



FIRST LIGHT -- two men from 2nd Squadron's F Troop sit atop their Sheridan at dawn.

11th ACR, Vietnamese medics work side by side

A major part of 3rd Squadron's operations in Tan Uyen Province involves the work of the squadron's civil affairs team and medics to assist the local Vietnamese and gain their confidence.

Medcaps, held at least three times a week, work in cooperation with Vietnamese civilian medical personnel. Vietnamese medics, usually women, work side by side with the Bandit medics in the treatment of villagers.

These hospital-trained nurses have demonstrated a great deal of medical knowledge, as well as a willingness to help their own people. "Many times they have advised me on which medical treatment I should be using," says Specialist 5 John Kennedy, the surgeon's assistant for 3rd Squadron. "Their advice usually turns out to be precisely the right procedure."

Along with the squadron civil affairs team, the medics have been working in two villages, Tan Binh and Binh My, as well as the hamlet of Binh Co. "We have been able to give

continuous care because we visit the villages so often," explains Captain George Barton, the squadron civil affairs officer. "In Cambodia we might have seen an individual patient twice if we were lucky. We were always on the move, and consequently we could not give the care we wanted to."

Captain Barton's civil affairs team has been trying to identify the special needs of the villagers and to discover and begin

dealing with any environmental problems in the area.

In connection with the squadron's program, Armed Propaganda Teams made up of eight Hoi Chanh are going into the villages and speaking with the people. These former VC soldiers, trained in psychological operations techniques, are playing an important part in the pacification program, gathering intelligence and explaining their experiences to the people.

BLACKHORSE



— Find the Bastards — Then Pile On —

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"Only excuse is that you want to die"

"My friends approached me and asked me if I needed help. That was at the time when I thought I was under control. I thought I didn't need it. I kept on snorting, and I finally got to a point where I started asking myself why I kept using it. Finally I recognized that there was only one answer — I was addicted to it."

The speaker was a 19-year-old enlisted man who has been with the 11th ACR 10 months. Until two weeks before the interview, he was addicted to heroin. He is still recovering from the effects of his addiction, which he overcame after he turned himself in to get some help. As part of his unit's amnesty program, no disciplinary action has been taken against him.

Although he had sometimes smoked marijuana, it was not until the Regiment had moved to Di An, more than seven months after his tour in Vietnam had begun, that he first used hard drugs.

A Vietnamese offered to sell him some stuff, telling him it was cocaine. It was really a compound that was 90% heroin — a stronger mixture than anything available in the United States.

"I was the kind of person that didn't question what it was," he recalls. "That's why a lot of people are in the same trouble I was in — they don't want to question it. It's too easy not to. People don't care to know what they're getting into."

He started taking heroin, and the

practice grew to the point where he was taking it several times a day, "whenever I felt I needed it." He took his doses by "snorting", a common practice in Vietnam. It is done by putting the heroin up to the nose and sniffing it.

"People think that it is not addictive that way, but it is, either mentally or physically, or maybe even both."

"I came to the point, after using it for about a month and a half, where I had to keep telling myself that I had no problem, that I could control it. But that's actually the time you're addicted, or at least it was for me. By the time you realize you are addicted, you've gone quite a way past the real signs."

Getting a high became a very important part of his life. Describing the need of an addict, he says, "You feel that your body needs it, or your mind needs it. You think that you have to have it in order to be, what is in your mind, normal, and without heroin you're abnormal. Reality is the high."

But being an addict was, for him, more than a high. "I was able to make myself do my work, but the side effects were pretty bad. I couldn't eat, couldn't go to the bathroom. My body seemed to be all plugged up. When I did eat, I vomited. My sleeping habits became disrupted, I couldn't sleep at night. I became nauseated."

Finally, he went to a doctor. "I talked to him about my problem and told him that if I needed any medical assistance, I

wanted it. He told me that he'd help me and that if I ever wanted to come and see him, to do it. It's helped."

