major said.

"The Plain of Reeds is still a Viet Cong sanctuary but we can and will take it away from him. All we need is more vehicles. This is our only major problem. We anticipate more ACV's in the future, however, and once we receive them the VC will be deprived of another hiding place," the major concluded.



Delta swampland, previously inaccessible, is being opened by 9th Infantry Division troops using the ACV's. The ACV's can travel along swampland, dry land and waterways. Heavily armored, the ACV's can dish out more firepower than a Huey Cobra

Education in Vietnam

*Despite Overwhelming Problems,
Children in Vietnam Are Being Educated*

by *II FFV IO*

photos by SP4 Paul Temple

In a land sundered by war, children suffer most. And in Vietnam, a country with one of the highest literacy rates in Southeast Asia, the children suffer in this war from lack of school facilities, from teacher shortages, from lack of textbooks. In Vietnamese culture, however, there is a deep respect for education and the Government of Vietnam, with assistance from the United States, is doing all it can to provide education for its people.

The task is not easy, nor are the results always encouraging. In a country fighting a death-struggle for independence, the long-term project of education has often had to relinquish vital resources to the short-term necessity of fighting for national survival.

Vietnam's long history of education has provided respect for the learned but it also has bequeathed a host of problems that, along with the war, make it difficult to provide modern education. For two millennia, first under Chinese domination and then for a thousand years as an independent country, Vietnam developed the mandarin system of education as a basic tenet

of its culture. Confucianism, emphasizing learning and filial devotion, was a central force: education was the principal means for social advancement. After a rigorous course of study based on Confucian—and later Buddhist—classics, the young scholar took a series of difficult examinations. The most successful candidates were awarded government posts. Education counted a great deal more than experience, initiative or even common sense. This is still true to some extent: university graduates occupy most of the government posts in a land where not one man in 100 is a graduate.

The French, who occupied Vietnam from 1868 to 1954, abolished the substance of the mandarin system and negated the Confucianism at its base. They instituted an essentially French system designed to train Vietnamese for low-ranking positions in the colonial administration. All classes were taught in French and, in 1917, the admin-



mãng điêm

mãng điêm

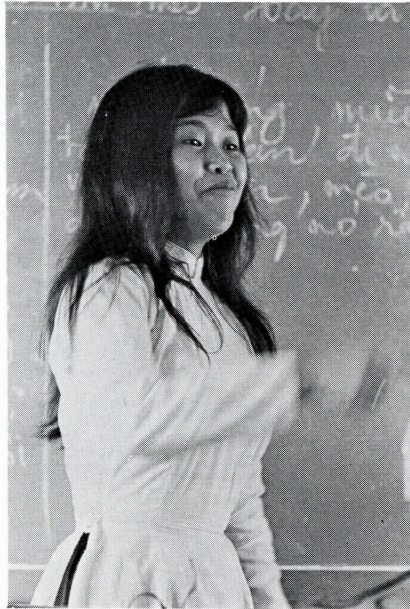


PERSPECTIVE

istration established a standard course of instruction for all of French Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia). The system, designed not so much to provide total literacy as to give a basis for colonial administration, made education socially desirable but not universal. (The mandarin system, although it dealt with different subject matter, had similar goals and, to a large extent, was based on the same methods.) Although in theory elementary education was mandatory in Indochina after 1927, most children received no schooling. For example, in 1938 in all Indochina there were about 400,000 pupils in elementary school, less than 20 per cent of the children in the applicable age group. Private schools played an important part in the pre-independence period, as they do now. The Roman Catholic Church mission schools, the Chinese community and village councils in the 1930's accounted for more than half the 60,000 students in private schools throughout what is now North and South Vietnam.

Vietnam has had few years of peace to develop education since the beginning of World War II. Following the Japanese occupation during the war, the country struggled for independence until 1954. During that time the revolutionaries were unable to provide for education and the French, who saw their hold as a colonial power drastically weakened, were unwilling to build for a future that did not include them as rulers. When the country was divided in 1954, South Vietnam was in much poorer educational shape than the north—most of French industrialization, material wealth and educational facilities were above the 17th Parallel. (As an exception, many of the nearly one million refugees that poured south were Catholic and have contributed to the establishment of several private schools.)

In the decade following inde-



Teacher shortages are critical, will become worse. This young teacher, a member of the "crash" Hamlet School Program, instructs in the village in which she was born

pendence, the infant Government of South Vietnam made astounding progress to provide education to its people, although until 1963 it devoted little of its resources to the problem. The number of elementary school students in South Vietnam more than trebled from 600,000 to two million. The number of secondary students increased eight-fold from 43,000 to 370,000. And enrollment in universities grew from 2,150 to more than 33,000 students. In 1963, the Ministry of Revolutionary Development began the Hamlet School Program as a pacification effort. It has added 9,000 teachers to Vietnam's elementary education program and has constructed more than 8,000 new classrooms. (The Hamlet School Program is funded

by MORD, including the first two years of the teacher's salary. The Minister of Education controls the curriculum of all schools and all other funding.)

But in 1959, the Viet Cong began systematically burning schools and kidnapping or assassinating teachers in rural areas. By 1961, terrorist activities were common against rural schools and hit some urban classrooms as well. The problem became severe: throughout Vietnam between 1959 and 1961, 636 schools, serving more than 18,000 students, were burned down or closed. By the following year, 32 teachers had been killed and more than 260 had been kidnaped. The Viet Cong rationalized the terrorism by objecting to the practice of daily saluting the South Vietnamese flag and singing the national anthem.

Nevertheless, enrollment increased sharply, due largely to the crash Hamlet School Program. At the beginning of the 1967-1968 school year, there were approximately 478,000 children of elementary school age in III Corps Tactical Zone. About 70 per cent of them attended school, the highest rate in the nation's history. In 13 years the Government of Vietnam had done what it took the United States 70 years to do, and the feat was accomplished by an essentially agricultural nation fighting a war for survival.

But as Benjamin Disraeli, 19th Century Prime Minister of England, said, "There are three kinds of lies. Lies, damn lies and statistics." On the elementary level at least, the Government of Vietnam has put most of the country's children into school. In III CTZ they are taught by more than 7,500 teachers. And the GVN believes it will have 85 per cent of the elementary age children—what it considers an acceptable percentage to allow the nation to develop and progress—by the 1970-1971 school year. But because of the carryover of the mandarin methods of instruction and the "crash" nature of the Hamlet School Program, levels of instruction are poor, one-half to two-thirds of the teachers are considered inadequate even by the GVN's standards, and even recently constructed schoolrooms are collapsing. Many students attend school only two hours a day because schools are on triple sessions. To highlight the problem, all of III CTZ's children could be enrolled in public schools by using double sessions with 120 students in each

Progress

in a War-Torn Society

classroom. Private and semi-private schools with generally better levels of instruction help ease the burden. About one-third of the students in III CTZ attend them.

The problems that beset elementary education—aside from the extreme difficulty of accomplishing much in a war-torn land where lack of security is a constant harassment—break down into three major areas; teachers, teaching methods and facilities. Regular elementary school teachers are required to complete 11 years of formal education and two years of Normal School education to learn the teaching profession. These teachers are eligible to teach all five years of elementary school. The teachers in the Hamlet School Program, on the other hand, are only required to complete elementary school itself. They then take a 90-day training course and return to the village or hamlet from which they were recruited. (The average educational level of the Hamlet School recruit, however, is four years above the minimum.) They teach only the first three grades. The teachers considered inadequate fall mainly within the Hamlet School Program; by 1970 an estimated 82 per cent of elementary school teachers will be substandard. In addition to this, the Government of Vietnam estimates that an additional 11,257 teachers will be needed for South Vietnam's elementary schools to bring the total for private and public schools to 44,

600. The figure is based on the standard 60 pupils to one teacher ratio.

Even among the well-qualified teachers, however, the traditional system of instruction inhibits understanding and promotes rote learning. When books are available, teachers sometimes misuse them as sources of fact rather than sources of ideas.

Extensive efforts are being made by the GVN and its US advisors to improve the quality of teachers. In III CTZ, for example, "master

teachers" with an average length of service of about nine years conducted this spring and summer a training program for Hamlet School Program teachers who will start work this fall. The 28 master teachers trained some 710 new teachers in the 90-day program. There has also been an emphasis on in-service training. Last year, III CTZ CORDS conducted workshops for 6,000 teachers in the use of textbooks. Great emphasis has been placed on teacher recruitment; women are preferred be-



Classrooms are crowded in Vietnam. The GVN hopes to provide adequate space for most elementary pupils by 1970, but because of poor construction, even recently constructed classrooms are falling apart

Education

cause men are subject to the draft. Programs are being discussed to allow male teachers to serve in reserve units in their hamlets during the school year and on active duty during vacations. There are also efforts to improve the social status of elementary school teachers—it is widely believed in Vietnam “that anyone can teach elementary school”. Teachers’ pay, in some cases as low as VN\$3,400 a month, is also under review.

Educational facilities, including classrooms, textbooks and teaching aids, are generally inadequate on the elementary level. The Government of Vietnam has estimated that in III CTZ an additional 11,000 classrooms will be needed to meet the 1970 goal of adequate space for the 85 per cent of youths planned to attend. The government is building 800 classrooms this year. Construction is proceeding as expected, despite a setback due to the Tet Truce Violations. (During Tet, many schools in III CTZ were closed. Virtually all were back in operation three months later.) United States Agency for International Development has been assisting the GVN print and distribute textbooks since 1957. In FY 1966 a project to distribute 14,000,000 elementary textbooks and 6,000,000 secondary textbooks throughout Vietnam was begun. Completion of distribution is scheduled for FY 1970; 11,340,000 had been distributed by June of 1967.

Despite the problems, most of the children in Vietnam learn the fundamentals of reading and writing at the elementary level. In Vietnam’s Constitution it is stated that education for boys and girls from age six to 11 is mandatory and laws have been passed to penalize principals who do not report absences. (Throughout the country, this minimum is enforced only where security permits.) The curriculum on the elementary level includes reading and writing, Vietnamese history and language, geography and civics in the first three grades. In the last two grades (two and one) moral education, general science, arithmetic and drawing are taught. The school year lasts about nine months and is divided into two semesters, with three months of summer vacation and a holiday of 10 days during Tet.

Enrollment in Vietnamese schools is patterned on a sharply sloping triangle. Only one-quarter of the graduates of elementary school go on to secondary school, where teaching methods are better but lack of teachers and facilities worse. Most of the educating is done in private schools. Primary

Books are scarce in Vietnamese schools—here they have been distributed on a one-to-three ratio. Teachers, following the traditional mandarin system of education, often use books only as sources for facts



emphasis of the GVN, however, now is being shifted from the elementary level to the secondary. The government has set a goal to provide the opportunity for two-thirds of those who finish elementary school to attend a secondary school. At the beginning of this year, there were adequate public facilities for only six per cent of youths of secondary school age (12 to 18) but the Minister of Education and the Minister of Revolutionary Development have established a five-month accelerated Teacher Education Program to prepare first cycle secondary school teachers and are constructing additional classrooms at existing schools and supporting "self-help" classroom construction programs. The government hopes to have facilities ready for two-thirds of the children who finish elementary school in 1968 as an important part of the larger goal of providing facilities for two-thirds of all children from 12 to 18.

Secondary education takes seven years; a four-year "first cycle" and a three-year final period. Students concentrate in one of four fields—modern languages, classical languages, science or math. Success on the stiff "final exams" qualifies a student to enter a university, but only about 12 per cent of those students starting secondary school finish, and only one in five of those goes on. Upon graduation from secondary school, the student has gone far beyond the educational average for Vietnam (5 years) and, even if he does not continue his education, he can take his place as a progressive member of an advancing society.

University education in Vietnam is being pressed to expand when it cannot provide for students already enrolled. American assistance, primarily directed at the elementary level under the theory "first things first," has done little

standard university education. It has been hampered by a lack of books and facilities, left behind when it migrated from Hanoi in 1955. Students usually meet once a week for classes and spend most of their time in preparation. Some students have enrolled in the University to evade the draft and less than half pass the yearly examinations. Nonetheless, the university level is the most important single component of the education sys-

tem, under the MOE in Saigon, is responsible for developing a system of technical vocational institutions. The specific goal is to have by 1971 an enrollment of 14,000 students in the fields of auto mechanics, ceramics, electricity, machine shop, sheet metal, welding, forging, foundry, woodworking, home economics and business education. This should produce an annual graduating class of 5,000. There are at present four poly-

Vietnamese students are given an elementary lesson in biology. Modern methods of education are replacing inadequate traditional ones rapidly



tem. The Vietnamese people, the lower echelons of education and the government all look to the universities for a focal point of cultural and social development.

In addition to the standard pattern of academic education, there are two fields of great im-

portance to the future of Vietnam—skilled labor and agriculture—that are becoming part of the educational system of Vietnam. Vocational education has been awarded a high priority as a vital element in the overall pacification effort. Because Vietnam is a developing nation, thousands of skilled workers must be created.

The Director of Technical Education, under the MOE in Saigon, is responsible for developing a system of technical vocational institutions. The specific goal is to have by 1971 an enrollment of 14,000 students in the fields of auto mechanics, ceramics, electricity, machine shop, sheet metal, welding, forging, foundry, woodworking, home economics and business education. This should produce an annual graduating class of 5,000. There are at present four poly-

The job is being done . . .

to assist the five universities in Vietnam. The aid has been limited to the provision of token amounts of books and periodicals, a small amount of construction and a few contracts with universities in the United States for training elementary and secondary level teachers. The University of Saigon, largest in the country with an enrollment of 36,000, provides a

importance to the future of Vietnam—skilled labor and agriculture—that are becoming part of the educational system of Vietnam. Vocational education has been awarded a high priority as a vital element in the overall pacification effort. Because Vietnam is a developing nation, thousands of skilled workers must be created.

The Director of Technical Edu-

educational projects should be emphasized. A national organization to support and encourage vocational agricultural activities should be set up. The first steps in this direction have been taken in III CTZ. Two agricultural schools were started last fall on borrowed land in Binh Duong and Tay Ninh provinces. This year, complete facilities are being built, including demonstration areas and labs. About 600 students are involved. Two more such schools have been planned for Binh Tuy and Long An provinces.

Education in Vietnam has made surprising progress, despite overwhelming problems, because the people of Vietnam have an abiding commitment to it. What is needed—and what is coming—is a greater dialogue between the people and their government. From this dialogue will come first the basis of pacification and then the basis of democracy as the school becomes a community meeting place and as the educational level raises and produces a nation of well informed, active participants in the destiny of their country.



Vocational training has become a top-priority goal of the Vietnamese government. Thousands of skilled workers must be created where few exist



Command Sergeant Major

by SGM Clay Lacy

photo by SP4 Charles Holmes

A veteran airborne infantryman who has dropped through nearly 33 miles of space has landed in the top noncommissioned officer slot for II Field Force Vietnam. Command Sergeant Major Frederick E. McFarlan, 45, who became the Command's top NCO in July, looks forward to his tour as one of "challenges galore."

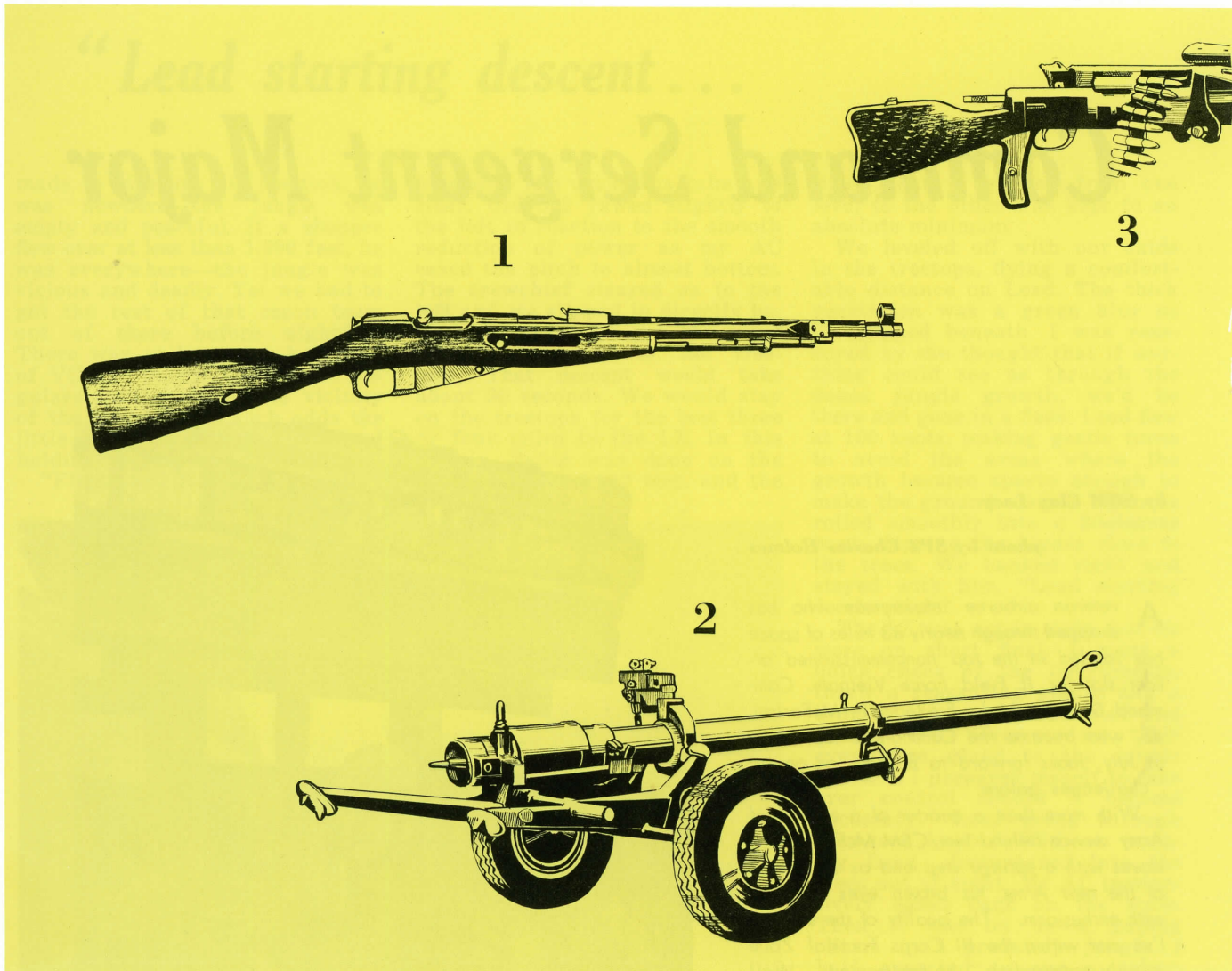
With more than a quarter of a century of Army service behind him, CSM McFarlan still moves with a springy step and as he speaks of the new Army, his brown eyes light up with enthusiasm. "The quality of the soldiers I've met within the III Corps Tactical Zone is truly outstanding," he commented. "Well motivated, highly educated and possessing an eagerness to excel, he is the best of all American soldiers."

CSM McFarlan joined the Army in 1943 and following Airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia, jumped with the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82d Airborne Division on "D-Day" in World War Two.

His airborne assignments have earned him the Master Parachutist's Badge with 174 jumps to his credit. With these jumps averaging more than 1,000 feet per jump, the Oskaloosa, Iowa, native claims nearly 33 miles of jump experience.

The new "top sarge" is married and his wife Marie lives in Spring Lake, N.C., with their two sons, Michael A., and Thomas E. Prior to his present assignment, CSM McFarlan served with the 5th Infantry (Mechanized) Division at Fort Carson, Colorado.

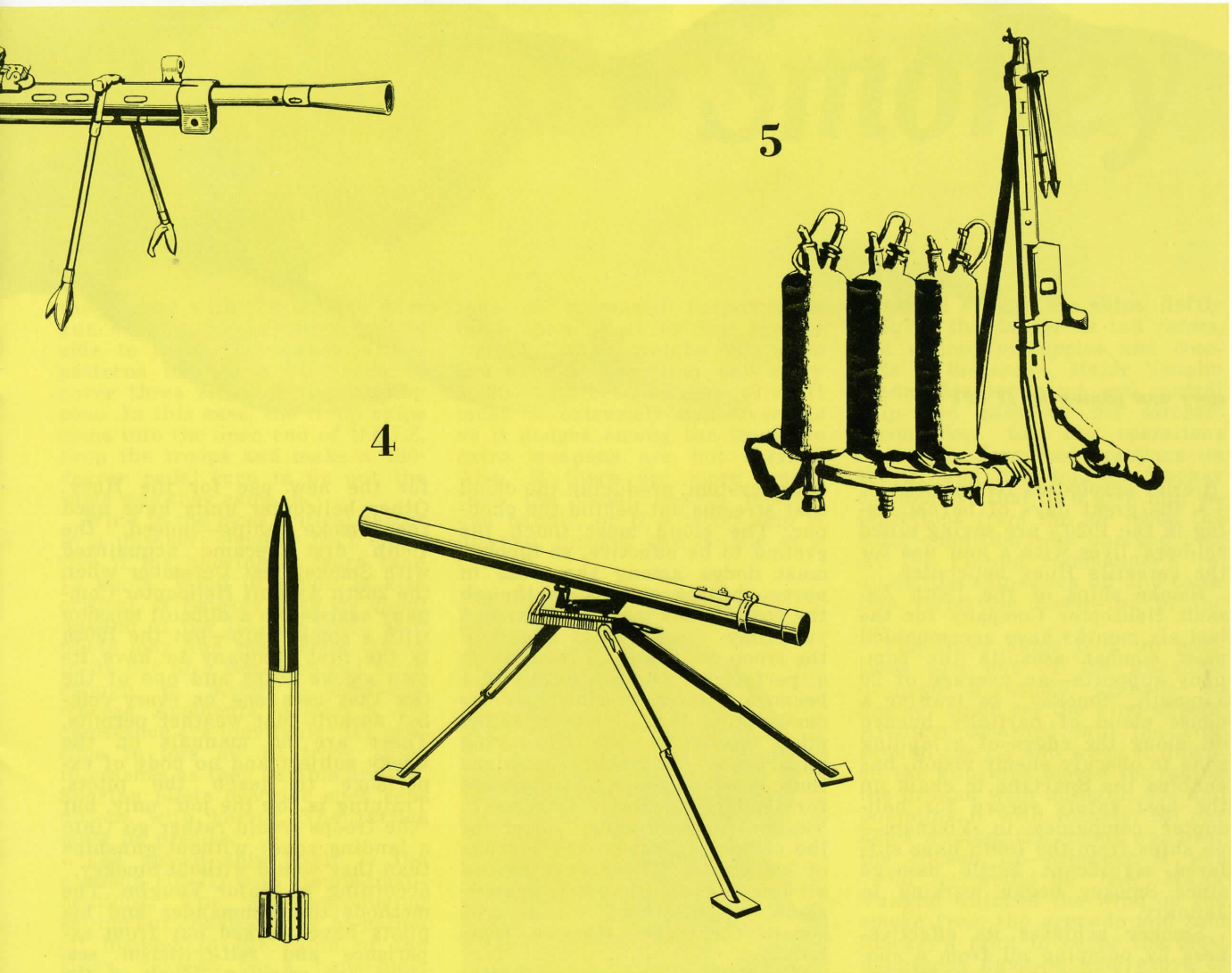




Enemy Weapons

1 Soviet 7.62 mm Carbine N1944—This carbine is easily recognized by its short length and the permanently attached folding bayonet on the right side of the barrel. This 8.9 pound, bolt-action carbine has an effective range of 400 meters and can fire 10 rounds per minute. It uses either Soviet or Chi. Com long-rimmed cartridges.