At that point he did not know about the drug amnesty program, which is in effect throughout the Regiment. "I wasn't too sure how the Army treated people who were addicted. Basically you have the feeling that if you go to them, someone's going to throw you into jail for a long time. I thought there was a chance I would end up with a dishonorable discharge, but I was desperate, so I took that chance."

He decided that he did not want to go into the hospital to be brought down by different drugs. "I wanted to expose myself to everything that I had done to myself."

"It was worse than I expected. I hadn't realized what a cold turkey withdrawal was like. I had severe head and back aches, my legs ached, and I was vomiting. I couldn't eat very much food and keep it down. I had no appetite. I had a very bad case of diarrhea which lasted for a long time."

The worst period came three days after he had gone off the heroin and lasted three or four days. Two weeks after he had stopped, he was still suffering from occasional headaches, backaches, and leg aches.

Why did he let himself in for all this? "I enjoyed smoking marijuana, and I thought I might get a better high. The reason I started taking heroin is because I

Combined operations continue

The month of September saw most of the contact with the enemy occurring in the 3rd Squadron area of operations. The Bandit troopers killed 10 VC/NVA, and Regional Forces soldiers, working with these Blackhorse troopers, killed another two.

On September 18, just before I Troop left their NDP for the day's operations with the 237th Regional Forces Company, a VC soldier appeared outside the troop's perimeter and chieu hoied. He told the 3rd Squadron troopers that he had sneaked away from his unit because he was tired of fighting the war.

The squadron moved its fire base a mile closer to Di An and named it Fire Support Base Bandit II.

First Squadron continued running joint operations with Regional Forces Companies and completed its Rome Plow operation in September.

On September 13, A Troopers together with the ARPs of the Air Cav Troop converged on a complex of 37 bunkers.

On September 14, B Troop conducted a joint operation with the 233rd and 185th Regional Forces Companies from the Duc

Tu District. The Regional Forces soldiers swept through the district while B Troop served as the reaction force. Twenty VC suspects were apprehended during the operation.

In a similar operation, the squadron worked with 2/43rd ARVN in a cordon and search operation. A and B Troops and D Company formed a giant horseshoe, and the ARVNs swept through it.

After stand down, 2nd Squadron moved to its new AO, 100 miles east of Di An, where it was placed under the operational control of the 1st Cav.

The troopers left early the morning of Sept. 6 and established a temporary base camp on the east side of Gia Ray Mountain, 30 miles east of Xuan Loc. The next morning, E Troop and the 919th Engineers moved out to begin work on Fire Support Base Bolan. Headquarters Troop, How Battery, and H Company followed the next day, while the line troops took up night defensive positions along Highway 1.

The old 199th Light Infantry Brigade Fire Base Riviera is serving as the Squadron's forward support area. Resupply began moving through Riviera as soon as the Squadron was settled in the AO.

Operations began Sept. 9 when the three line troops established a screen, or blocking force, south of Nui Ong Mountain while 1st Cav troopers searched the area.

Since the operation was far to the north of FSB Bolan, the Squadron set up a mini-fire base, consisting of three 155's, to provide artillery support. A platoon from H Company secured the Hows.

was afraid I would get caught smoking marijuana. The only reason a lot of people snort is because they don't want to get caught smoking."

He does not believe in any of the excuses often given for drug use, such as boredom or excessive anxiety about being in Vietnam. He did not see himself as a member of an anti-war, drug-oriented culture. He supported the aims of the United States in Vietnam before he came over here, and he still does.

"I was addicted because I wanted to be. You can't make excuses about being addicted to a hard drug. In my opinion, the only excuse is that you want to die or become a person without a function, because that's what you are."

His reason for getting off drugs is simple. "I like to feel like I'm a real person."

Convinced now of the danger of drugs, he assists in his unit's anti-drug education program. "I want people to know my feelings on the situation. A lot of people I know want help. They want to go home the same way as anyone else. I know I was waiting for someone to come up and give me a little advice."

"I did not enjoy being addicted to drugs and I can say that all the others don't either."

There is one lesson he has learned from his experience, one that he readily volunteers. "If I had the chance to do it again, I wouldn't."