2 Soviet 107 mm Recoilless Gun B-11—This armor-penetrating gun is a breech-loaded weapon. It can be fired either from its wheels or from a tripod mount. When it is fired from the mount, the weapon is raised and the wheels removed. Characteristics of this gun are its tripod legs, a gimbal mounting of the tube, and the prominent sight mount on its top. This 107 mm gun weighs 672 pounds, has an effective range of 450 meters and a maximum range of 6,650 meters. It uses a heat type ammunition and can fire 5 rounds per minute.



3 Soviet 7.62 mm Light Machinegun RP-46—More commonly known as the "Company Light Machinegun" because of its tactical use as a supporting weapon. It is normally fed from a belt, but also can be fed from a 47-round drum magazine. It has a feed operating lever on the right side of the receiver and a carrying handle. This fully automatic, air-cooled machinegun weighs 28.7 pounds and has an effective range of 800 meters. It will fire 250 rounds per minute. It uses either Soviet or Chi Com 7.62 mm long rimmed cartridges.

122 mm Soviet Fin-Stabilized Rocket and Launcher—This rocket consists of a point detonating fuse, a high explosive warhead constructed of steel with two preengraved fragmentation sleeves, and a launcher tube supported by a specially fabricated tripod mount. The rocket warhead contains 14.5 pounds of TNT, a rocket motor, and a spring action folding-fin stabilizing unit. It weighs 102 pounds and has an effective range of 11,000 meters. This rocket is used as an area weapon against military installations.

4 Soviet Manpack Flamethrower LPO-50—This flamethrower is identified by its three identical upright cylindrical fuel tanks and a swing-out bipod on the flame gun. Each tank has two valves on the top; one is a safety valve and the other is a filling aperture. The gun has sights and resembles an automatic rifle. It uses petroleum with thickener and weighs 50.6 pounds. It has a range of 70 meters.

"SMOKEY" x

story and photos by II FFV IO

Aerial acrobatics reminiscent of the great days of barnstorming in the 1920's are saving allied soldiers' lives with a new use for the versatile Huey helicopter.

Smoke ships of the 190th Assault Helicopter Company for the last six months have accompanied most combat assaults the company supports—an average of 20 a month. "Smokey," by trailing a dense cloud of partially burned oil along the edges of a landing zone to obscure enemy vision, has enabled the Spartans to chalk up the best safety record for helicopter companies in Vietnam—no ships from the 190th have suffered significant battle damage since Smokey began working in January.

Smokey achieves its effectiveness by pumping oil from a special nozzle into the aircraft's ex-

haust system, producing the cloud that streams out behind the chopper. The cloud must touch the ground to be effective, so Smokey must dodge among the trees in nerve-chilling swoops as though the stolid Huey were a biplane of yesterday. Smokey flies ahead of the troop ships and to their flank, a perfect target for enemy fire because it must fly slowly or the smoke is too thin. But because the pilots recognize the life-saving importance of Smokey missions there is never a lack of volunteers for the flights. Major Charles U. Vaughn, commanding officer of the company, praised the courage of his pilots. "These guys exceed all imagination in just raw courage," he declared. "It's true across the board—they're fearless."

The 190th also is writing tactics

for the new use for the Huey. Other helicopter units have used the smoke ships—indeed, the 190th first became acquainted with Smokey last December when the 269th Assault Helicopter Company assisted in a difficult mission with a smoke ship—but the 190th is the first company to have its own smoke ships and one of the few that uses one on every combat assault that weather permits. There are no manuals on the tricky subject and no body of experience to teach the pilots. Training is "on the job" only, but "the troops would rather go (into a landing zone) without gunships than they would without Smokey," according to Major Vaughn. The methods the commander and his pilots have worked out from experience and self-criticism sessions are working. Much of the Spartans' success is due to Major Vaughn's enthusiasm for Smokey and his ability to share his feelings as he leads his men. The sky soldiers of the 190th are devoted to him. An officer from the 145th Aviation Battalion, the 190th's parent unit, said "anyone in that company would give him (Major Vaughn) his right arm."

In the standard Smokey run the ship comes in along the most dangerous flank of the landing zone trailing the smoke and makes an abrupt turn at the end of the zone to obscure the far end. Flying from 60 to 80 knots, hugging



Smokey pulls out of a run as the troop ships come into the LZ. Since the enemy can't see the flight, helicopters and men alike are much safer



Smokey

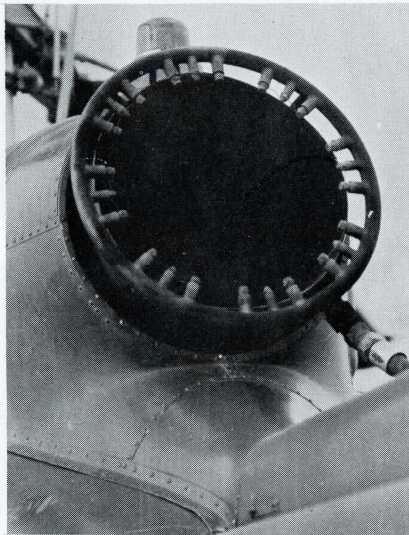
the ground with the outside door gun blazing, Smokey turns on its side to make the corner. Other patterns include a "U" turn to cover three sides of the landing zone. In this case, the troop ships come into the open end of the LZ, drop the troops and make a 180-degree pedal turn to fly out the same way they came in.

Wind is the most critical factor in a mission; Smokey isn't effective if it's blowing at more than 15 knots. Wind direction is also critical. If Smokey puts its cloud upwind of the LZ, the troop ship pilots may find themselves trying to fly out of a pea-soup fog thick enough to make a Londoner wheeze. Accidents in such a circumstance are inevitable; it's possible to lose all 10 troop ships in crashes as they bumble around. Spartan pilots describe such conditions with horror. The tactics must be precise.

The smoke ship itself is the common UH-1D with simple modifications. The smoke-producing equipment consists of a 55-gallon oil bladder in the cabin of the Huey, covered by a home-built wooden seat. A pump forces the oil through a hose into a ring around the exhaust pipe of the aircraft where the oil is squirted into the hot (1100-degree) exhaust. The pump and ring are standard accessories for the Huey but are not Table of Organization and Equipment items. They are available and conversion is simple. Based on the success that the Spartans have had, Major Vaughn expects that more helicopter companies will use Smokies.

Smokey carries a pilot and an aircraft commander (all pilots and AC's in the 190th are "Smokey-qualified," having flown Smokey missions) and two door gunners with M-60 machineguns. The 190th and other companies have experimented with heavier armament—miniguns or 50 caliber machineguns, but the advan-

tage of increased firepower is more than offset by the greater weight. The oil weighs only some 500 pounds—the Huey can carry 1,200—but because the aircraft must be extremely maneuverable as it dodges among the trees the extra weapons are not carried. Also, if there are more troops than the usual 10-ship mission can handle, or if a troop ship is downed, Smokey can double as a carrier.



Oil is squirted into the exhaust of the Huey from these nozzles. The oil is partially burned and produces a tremendous cloud of smoke

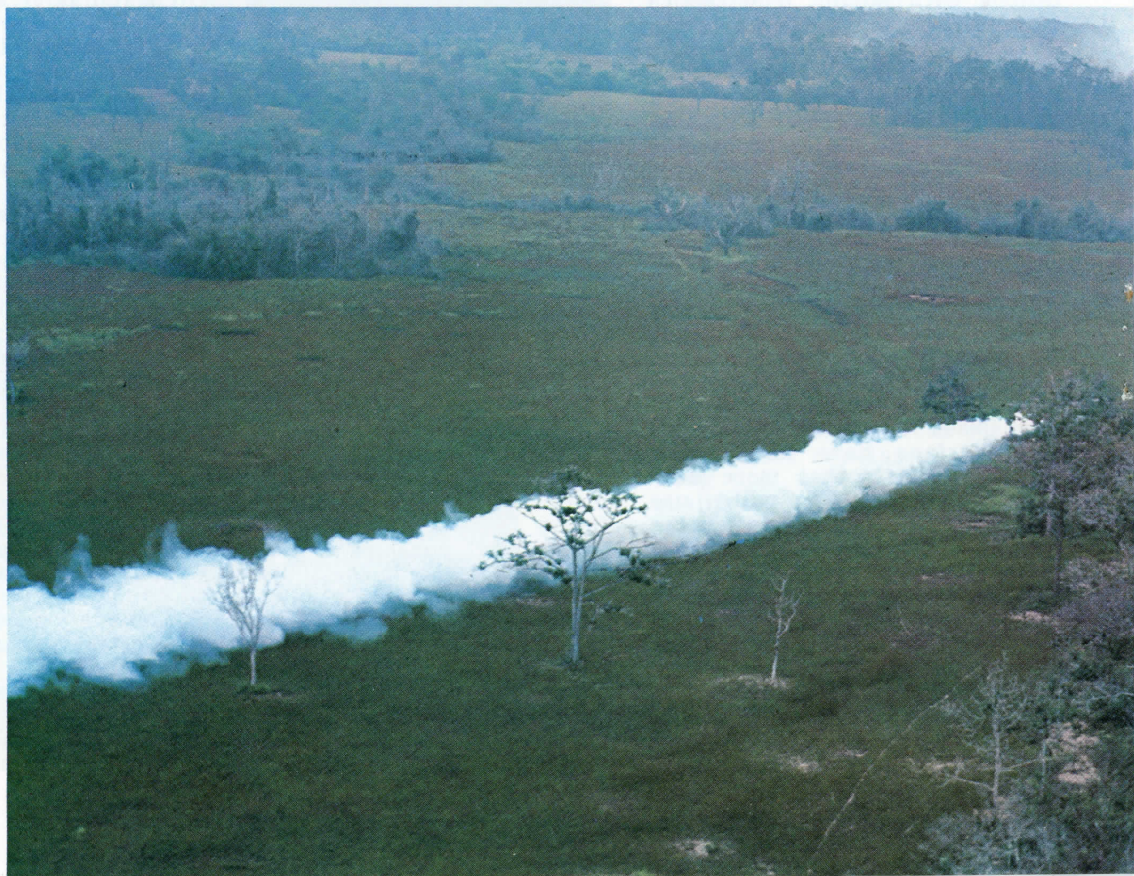
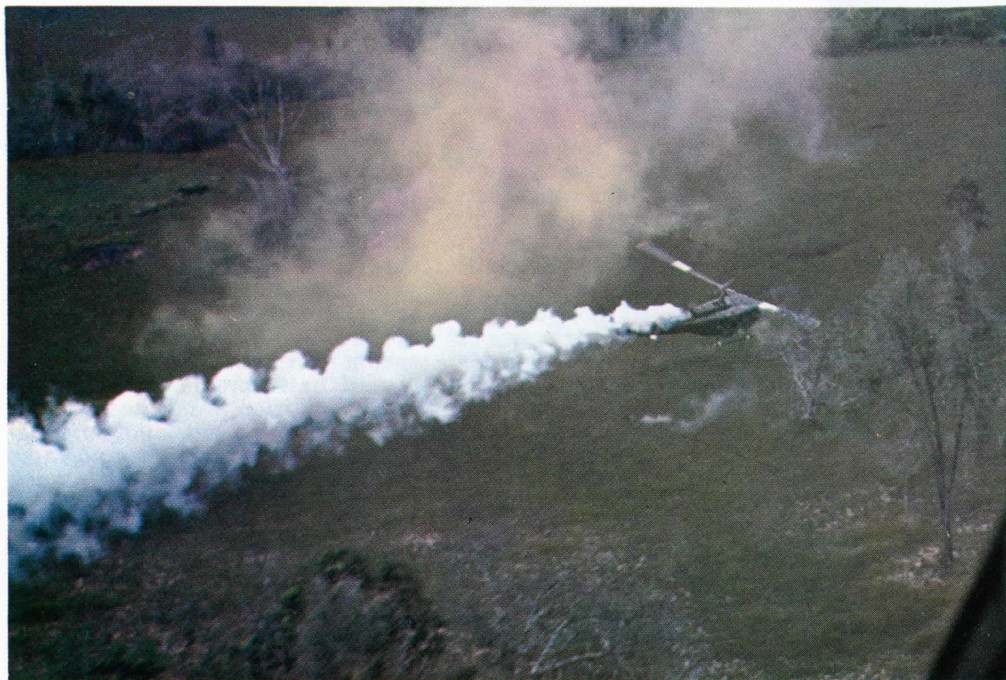
A typical Smokey mission took place in support of the 9th Infantry Division in the delta. Ten troop ships, gunships and one of the two Smokies in the 190th took off at dawn to be ready to extract and re-insert an infantry unit that had been on a reconnaissance in force mission throughout the previous evening. The troops weren't ready to come out so the Spartan ships set down on a gravel road to wait. Dozens of ragged children