Commander's message

The trooper's finest hour

It is good for a man's soul for him to look from time to time outside of himself and his own sphere for inspiration and perspective. I would like, therefore, to share with you the words of a great leader in a sphere normally thought of as different from that of the Blackhorse Regiment. Those words do, however, capture the spirit that moves the Blackhorse and gives its troopers their finest hours.

Vince Lombardi, the legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers and the Washington Redskins, once said:

"Any man's finest hour is when he has worked his heart out, exhausted on the field of battle, victorious."

Thus is the finest hour of a Blackhorse trooper.



"Allons"

John L. Gerrity Colonel, Armor Commanding

Chaplain's column

Dear John

by Chaplain (LTC) Peter J. Hoffman

Dear John,

This is the hardest letter I've ever written and I don't know how to begin so I guess I'll come right out and tell you.

By the time John reaches this point in his letter his throat is dry and his guts hurt. He could throw the letter away and read no further because he knows the rest. Before any final break ever comes there are always the warning stresses and cracks in the interpersonal structures of our lives. John has been reading these warning signs that have recently been turning mail call into a personal crisis rather than the morale booster it should be. He knows intellectually and emotionally that it's all over.

A couple of things occur to me when I talk to men that have been, at least temporarily, demolished by this experience. First of all, the woman that writes such a letter is a selfish, egotistical bitch. If she wears an engagement or wedding ring she has entered into an agreement made in a happy moment when she and John were together. John is in no position to discuss or renegotiate this agreement. He is likely fighting all kinds of debilitating experiences including the ones which could deprive him of life and limb. The will to survive is his most important asset.

When the dear John letter arrives the dreams and hopes and phantasies which have reinforced the will to return home, evaporate. There is an emotional letdown which in combat could cause a man to be careless. I am sure that letters like this have taken the lives of many men, both those who received the letter and those who were dependent on these men in a combat environment.

The other thing that always comes to mind in this type of counseling is that the ego involvement or infatuation which had been experienced by John and his erstwhile sweetheart was not love in the full and complete sense of that experience. The involvement was strong, no doubt, in its erotic dimensions but very weak in its experience with companionship and mutuality and probably without any semblance of other necessary elements like loyalty and commitment. When people really love, time and distance are no barriers. But contrary to the popular conception (far from being as common as grass) real love is as rare as holiness or courage or wisdom, which have a million counterfeits for every real manifestation.



— Find the Bastards — Then Pile On —

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ON YOUR MARK -- kids mount their trusty steeds in preparation for the all-important race at the party for orphans.

Orphans guests at Di An

Fifty smiling, brightly-dressed orphans, aged eight to twelve, were guests at a party given for them at the Stateside Service Club September 20.

The children, from St. Theresa's Catholic School and Orphanage in Di An and the Phuoc Loc Tho Buddhist Orphanage near Bien Hoa, were paired off with 11th ACR troopers at the party, which included games, refreshments, and a USO show.

The two orphanages are sponsored by two Blackhorse units.

St. Theresa's Orphanage has been receiving food and special assistance from the troopers of 1st Squadron for the past two months.

The 541st Military Intelligence Detachment, the sponsor of the Buddhist Orphanage, is building a dispensary and nursery for it.

Troopers remember scout

Cavalrymen from 3rd Squadron's I Troop recently gave a radio to their former Kit Carson Scout, Nguyen Qua.

Company Grade Scout Qua was wounded June 26, when the ACAV he was riding hit a mine and took an RPG round. He was taken to the 93rd Evacuation Hospital for severe burns and shrapnel wounds to his face that resulted in the permanent loss of sight in his left eye and the temporary loss of sight in his right eye.

"When I went to see him the first time, he was in bad shape, but he did manage to tell me that he would like to have a radio to listen to while in the hospital," said Captain Carlos F. Figueroa, the assistant Regimental S-5.

Capt. Figueroa mentioned Qua's request to some I Troopers. "It was only a matter of a few days before I walked

into my office to find the radio on the desk," Capt. Figueroa said.

The men had taken up a collection and had bought the radio while they were in Di An for stand down. Capt. Figueroa brought the radio to Qua along with a letter to him from the men of I Troop.

When he received the radio,

Qua told the civil affairs officer, "I am really happy to know that the members of the 11th Cav have been thinking of me."

Qua, who has been with the Regiment since January 1968, will not be able to take any physical exercise for six months. Regimental civil affairs personnel are working to find him a new job.

Aid Boy Scouts

The Boy Scouts of Lai Thieu District are building five new clubhouses with lumber and materials supplied by the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

The wood-framed, tin-roofed houses will be the new meeting places for the scouts, who have been receiving support through the Regimental Civil Affairs Office.

In addition to materials, the Regiment has supplied the scouts with canteens, pistol belts, and fatigues.

For the special children's holiday September 15, the Blackhorse Regiment supplied three trucks to take groups of Boy and Girl Scouts from Saigon to be guests of the Lai Thieu scouts.

Khai's corner

Vietnamese cultural hits

by Sergeant First Class Doan Khai

Nuoc mam, rich in acids and vitamins, is the primary source of flavoring and spice for the Vietnamese. When used at the table, nuoc mam is further diluted with the addition of vinegar, water, sugar and hot peppers, making a spicy, tasty addition to the food that is to be taken. When you have a chance you can test it in any restaurant.

Nuoc mam is made only from a small fish, similar in size and appearance to the sardine. The fish is very highly salted and placed in vats where it is compressed for five months to one year. The longer it is in the vats, the better the grade of nuoc mam. It can be described during this period as spoiled fish. After a sufficient period of time the juice is drained off the vat. This is nuoc mam.

Commonly Used Phrases

- "Ong ten la gi" (om ten la yi) -- "What is your name, Sir."
"Xin ong noi lai" (Sin om noy lie) -- "Say it again please, Sir."
"Ong dan lam gi vay?" (Om dang lum yi vay) -- "What are you doing, Sir?"
"Toi Muon hoi ong may cau." (Toy moon hoy om meat kow) -- "I'd like to ask you a question, Sir."
"Xin Ong dung so." (Sin om dung shu) -- "Don't

be scared, please, Sir."

Single Words

- Cai Nha (Kai ya) -- House
Cai Ghe (Kai Gay) -- Chair
Chong (Chom) -- Husband
Vo (Va) -- Wife
Con Meo (Kon Mail) -- Cat
Con Cho (Kon Cha) -- Dog
Nguoi giup viec cua toi (Nuy yoop vic kua toy) -- My house girl.

(If any individuals have specific questions about customs they have observed or phrases they would like to know, they should address them to me, SFC Khai, c/o S-5, Hq. 11th ACR, and I will attempt to answer them each month in this column.)

To insure that parcels and letters mailed from RVN arrive in CONUS in time for Christmas the following mailing deadlines should be observed:

Table with 2 columns: TYPE OF MAIL, MAIL NOT LATER THAN. Rows include SURFACE (1 NOV), SAM PARCEL (7 DEC), SAM LETTER (12 DEC), PAL (10 DEC), AIRMAIL (15 DEC).



General Ralph E. Haines, Jr., Commanding General, U.S. Army, Pacific, attaches the Valorous Unit Award (Second Oak Leaf Cluster) to the colors of 3rd Squadron's How Battery.

11th ACR units honored

Units from the Blackhorse Regiment's 3rd and 2nd Squadrons were honored for heroism at a ceremony at Di An Sept. 21.

General Ralph E. Haines, Jr., the Commanding General, U.S. Army, Pacific, presented the Second Oak Leaf Cluster to the Valorous Unit Award to I and K Troops, M Company, 3rd Howitzer Battery, and 3rd Squadron Headquarters and Headquarters Troop.

The First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Valorous Unit

Award went to F Troop and H Company, 2nd Squadron.

The units were honored for the heroism of their men on operations near An Loc June 17-20, 1969. During that period, these Blackhorse troopers met large NVA and VC forces in a series of pitched battles in the rubber plantations west of the city.

The 11th ACR troopers routed the enemy, inflicting heavy casualties and capturing large supplies of weapons and ammunition.