swarmed around the ships, deftly dodging the dangerous tail rotors, and offered pineapples and coconuts to the crews. Major Vaughn landed his command and control ship and gathered his aircraft commanders for his operations order. He described positions on the ground and told the Smokey commander that he'd give him instructions from the air when the wind condition was checked out. At the ground commander's request, the ships took off and came into formation downwind of the LZ.

The troop ships took up positions and one of the gunships dropped a smoke grenade so Smokey could see the wind effects. Artillery smashed into the area around the LZ and when it finished the gunships moved in, raking the ground with minigun fire and pounding it with rockets. No one knew whether the enemy was near the chosen LZ—whether it was "cold" or would be "hot." Major Vaughn watched the wind on the smoke from the grenade and told Smokey's pilot to cover the most dangerous flank—a long grove of nipa palm trees that curved around the end of the LZ. The gunships started on their final run and Smokey lifted over the tail end of the troop ships in a delicate ballet movement and dropped down ahead and to the right of them to prepare for the run. (Incredibly, a snow-flurry of psychological operations leaflets appeared all around the aircraft. Fifteen minutes before Smokey's crew had watched a small plane drop them upwind). Down among the nipa palm trees Smokey dropped, flashed across a small canal and the pilot flipped the smoke switch. The right door gunner opened up as the ship twisted in and among the 10-foot tall palms as the troop ships settled and the ground pounders sprinted for the open doors. Smokey reached the end of the LZ and turned sharply, with the main

Smokey

color photos by SP4 Wayne Walker



rotor blade almost at right angles to the ground. The pilot, on the down side of the ship, glanced anxiously as the blades came within feet of the ground. Smokey pulled out of the run as the troop ships lifted out and over the smoke at the end of the LZ. The left door gunner pulled nipa palm leaves off the barrel of his machinegun—Smokey had gotten close to the ground in a successful mission.

The Spartans inserted a second load of infantry again and waited again. The troops had to be ferried across a canal. Six more times that day Smokey led the troops into landing zones, dodging the nipa palms. At dusk, when the silver of the paddies turned to pewter, the 190th headed for home at Bien Hoa Air Base.

Smokey saves lives by denying the enemy the easy target of a helicopter motionless on the ground. But to do this the pilots must expose themselves to the fire and must demonstrate that they are the best in the world—the flying is the most difficult. Spartan pilots carry a card to give to ground commanders. The back reads, "you have been supported by the best damn assault helicopter company in Vietnam." The AC smiles as he hands it out—he knows it's correct. (PFE)



Smokey starts a run (above, left) and obscures the LZ from the enemy, hiding in the treeline (left). Above, Smokey charges the camera

The Tale of a Popular Force Outpost

by PFC Kenneth Smith

photos by SP5 Rick Nelson

Courageous Soldiers

Take It, Dish It Out



The faded, chipped, red-lettered sign reads: "Welcome to Phu Hoa Dong." Its dusty paint is slapped on the wall of a shattered building located near the tiny outpost's perimeter in southeast Binh Duong province. Seven months ago it was bright red. The building was in one piece. Since then most of what's come into Phu Hoa Dong has been about as welcome as flies. The sign's become a satire; the enemy's incoming bullets and rockets anything but.

The two Vietnamese Popular Force (PF) platoons—53d and 54th—and the U.S. Advisory Team who fought there have departed for a more advantageous position. And so, the remains of Phu Hoa Dong now rest peacefully. They qualify as candidates for a museum.

Seven months ago, Phu Hoa Dong provided a relatively defensible, liveable home for the two PF platoons and their six American advisors. It is situated in the middle of a favorite enemy route to Saigon, 20 miles to the south, and proved to be a nasty stumbling block for the Northern Army. The platoons, as is true of



The PF outpost at Phu Hoa Dong was defensible—the enemy tried his best to overrun it and failed

most PF units, provided life-saving security for adjacent villages.

In the Tet Truce Violation, Phu Hoa Dong expectedly began taking fire. Until it was vacated in early June, Northern troops treated the outpost like a pop-up rifle target. It got in their way, and life for the men at Phu Hoa Dong became relaxing—like a cold shower. Attacks came in varied sizes—large, medium and small, but on all occasions the PF troops repulsed the enemy, often killing large numbers. They took it and dished it out. They achieved many victories. But none was more decisive than their last, which occurred just a few days before they left, the night of June fourth. It was like “one more for the gipper.”

At 9:30 pm the 25th Infantry Division phoned to say a Hoi Chanh returnee had told of an all-out attack scheduled for that night. At 1:50 am everything but the stars fell from the sky on Phu Hoa Dong: “Widow-making” 57 and 75 mm recoilless rifles, 60 and 82 mm mortars, RPG and B-40 rockets, machine guns, small arms; the works. It rained fire for a solid half hour. First Sergeant Wiley Wasson said, “It was the most intense fire I’ve ever experienced. I didn’t think all those

shells and bullets would fit in such a small area.”

Advance warning or not, the initial attack was terrifying. But the courageous Popular Force soldiers shot back from the berm, while the U.S. team ripped away from the command bunker. Under such extreme fire it took plain guts to leave that bunker to shoot M-79 grenades. But it had to be done and done in the open. Major George O. Green, Jr. led his men out.

First Sergeant Wasson got but one foot outside when a piece of shrapnel penetrated his forearm to the bone. He came inside, received quick treatment, and immediately returned to the outside with his M-79.

“It hurt like the devil but I had to keep firing,” he said.

During that explosive first half hour, Lieutenant Robert Antonius, assistant district advisor, ordered aerial and artillery support. Soon four gunships and a Forward Air Control (FAC) plane began making passes. Then the 25th Infantry Division from nearby Cu Chi began pouring in rounds from 155 mm howitzers, and the enemy was soon zeroed by the invaluable FAC plane.

Then suddenly there was a deathly moment of silence. All firing stopped.

“The enemy, the 8th Battalion of the 88th North Vietnamese Regiment, had infiltrated to within 50 meters of us,” related Staff Sergeant David Turner. “Then they stopped firing and when we stopped too, they stood up for a “banzai” charge. Major Green decided the time was right and ordered close-in artillery. FAC had adjusted the 155’s perfectly. They hit exactly where the enemy was located.”

“The timing was just perfect,” added Sergeant First Class Raul Martinez.

“Charlie tried to re-organize and try again,” continued Sergeant First Class Trinidad Reyra, “but the stubborn Popular Force soldiers on the berm and the four helicopter gunships helped make Charlie realize it was no use. Then as they were running away,



These advisors helped the PF soldiers repel a major onslaught. From left to right they are: SSGT David Turner; Major George O. Green, Jr.; and First SGT Wiley Wasson

A New Life at Parris Tan Qui



Spooky (AC-47 Gunship—18,000 rounds per minute) showed up and turned the rout into a slaughter.”

The enemy cleared the area by 5:00 am. They left behind 45 bodies and many weapons. Only one PF soldier was killed.

“The group was truly outstanding,” said Major Green.

Two days after the attack the Vietnamese and their advisors, in broad peaceful daylight, retreated. They left Phu Hoa Dong for Parris Tan Qui, a similar outpost about five miles directly south.

The advantages of Parris Tan Qui should make the PF soldiers less vulnerable, and in turn, attacks less frequent. The new outpost is blessed with wide open spaces stretching some 500 meters out from its perimeter, forcing the enemy to stage attacks at a considerable distance. There are also additional roads connected to the outpost. But though this should help, in the coming months, Parris Tan Qui will probably get its fair share.

But whether it's Parris Tan Qui, Phu Hoa Dong, or “Binh Ben Duc,” chances are you won't see a PF outpost in big headlines. Nor will you see a PF platoon or its advisors exalted as are the victors at such strategic campaigns as Dak To, Khe Sahn or Hill 881.

They're not the stars of this show. They won't get the girl in the end.

But there are Phu Hoa Dong's all over South Vietnam. And there are hard-working, brave PF units and their U.S. advisors living in them, sacrificing, risking, enduring. To the villages and hamlets they protect, they're even better than John Wayne.

Expended artillery casings are piled up in the new outpost. Parris Tan Qui has much better fields of fire

One More Mission

The Story of a Combat Assault

by the Man

Who Makes it Possible

by WO1 Larry McIntosh

photos by 12th Group IO

Editor's Note: There are many tales about the machine that has changed the concept of warfare—the helicopter—and the men who fly it. But there are few accounts of the dangers, fears and triumphs told by the pilots themselves. WO Larry McIntosh has told the story of one mission, a mission like those he participates in every day.



Larry McIntosh

The diamond formation headed northeast from Nui Ba Den mountain, flying at the base of the clouds with that unhurried, Sunday afternoon air so characteristic of helicopter formations. Looking over my shoulder from my number two position, I could see the smiling face of "Little Annie Fannie" on the nose cone of the number four ship, rising and falling gently in the late afternoon air. Right then I was proud to be a member of the unit she stood for; the First Platoon of the

117th Assault Helicopter Company, the "WARLORDS." Now, as we moved in for the final extraction from the Landing Zone, I marveled at the keen alertness of all my senses, surrounded by a cool, relaxed confidence that grows from being part of a well-oiled team of competent and dedicated professionals. All four aircraft commanders were masters of the fine art of airmanship under combat conditions. All four pilots had flown many hours under the command of these AC's. Every

crew member in this formation knew his particular role in the mission. Every man was calm; every man was alert.