McKnight takes 1st reins

Lieutenant Colonel Don A. McKnight assumed command of 1st Squadron, 11th ACR on the morning of September 5.

In the ceremony at Fire Base Henderson, Lt. Col. McKnight received the standard from Lieutenant Colonel James B. Reed, squadron commander since January.

Lt. Col. McKnight, a graduate of St. Benedict's College, where he was awarded a bachelor of arts degree in history, comes to the 11th ACR from Fort Knox, where he was commander of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Training Brigade.

In addition to his civilian

education, Lt. Col. McKnight has attended a number of military specialty schools. In the five year interval from 1954 to 1959 he graduated from the Armor School, the VII Corps CBR School, the USAARMS Associate School, and the Army Combat Intelligence School. In 1965 Lt. Col. McKnight was graduated from the Command and General Staff College.

During his military career, Lt. Col. McKnight has served two years in Germany, and one tour in Vietnam. Lt. Col. McKnight was in Vietnam from December 1965 to December 1966 as executive officer of the 1st

Battalion, 69th Armor, 25th Infantry Division.

Lt. Col. McKnight served as a combat intelligence officer assigned to the Air Force from June 1963 to December 1965.

Among Lt. Col. McKnight's awards are the Bronze Star Medal, the Air Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal.

A native of Cleveland, Lt. Col. McKnight is married and the father of four children. His wife and children are now residing in Fort Knox, Kentucky.



Commanders and top enlisted men in the Blackhorse Regiment. Sitting (from Left) Lieutenant Colonel Don A. McKnight, 1st Squadron commander; Lieutenant Colonel John L. Ballantyne III, 2nd Squadron commander; Colonel John L. Gerrity, Regimental commander; Lieutenant Colonel Bobby F. Griffin, 3rd Squadron commander; Major Joseph H. Blanchard, Jr., Air Cav Troop commander. Standing (from left) Command Sergeant Major Howard V. Burkhalter, 1st Squadron; CSM Corles M. Tate, 2nd Squadron; CSM Hiram T. Harrison, Regiment; CSM Harold E. Kelly, 3rd Squadron; and First Sergeant Clarence F. Bowden, Air Cav Troop.

Honored for Valor

SILVER STAR

Major Frederick Franks, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.
Captains William A. Bristol, E Troop; Lynn J. Hunt, B Troop.
Specialists 5 Bruce G. Dodge, 3rd Squadron Headquarters;
Stephen J. Grate, C Troop.
Specialists 4 Robert E. Koonce, Jr., Air Cav Troop (Posthumous);
Allen T. Russell, F Troop.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Captain Ronald G. Berry, Air Cav Troop.
Chief Warrant Officer Jeffrey C. Starrak, Regimental Aviation Platoon.
Master Sergeant Robert L. Bolan, 2nd Squadron Headquarters, (Posthumous).

BRONZE STAR MEDAL

Captain Bennett B. Wood, Jr., 3rd Squadron How Battery.
First Lieutenant David M. Coover, Jr., 3rd Squadron How Battery; Larry D. Sargent, B Troop; Eloyd C. Smith, I Troop; Philip J. Sorota, C Troop; Eric C. Spanier, L Troop; Earl D. Zerback, 2nd Squadron How Battery.
First Sergeants Ronald B. Osborne, I Troop; Edward J. Tinney, A Troop.
Platoon Sergeant Clifford Campbell, I Troop (two awards).
Staff Sergeants Shorty Barfield, E Troop; James T. Hampton, 2nd Squadron How Battery; Donald G. Lepper, 2nd Squadron How Battery; George E. Richeson, C Troop; James D. Smith, M Company.

Sergeants Lee E. Bauche, M Company; Michael A. Coley, G Troop; Robert D. Duncan, C Troop; Marion Lounsbury, C Troop; William H. Marshall, C Troop; John W. Nagel, G Troop.

Specialists 5 Richard C. Jacobson, 409th RRD; William G. Owen, Jr., 919th Engineer Co.; John W. Pudalak, H Company; Stephen Stringer, H Company.