We had already made two extractions from this dark, unholy cavern in the jungle. Both times we had received intense fire on the approach and on climbout. Somehow these recon teams seemed to have aggravated every Viet Cong within a 10-mile radius. In this region was the home of more enemy units than the teams had ever suspected. The faint blue puffs of smoke at the edge of the landing zone had been unmistakable—and not more than 50 meters away! My crewchief had seen the muzzle flashes. I felt certain we must have taken hits. But all four ships reported all instruments normal and the birds handled perfectly. I could only attribute the enemy's poor marksmanship to the fact that he used no tracers, thus minimizing his chances of being detected.

Under such intense automatic weapons fire, the normal procedure would have been to silence the positions with artillery and tactical air strikes. But this was Charlie's country. Triple canopy jungle lay for miles around in every direction. If an attempt was

“Lead starting descent . . .

made to pinpoint his position, he was nowhere—the jungle was empty and peaceful. If a chopper flew over at less than 1,000 feet, he was everywhere—the jungle was vicious and deadly. Yet we had to get the rest of that recon team out of there before nightfall. There was at least one battalion of VC and North Vietnamese regulars in the immediate vicinity of the LZ. Against such odds the little team had small chance of holding out through the night.

“Flight, go trail; Lead starting

descent.” The voice was calm and clear. Old 562 yawed slightly to the left in reaction to the smooth reduction of power as my AC eased the pitch to almost bottom. The crewchief cleared us to the left and we slipped in directly behind Lead as we began the rapid 3,000-foot descent to the treetops. That descent would take about 90 seconds. We would stay on the treetops for the last three or four miles to the LZ. In this terrain, flying was done on the deck or above 2,000 feet, and the

time spent in getting from one level to the other was kept to an absolute minimum.

We leveled off with our skids in the treetops, flying a comfortable distance on Lead. The thick vegetation was a green blur as it whipped beneath. I was reassured by the thought that if anything could see us through the dense jungle growth, we’d be there and gone in a flash. Lead flew at 100 knots, making gentle turns to avoid the areas where the growth became sparse enough to make the ground visible. Then he rolled smoothly into a 30-degree bank, dipping the blades close to the trees. We banked right and stayed with him. “Lead starting deceleration.”

The LZ was not in sight, but we were on short final. I made a quick check of the instruments, threw a reassuring glance and a thumbs up to the crewchief and gunner. They never saw me; their eyes were glued to the jungle beneath. I prepared myself to take over control should it become necessary. “Lead going through four-zero knots.” Without warning Lead disappeared into the trees out of sight. My AC instinctively eased back on the stick. Then it was on us—a gaping chasm in a predatory jungle. I half expected to see a saber-toothed tiger leap up at us. As we crossed the treeline and sank into that hole, what leaped up at us was far more deadly than any prehistoric beast. The sharp, superfast staccato of the AK-47 rifle was an all too familiar sound.

“Lead, this is Three, we’re taking fire—taking fire! I think we’re hit.” As our skids touched the ground Lead picked up and started out.

“Lead’s coming out. Can you make it out Three?”

“This is Three, I’m touching down at this time. Everything seems to be okay.”

“Lead, this is Sidewinder Eight; break right when you hit the treeline.” The Sidewinder gun



SP4 Richard C. Nelson, crew chief, sits at his machinegun, showing how he provided intense suppressive fire

team had covered us on the first two extractions. Their heavy suppressive fire was the only deterrent sufficiently effective to make the extractions possible. Now the two gunships, low on fuel, flew at minimum torque to stretch their time-on-station.

The troops were motivated. The loading was very expeditious.

"Two's coming out." We eased off the ground and began the agonizingly slow climb to the brink of that ghostly cavern. "Tat-tat-tat" Close! Too close! But almost immediately, two M-60 machineguns barked a defiant answer as the crewchief and gunner silenced the closest enemy position with a steady stream of death. The troops we had picked up helped us to get the point across with their fast-talking M-16's. The steady rhythm of automatic weapons fire coming from my ship was music to my ears.



Specialist Nelson sprints for the rescue ship from his downed "Little Annie Fannie," clutching the precious logbook in his teeth (below). That photograph was taken by WO Francis K. McGinnity on the rescue ship. Above, author McIntosh's chopper heads for home



“We snatched it

“Two’s out, breaking right, taking fire from the left and right in the LZ.”

“Two, this is Lead; you alright?” Before we could answer, “Lead, this is Three, I’m losing fuel fast. It’s all over the floor.”

“This is Lead; can you make it out, Three?”

“We’re not staying in this hole! Three’s coming out.”

“This is Sidewinder Eight, we’ve got you Three. Come on out—take it easy.”

“Three’s out. Lead, I just got my fuel warning light.”

“Roger, Three. Set her down. Pick a spot and set her down.”

“Three, this is Two. There’s a pretty good area at your two o’clock about 300 meters.”

“Roger, I’ve got it. I’m taking her in. Cover me, Sidewinders.”

“We’re with you, we’ll have you out in a minute.” There had only been three loads in the LZ. The number four aircraft was brought along as a cover ship. Now this idea paid off in full, and the rescue and salvage operation which followed was an example of discipline and professionalism.

“This is Four. I’m going in to get him.”

The aircraft commander of the lead ship was our operations officer. He was also our command and control. It was his brilliant evasive action and tactics which enabled us to insert the small recon teams into the heart of the enemy-infested territory. This same leadership enabled us to extract them at a moment’s notice—often from the very jaws of a VC trap. Now, though he maintained the call sign of Lead, he resumed his role of Command and Control, and the cool, easy tone of his voice instilled confidence where it might have ebbed for an instant.

“This is Lead. Roger, Four, just get the crew and head for home base. I’ll get the radios. Three, don’t forget your log book.”

“This is Three. I’m on the ground. No injuries to personnel, no further damage to the aircraft. Going off the air at this time.”

On the ground, the troops on board the downed ship quickly spread out into a defensive peri-

meter. They were 500 meters from the LZ. Charlie was close. A helicopter and crew was a rich prize. He would be getting closer.

Back at base camp, Sidewinder Seven had been monitoring the radios. Both his ships had been shot up and were in need of maintenance attention. As soon as it became evident that a ship was going down, he scrambled his team and was on his way to the scene.

“Two, this is Lead. What’s your position?”

“Two is orbiting at one-five hundred.”

“As soon as Four gets the crew, take your troops in as a security force.”

“We’re on our way.”

“Four’s coming out with the crew.”

“This is Lead. Roger Four. Head for home base and have them get a reaction force ready to go.”

“Four. Roger.”

We took our troops in, and as we climbed out, Lead went in after the radios. We picked up an orbit at 2,500 feet and called our base, Warlord Control, at Long Binh, filling them in on the situation so they could work through their own channels. The radio traffic increased tremendously as everyone seemed to be calling at the same time. Seeing how this could give rise to serious complications, we climbed another thousand feet and acted as radio relay. I checked the instruments. Fuel was down to 380 pounds. We would be well into our 20-minute reserve before we got back to



The valuable radios are removed from the downed helicopter. Bullet holes are visible, showing why the craft was forced down so abruptly

from the jaws of the VC...

home base. We didn't have much time on station. I tried to think of what moves should be next. We had three slicks available to put in a reaction force to secure the ship through the night. It would take quite a force. Charlie would go to any lengths to destroy a helicopter which was a winged bird right in his own back yard. If we could only get a Chinook here before night closed in—and Charlie with it—we could pluck that bird right from his jaws. But that possibility seemed too remote. Already the shadows reached way out to the east, shrouding the lower portions of the landscape in the gloom that was so precious to the enemy. It would be a rough night for the security force. But Lead had not been so pessimistic as I. Little did I know

that he had already had Pipesmoke recovery team contacted on a separate radio channel, and right at this moment a Chinook and recovery crew were being sent to the location of the downed bird. It would be a race against time.

I began to get worried about Lead. He'd been down there almost four minutes now. I turned to my AC, "What the hell's taking him so long?" His answer was laconic, "He's getting the radios." I looked at the fuel gauge. This was going to be close. We orbited another minute. "Lead, you all right?"

"Roger, Lead's coming out. Cover me Sidewinders."

"We're with you, Lead."

The VC wasted no time in getting there. As Lead crossed the tree line they opened fire from directly below him and to his front. "Lead taking fire, breaking right, Sidewinders, breaking right."

SWISH—WHUMP!! The Sidewinder's rockets blasted the VC position seconds after they had taken Lead under fire. These were followed immediately by the dead-ly sing-song chorus of twin miniguns.

"You all right, Lead?"

"Lead. Roger. I think I took a couple of hits, but the bird feels OK. I'll have to check her out on the ground." As he climbed out we fell in behind him and headed for home base.

By this time Four had dropped the downed crew off and had refueled at Tay Ninh. "Lead, this is Four. What are your instructions. Over."

"Looking good, Four. Stay in the air for radio relay and head out to the downed bird. Coordinate with Pipesmoke and guide him in if he gets there before I do. I may have taken a couple of rounds getting those radios out of there. I'll have to shut this thing down and check her out." As Lead touched down at the base camp, the gaping crowd that gathered around his chopper, staring in disbelief, confirmed his suspicions. Fourteen hits, and one of them through the engine combus-



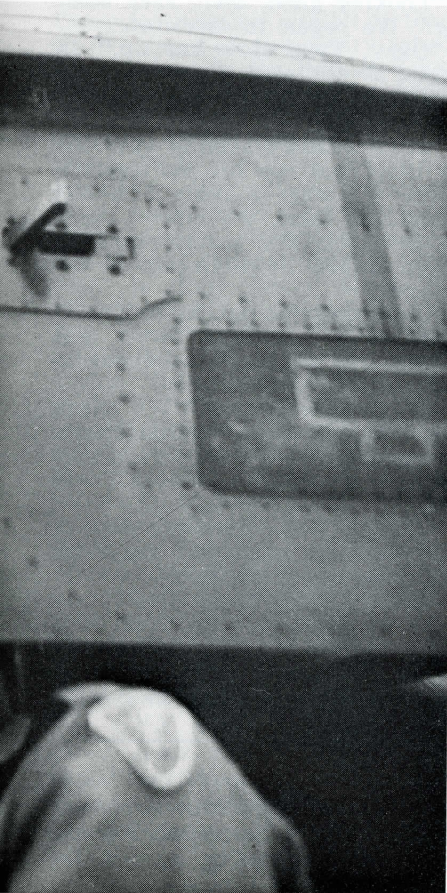
The action took place near Nui Ba Den, where outnumbered Americans had to be extracted before nightfall

tion chamber! A quick glance at the punctured skin of the aircraft was sufficient to dictate their next course of action. Out of the cockpit before the blades had even stopped, they grabbed their gear and hopped into the cockpit of 208, one of our Warlord courier ships from Long Binh. They cranked her up and were off again, leaving a crowd of ground troops and Vietnamese civilians to marvel at their bullet-riddled ship.

We refueled and shut down at the base camp to await the decision to take out the reaction force or to extract the security force now guarding the ship. A close inspection of the ship revealed only one bullet hole in the main rotor blade. We had been very lucky so far.

An excited GI burst out of the operations tent, running like a bat out of hell and frantically rotating his hand around his head, the signal to crank her up. "The Chinook's only a few minutes out from the downed ship. Head on out for the extraction." We whisked old 562 into the air as if the world were on fire, anxious to be doing anything but sitting on the ground at a time like this.

It was twilight now, and in the twenty minutes we would take to get out there it would be full night. I wondered if the Chinook



“A beautiful night to be flying . . .

was being harassed by the VC. As we passed Nui Ba Den, we heard over the radio that the Huey was about to be lifted out. I could just see Charlie treating the big hook to a sizzling banquet of lead as it hovered over the Huey, tempting and vulnerable in the gray gloom of half night. But the next transmission was not the spine-chilling MAYDAY we expected. The Chinook was calling clear as he headed for the early stars with his precious cargo secured. The crew of 562 let out yell of joy like kids at a football game. We had snatched this valuable prey from the hungry jaws of the VC without a minute to spare. Again it was professionalism and courage that won the day. The salvage crew had worked smoothly and quickly. The Huey was rigged, hooked and lifted out with no

damage to equipment and no injuries to personnel. The blanket of suppressive fire laid down by the Sidewinders deprived the enemy of any opportunity to fire at the salvage aircraft or crew. The ship was saved. Now came the touchy part of extracting the troops in contact at night.

When we arrived at the location, Four had already climbed out with his shipload of the security force. The night was a confusing maze of flashing beacons and red and green lights as the Sidewinders kept up their deadly suppressive orbit. We established altitude separation to avoid a mid-air collision and Lead started in for his load.

“Lead, this is Four. Go in to the South and watch out for those little trees in there. It’s hairy.” The grass in the LZ was tall and

even with a landing light it was impossible to pin-point the exact location of the ground troops. When Lead was on short final, one of the ground troops began to give him a modified GCA using a PRC 25 FM radio. With some hasty course correction and a crazy flare at the bottom, Lead made it in safely. I hoped we could do the same. To roll it up trying to get into that impossible spot at night on the very last lift would just ruin a perfect day. It was Lead’s ingenuity and courage that provided an answer.

“Two, this is Lead. We’ll sit here with our landing light on to guide you in. When you get on short final, we’ll get out of here and you can shoot to our spot.” I knew right then that he was one leader I would follow anywhere without a moment’s hesitation. We started in.

“Looking good, Two, keep coming.” We began to decelerate.

“Okay, Two, slow her up.” 40 knots. 20 knots.

“Okay, Lead, we can take it from here.”

“Roger. Lead’s coming out.” As he lifted out we hit our searchlight. We were a little hot, but thanks to Lead, we landed right on the spot. The troops were on board before the pitch was on the bottom.

“How many do you have, Two?”

A quick check; “Two’s got seven.” All we would need was to leave a man in that LZ!

“Two’s coming out.” We eased the ship up into the blackness, and as soon as we were sure that we had cleared the trees, “Two’s out.”

“Roger, Two. Smelling like a rose. Lets go home and get some hot chow and a shower.”

“This is Two. Roger that!”

As we climbed away from that unhealthy jungle, I thought it was a beautiful night to be flying; to be talking; to be smiling; just to be.



A crew member checks out “Little Annie Fannie” after she is returned home. The ship was repaired quickly, is now operating against the enemy that failed to end her use

Phuoc Long

Siberia of South Vietnam

story and photos

by Lieutenant Pierre Loomis

It was a routine day in Song Be, South Vietnam. Compared to Saigon, 75 miles to the south, the temperature was pleasant. A refreshing breeze was coming out of the surrounding hills.

Supper was good—especially when one considers that all supplies for Phuoc Long province must come in by air; the VC control the roads. The ham was cooked just right; the beans were the same as canned beans anywhere; but the instant mashed potatoes—well... The coffee was hot, too hot. It was 6:15 p.m.

Then five mortar rounds slammed into Song Be. The first three hit about 200 meters away. The last two, however, were close—no more than 50 meters from the mess hall. But everyone was on the floor by then—pressing into the concrete.

The warning siren wailed over the compound and then stopped. Nothing but silence—an eerie, uneasy silence.

Lieutenant Colonel Bernard E. Reiter is the province senior ad-



Phuoc Long . . .

visor for Phuoc Long. "Five rounds," he thought. "Is that all?"

A few more minutes passed, and nothing happened. The colonel walked outside and sounded the horn on a jeep to signal the "all-clear."

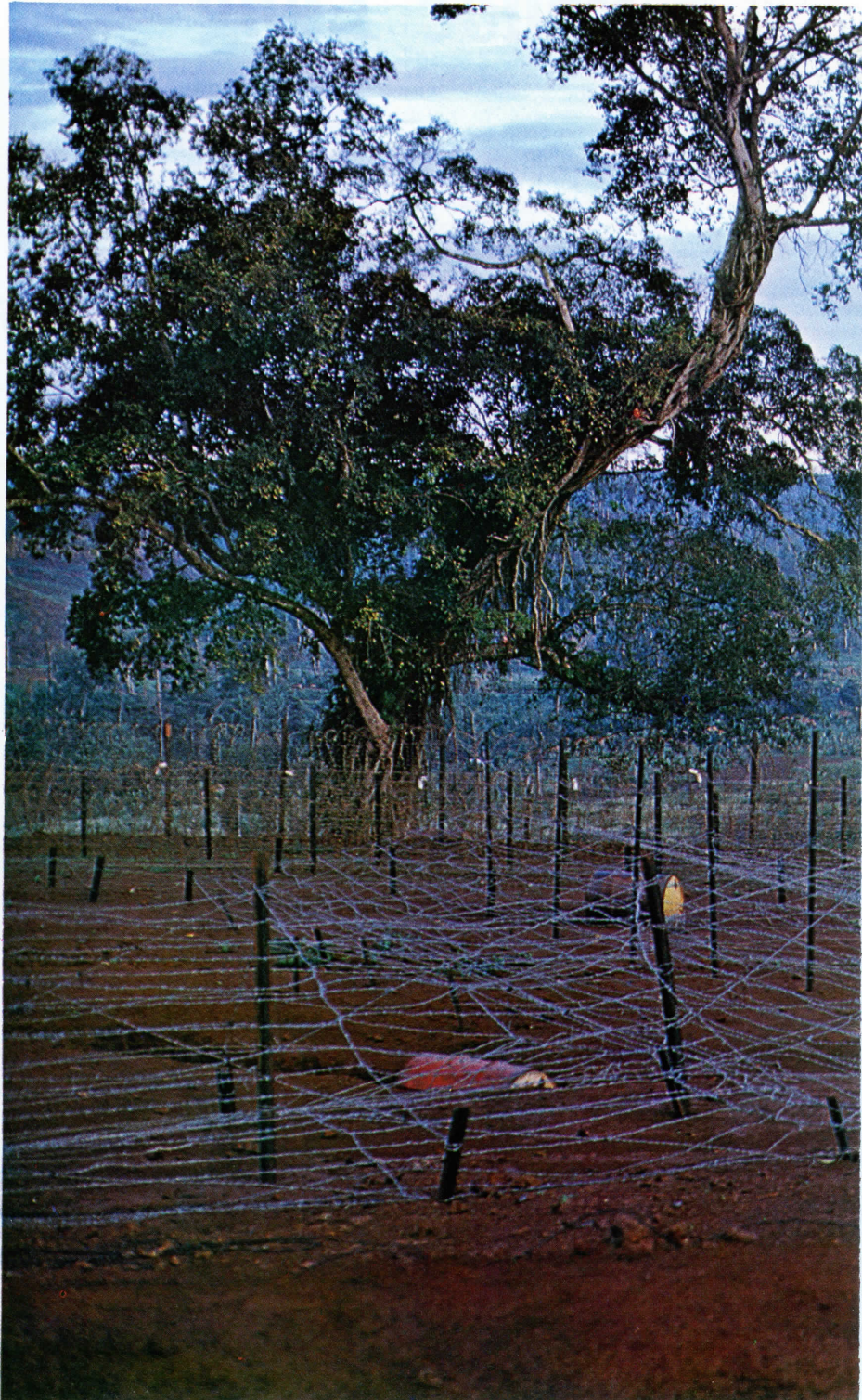
The mess hall began to fill up, and the murmur of voices returned to a normal level. It was just a routine attack. Colonel Reiter sat down and looked at his coffee. It was stone cold. And it was only 6:30. Darkness was just descending upon Phuoc Long province.

The wilderness of Phuoc Long sprawls in the northern section of the III Corps Tactical Zone. The 2,000 square miles of this province consist mostly of rugged jungle terrain, broken countless times by streams and rivers. Wild animals abound, and if it were not for the war that rages throughout the land, Phuoc Long would have some of the world's best hunting. Tiger, leopard, bear, rhinoceros, and baboons are known to roam the jungles. Army and Air Force Forward Air Controllers (FAC's), during their observation flights over the province, have even seen elephants wandering about.

Phuoc Long has been called the "last frontier" of the III Corps area for more than one reason. North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers control 95 percent of the land area in the province. They operate almost at will in their jungle stronghold—fearing only allied air and artillery strikes.

The enemy use Phuoc Long as one of their major infiltration routes from Cambodia into South Vietnam. They have constructed a major road that runs generally south from the Cambodian border for 80 miles into War Zone "D". This road, constructed by bulldozers, is capable of handling large truck traffic. Compared to the other infiltration routes that are usually a series of parallel trails, this road, says Colonel Reiter, "is a real expressway."

Song Be, the capital of Phuoc Long, is one of the few scattered government-held islands or com-



Government controlled areas in Phuoc Long consist of islands, strongly defended and totally isolated



Phuoc Long

munities that are sprinkled throughout the province. It is isolated by miles of dense, enemy-infested jungle. Each settlement is entirely dependent on supplies flown in by air. The province needs—and receives—an average of 10 cargo flights each day to survive.

The United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam (USMACV) has the advisory responsibility for the province. District advisory teams are currently operational in Bo Duc and Phuoc Binh, and an American Special Forces "B" Detachment is in Song Be. "A" teams are operating in Don Luan, Bunard and Duc Phong.

Colonel Reiter feels that "the province is a potential gold mine." Pointing to a large map of Phuoc Long, the colonel outlined hundreds of square miles of rubber plantations. "These plantations haven't been touched for years," he said. The rest of the map shows countless miles of virgin timber. This timber—much of it valuable teak—and rubber are the greatest natural resources of the province. They represent the immense amount of wealth that has yet to be developed. The presence of North Vietnamese Army troops prevents exploitation.

Some 46,000 people live in Phuoc Long and 90 per cent of them are under government control. Of this number, almost 35,000 are Vietnamese. The rest are Montagnards (9,700), Cambodians (1,500) and Chinese (350). They make their living in many different ways. The Vietnamese for the most part are engaged in some form of commerce, are storekeepers or do some form of government work. The allied military forces stationed in the area are mostly Vietnamese.

The Montagnards, or mountaineers, are probably the most colorful people living in Vietnam. Nomads at heart, these primitive people are hunters, fishermen and trappers. They also sell firewood to Vietnamese. Some young men from the scattered Montagnard tribes serve as soldiers in the Popular and Regional Forces.

The few Chinese that live in Phuoc Long are storekeepers. They run the small number of restaurants and drug stores found in the province.

Almost one-third of the people in Phuoc Long are refugees. This

puts a great burden on the Government of Vietnam, and the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese know it. The enemy purposely burns down homes to make the people refugees. The enemy is not above destroying a whole village. The now deserted ruins of Dak Son, where scores of villagers were murdered, are mute testimony to the desperation of enemy attacks. These acts of terror put even greater pressure on the province's struggling refugee program. And it puts more pressure on the already strained air supply lines, for these people must be fed.

Agriculture plays an important part in the life of Phuoc Long, as it does in all of Vietnam. Although the enemy controls most of the fertile land, the province still manages to be self-sufficient for three months of the year. In the many small plots scattered throughout the villages, the people grow rice, sweet potatoes, vegetables, sugar cane, coffee, fruit and peanuts. Soon Phuoc Long may have a



All supplies must be flown into the province, but Phuoc Long is self-sustaining three months each year

small fish industry in operation. The Government of Vietnam has given 19,000 fingerlings to the province in the hopes that the Song Be river, and its countless tributaries, will help support the people.

Education has long been a problem in Phuoc Long. The province has more than 4,000 school children and of these, only 300 are in high school. But the biggest problem is the teacher shortage; there are only 122 teachers in the province. When prospective Vietnamese teachers finish their training, they are assigned a school. After two years in that school, they can put in for a transfer, and most teachers assigned to Phuoc

Long do this. A teaching job in Saigon certainly is more attractive and much safer than one in Song Be.

Dr. Nguyen Duy Cung is the Province Medical Chief. "He is," according to Col. Reiter, "an excellent doctor and a dedicated man." Doctor Nguyen operates the 88-bed province hospital in Song Be. The hospital also handles between 50 and 100 out-patients daily. On his trips to the outlying communities, Doctor Nguyen has found that the biggest medical problems in Phuoc Long are malaria, diarrhea, and ulcerated sores. Much progress, however, has been made. The malaria problem has been reduced by insect spraying, and sanitation, though still a major cause for concern, has been improved. Doctor Nguyen is receiving some help, too. A 16-man US Army MILPHAP (Military Health Assistance Program) team has been assigned to the province for two years, and a new X-ray machine was recently installed. The MILPHAP team has vastly improved the hospital's capabilities.

Phuoc Long was created as a province in March, 1957. It is divided into four districts: Phuoc Binh, Bo Duc, Don Luan and Duc Phuong. Years ago, lowlanders dared not venture into most of the province. This was especially true for Bo Duc, which was known to be nothing but wild jungle. These wild areas were the home of the gods, and the S'Tieng tribe of Montagnards was considered dangerous. Ferocious animals roamed at will. Phuoc Long was a place to be avoided. Even today, Phuoc Long is considered the "Siberia" of the III Corps area.

But now, men like Col. Reiter are in Phuoc Long. Although their activities are restricted to five government controlled "islands" in a hostile sea, they have made progress. Health, sanitation, living conditions and education—to mention a few—are better for their presence, but, in the words of Robert Frost, they "have miles to go before (they) sleep."

Phuoc Long translated means "Happy Dragon," and in the months or years ahead, when the enemy ceases his invasion from the north, the Happy Dragon will be free again. He won't be restricted to five secure "islands," he will be free to scamper to the top of Nui Ba Ra, the highest point in the province, or to splash about in the Song Be river. And when the dragon is happy, the people will be, too.

Land Clearing Teams

"Jungle Eaters"

Deny Charlie a Place to Hide

by 20th Brigade IO

photos by PFC Rod Sehorne

The rough and tumble men of the 20th Engineer Brigade's Land Clearing Teams have eradicated more than 111,000 acres of jungle in III Corps Tactical Zone in their first year in country, denying the enemy bases necessary for his war effort.

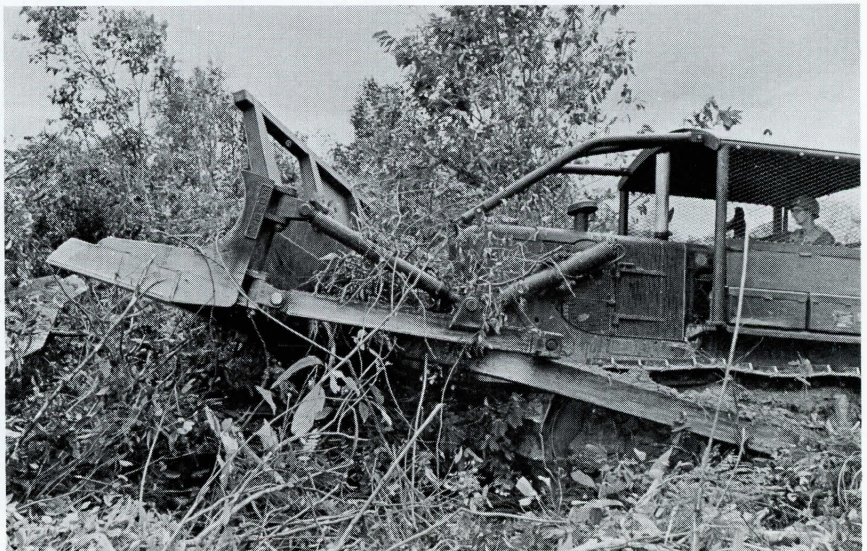
The success of the 20th Brigade has been attributed to a tremendously powerful "Super-Weapon," the Rome Plow. But it is the men who jockey the powerful dozers that have made the dream a reality. The men have difficult and dangerous jobs—temperatures of more than 130 degrees have been recorded in the cabs and the dozers often hit mines and booby traps. But the men have taken the dirt and the difficulty and the danger and reacted with a "gung ho" spirit.

The men of the land clearing teams aren't pretty to look at.

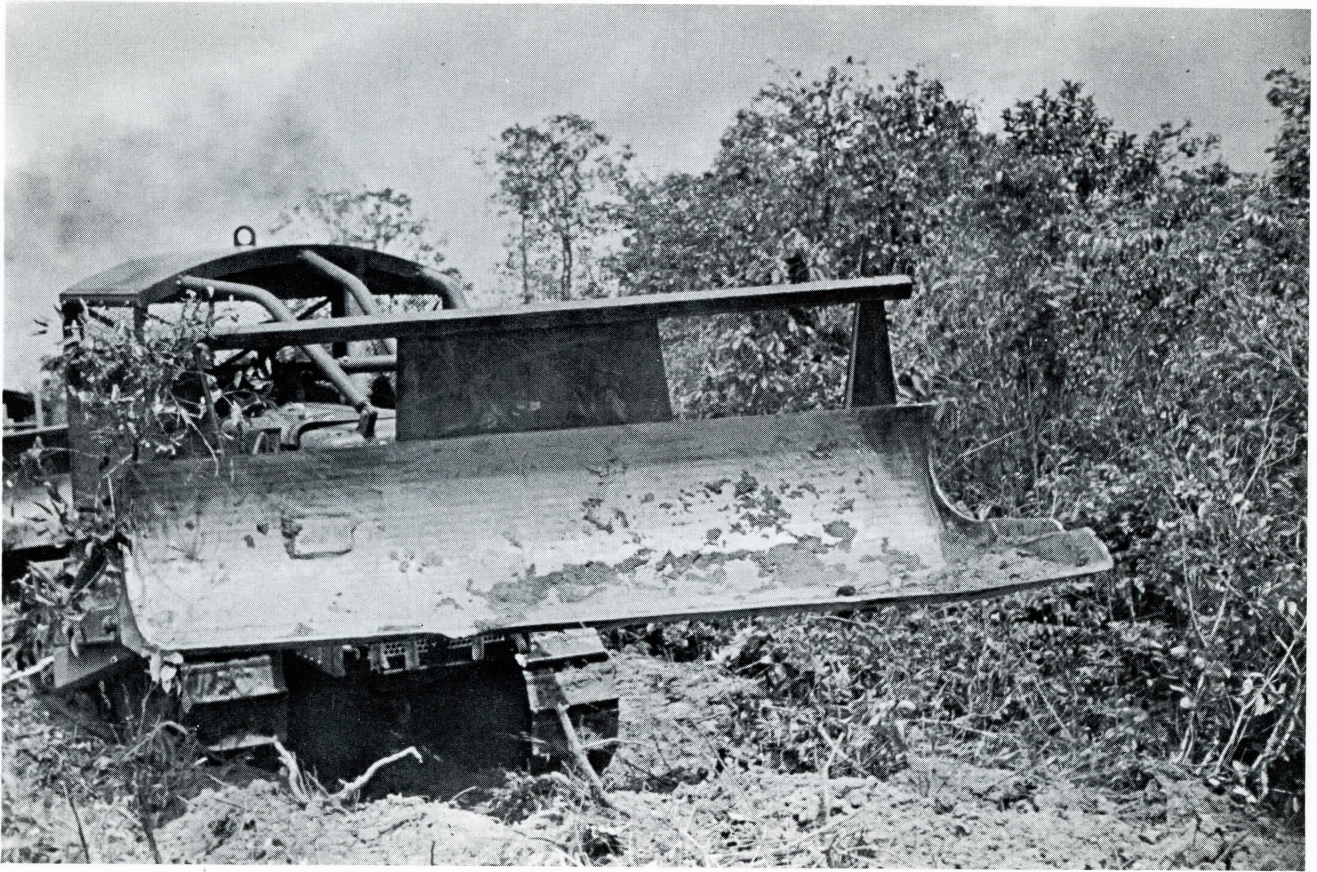
They're dirty. They're unshaven. They need haircuts. They don't wear shirts. They don't wear hats. And, when they can get away with it, they don't wear shoes and they don't wear socks. Their Rome Plows have names like "Hey Boy," and "Indiana Chapter of Jungle Bunnies" and "Doctor Death." Within their units they settle their

differences with action and not talk. They band together with fierce loyalty to repel outsiders. They have taken the tribulations of their jobs and built them into a mystique.

"Just look at them," said Lieutenant Rodger Warren, commander of the 168th Army Engineer Battalion Land Clearing Task Force, the



Life isn't easy for the men who cut the jungle. It's hot, it's dangerous and the omnipresent dirt seems to become part of them. But they react with a tremendous "gung ho" spirit

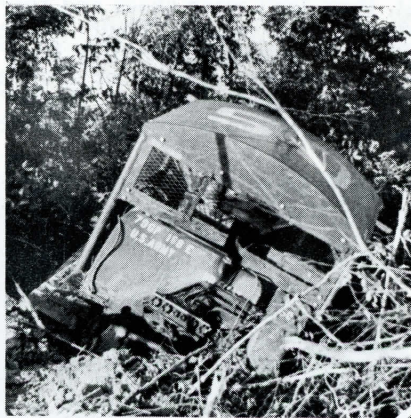


The "stinger" on the end of the blade cuts down the toughest tree

"Jungle Eaters." "Grubbiest bunch I've ever seen. But they've got pride. This is no place for anybody with a lot of fancy ideas, or high sounding talk," he continued. "These guys are out here to clear jungle and you learn to lay off 'em."

Their "Super-Weapon," the Rome Plow, isn't a plow at all. It's a custom designed, special purpose blade built by the Rome Plow Company of Cedartown, Georgia, and used on the powerful D7E Bulldozer, organic to engineer units.

It is referred to as a blade because it actually has a cutting edge which is sharpened daily. It is mounted on a diagonal, rather than perpendicular to the forward thrust of the dozer, and has a three-foot, sharpened spike, called the "stinger," which protrudes from the lower left corner of the blade. The blade is 'canted' to the right and there is a heavy guide bar about three feet above the blade. The diagonal 'cant' and the guide bar cause the trees and brush



The brutish Rome Plow can go a surprising number of places and come back in one piece, ready for action

that are cut to fall off to the right of the dozer. The stinger is used to split trees too large to be readily cut by the sharpened blade.

When working together, the plows cut a counter-clockwise circle in an echelon left formation so

that debris is pushed to the cleared side and does not interfere as the circle diminishes. From the air, plows employed in this style of "area" clearing look like lawn mowers cutting a millionaire's back yard. The dozers use another method which has proved effective in heavy underbrush and light trees. A 500-foot length of Navy anchor chain is pulled by two 7E dozers. The dozers run parallel and approximately 60 to 100 feet apart with the chain forming a giant "U" shape behind them, cutting down everything in its path.

There are three principal types of land clearing which serve three different purposes. The first type is "area" clearing, used to clear vast tracts of jungle, usually in an area of repeated VC activity. By removing the dense cover, the engineers are able to deny its use to the enemy.

The second type is trace clearing. This method is often used in place of 'area' clearing since there is an ever increasing demand for clearing and only limited re-

They're Proud of Their Name . . .

sources. 'Trace' clearing is simply cutting swaths, usually 200-500 meters wide, through VC infested areas. This system does not completely deny the area to the VC as does 'area' clearing, but it is effective since it limits enemy movement. The 'traces' allow much better observation of an area and provide easy access by both helicopters and track vehicles to conduct operations in the area.

The third distinctive type, called LOC clearing, cuts 100 to 300 meter swaths on either side of major Lines of Communication. This clearing eliminates ambush sites and makes the road considerably safer for both military and civilian travel. More than 100 miles of roadside have been cleared from Highway TL 4 north of Tay Ninh to QL 1 east of Saigon, and throughout the III Corps Tactical Zone.

The land clearing effort and resources of the 20th Engineer Brigade are organized into two teams, the 27th LCT, 168th Engineer Battalion, 79th Engineer Group and the 86th LCT, 86th Engineer Battalion, 34th Engineer Group. Each team consists of 30 Rome Plows and approximately 100 men, including operators, maintenance men, NCO's and officers. The teams receive rations and security from the tactical units they support. They may be deployed in any number from a single plow to the entire team depending on the size and priority of the operation, or both teams may work together on a single project.

Sometimes their missions are exceptionally difficult. In the height of last year's rainy season, the Jungle Eaters were in the Ho Bo Woods area near Cu Chi. It was one of those missions where everything seemed to go wrong. The jungle floor was strewn with VC



The stinger has split the tree and the operator attacks it with the main part of the blade. The tree is doomed and the enemy exposed

They're the Jungle Eaters



mines. The monsoon rain came down, in torrents. The base camp flooded out. The Rome Plows bogged down, deeper and deeper in the quagmire. Then, one night when things looked their worst, the Viet Cong attacked.

Fighting as infantry and not as mechanics or tractor drivers, the land clearing troops blazed away in return. No one has ever determined just how many VC there were. But when daylight returned to the muddy scene, the VC were gone and the task force was still there.

The men of the 27th like to talk about their jobs. . . Driving a Rome Plow is not very complicated, according to SP4 Laurence Beasley.

"You learn how to put that stinger in a tree just right—not too high and not too low—and you knock it right down. If the tree doesn't go over on the first try, you back up and stick it again. A new guy has to do it three or four times on a big tree. But once you learn the trick, it's a lot of fun seeing those trees crash over.

"The mines are always a problem, but the dozer usually takes

most of the shock and gives the driver some protection. One of the big worries that I have is that Charlie might jump up out of the jungle and hop right into the cab with me. That and the red ants, they're the worst of all. Hit a tree with a nest of them in it and you get thousands of them crawling all over."

The equipment takes an equal beating. That's where Warrant Officer Charles V. Lane fits in. He's the maintenance engineer technician. It's his job and that of the mechanics to keep the dozers running—all \$1,160,000 worth of them.

"You take each problem as it comes up and somehow you figure out a solution," Lane said. "No one gives any credit to the maintenance man, but you don't cut jungle with broken plows. These kids will work all night long, every night, to keep those dozers running if they have to."

In the midst of all this, Lieutenant Warren, the boss of the outfit, seems completely out of character. He's slightly pudgy, with a round boyish face and a crew cut. But he talks the language of the troops.

"A guy gets up at 5 a.m. and goes out and cuts jungle from dawn to dusk, then comes back to the base camp and pitches in on maintenance until 1 o'clock the next morning. Four hours later he's ready to go back out and cut more jungle. You don't chew on him because his hair's an inch too long, or he needs a shave or because he takes his dog along in the cab with him.

"I've got no discipline problems. The drivers make sure the mechanics keep the equipment running. The mechanics make sure the drivers don't ruin it. They have their own little ways of making sure no one goofs up.

"I guess," Warren said with a smile, "that maybe they aren't too civilized. Back at Di An everybody else hates them. They're Jungle Eaters and they're proud of that name. They earned it."



THE BETEL AND THE ARECA TREE

A Vietnamese Legend

During the reign of King Duong there lived a mandarin named Cao. Cao had two sons who resembled each other like two drops of water. Both sons were handsome, respected each other very much, and were never seen apart. While the brothers were still young, a fire burned down their house and killed their parents. To avoid charity, the young brothers went into the world searching for work.

The brothers, Tan and Lang, went to the house of Luu, an old family friend. Luu had no sons of his own, but had a beautiful daughter named Kato. Both brothers were welcomed into the family, and to tighten the bonds of friendship within the new family Luu offered to give Kato in marriage to one of the young men. Tan and Lang both wanted to marry Kato but both hid their feelings, each not wanting to hurt the other. Luu decided the elder should marry his daughter, and decided on a little trick to find the older brother. He placed two bowls of rice with one pair of chopsticks before Tan and Lang. Lang picked up the chopsticks and passed them to Tan, who accepted them naturally. Luu immediately chose Tan to be the husband of his daughter.

Tan was very happy, and spent most of his time composing love poems for his new wife. Lang felt unwanted, and one day decided to leave. He walked and walked, and soon reached the sea. He sat by the sea and wept until he died of grief, and was changed into a white, chalky rock.

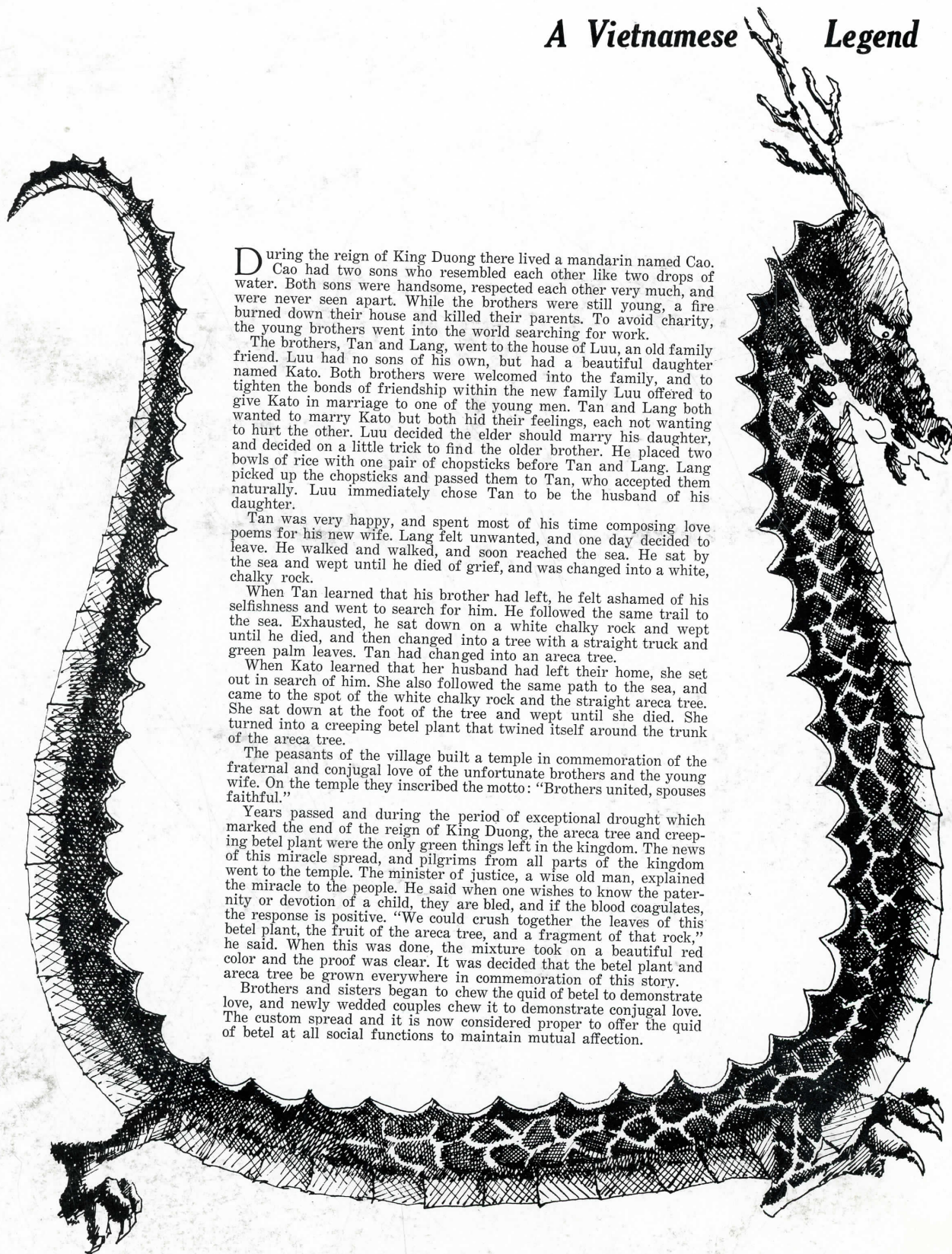
When Tan learned that his brother had left, he felt ashamed of his selfishness and went to search for him. He followed the same trail to the sea. Exhausted, he sat down on a white chalky rock and wept until he died, and then changed into a tree with a straight trunk and green palm leaves. Tan had changed into an areca tree.

When Kato learned that her husband had left their home, she set out in search of him. She also followed the same path to the sea, and came to the spot of the white chalky rock and the straight areca tree. She sat down at the foot of the tree and wept until she died. She turned into a creeping betel plant that twined itself around the trunk of the areca tree.

The peasants of the village built a temple in commemoration of the fraternal and conjugal love of the unfortunate brothers and the young wife. On the temple they inscribed the motto: "Brothers united, spouses faithful."

Years passed and during the period of exceptional drought which marked the end of the reign of King Duong, the areca tree and creeping betel plant were the only green things left in the kingdom. The news of this miracle spread, and pilgrims from all parts of the kingdom went to the temple. The minister of justice, a wise old man, explained the miracle to the people. He said when one wishes to know the paternity or devotion of a child, they are bled, and if the blood coagulates, the response is positive. "We could crush together the leaves of this betel plant, the fruit of the areca tree, and a fragment of that rock," he said. When this was done, the mixture took on a beautiful red color and the proof was clear. It was decided that the betel plant and areca tree be grown everywhere in commemoration of this story.

Brothers and sisters began to chew the quid of betel to demonstrate love, and newly wedded couples chew it to demonstrate conjugal love. The custom spread and it is now considered proper to offer the quid of betel at all social functions to maintain mutual affection.





Education in Vietnam
See page 6