Specialists 4 Kevin L. Anderson, M Company; Larry G. Blankenship, L Troop; Edward C. Borsdorf, Jr., H Company; Larry E. Cole, B Troop; Ray Covarrugias, B Troop; Gary L. Felthager, A Troop; Glen Giles, 919th Engineer Company; Ronald C. Henry, M Company; Ruben Martinez, I Troop; Morris G. Nielson, G Troop; Roy O. Olson, 2nd Squadron How Battery; Lannie Ray, L Troop; Richard C. Tarity, C Troop.

Privates First Class Curtis R. Ammons, B Troop; Gene A. Harmon, B Troop; James J. Perotti, E Troop; Steven A. Spiers, H Company.

AIR MEDAL

Major James L. Abrahamson, 1st Squadron Headquarters.
Captain Ronald G. Berry, Air Cav Troop.
First Lieutenants Thomas P. Finegan, Jr., Air Cav Troop; David W. Gordon III, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.
Warrant Officers Ernest O. Bowers, Air Cav Troop; Leslie J. Ernest III, Air Cav Troop; Douglas K. Mercer, 1st Squadron Headquarters; Phillip Reynolds, 1st Squadron Headquarters.
Command Sergeant Major Frank S. Zlobec, 1st Squadron Headquarters.

Specialist 5 Robert J. Wilkinson, 1st Squadron Headquarters.
Specialists 4 Donald H. Akin, Jr., Air Cav Troop; Donald J. Hicks, 2nd Squadron Headquarters; John C. Ruscher, 3rd Squadron Headquarters; James A. Wissinger, 3rd Squadron Headquarters.

Cavalry expert S-3

Lieutenant Colonel Frank E. Varljen, the new S-3 of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, is no stranger to armored cavalry operations.

Although this is his first tour with the Blackhorse Regiment, he has served three years with the 4th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Germany, two years with the 2nd Squadron of the 8th Armored Cavalry at Ft. Lewis, and three years with the 3rd Squadron of the 8th Armored Cavalry in Germany.

Lt. Col. Varljen's last assignment, before coming here, was as a squadron commander with the 4th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 4th Armored Division, in Germany.

Beginning his second tour in Vietnam, he served as a training advisor and senior district advisor in Go Cong Province, 25 miles south of Saigon, in 1964-65.

Lt. Col. Varljen entered the Army in 1950 and served a year and a half as an enlisted man before being commissioned in



LTC Varljen

1952, following graduation from Armor OCS.

An alumnus of St. Benedict's College, Atchison, Kansas, he was graduated from the Command and General Staff College in 1962, and from 1965 to 1968 he was an instructor there.

Lt. Col. Varljen is married and has two sons.

Vietnamization



A K Troop Sheridan blasts the jungle before beginning a RIF.



RF troops on a dismount providing flank security for the armor assault column.



Much time is spent by the RF's waiting and securing the rear elements of the joint operation.



Story and photo

In the true spirit of Vietnamization 3rd Squadron's K Troop has been actively involved with a Vietnamese Regional Forces (RF) assistance program ever since the squadron returned to the field from a stand down at Di An. An increasingly important phase of the Vietnamization program, the RF assistance activities have enabled the Blackhorse to continue its mission and to also lend a helping hand to the people who will someday take the responsibility of protecting the more populated areas of Vietnam.

"Joint operations of this nature are the coming thing," remarked Captain Steven W. Ader, K Troop commander, as he described the Regional Forces assistance exercises his unit has been undertaking during September. "We receive our mission from a joint command and execute it with both US and Vietnamese soldiers participating."

K Troop had just begun the third such mission with the RF's of Tan Uyen Province. The RF's are full-time military who live in compounds and operate on the local level. In the joint operations, an RF unit will deploy with an

equivalent U.S. unit commander in charge. MACV advisors are also present and interpreters facilitate communication between commanders.

"The RF's usually operate on the tanks and AC's that needs to be checked before we can move," commented. "Then they provide flank security recon of the area. They are searching all the bunkers

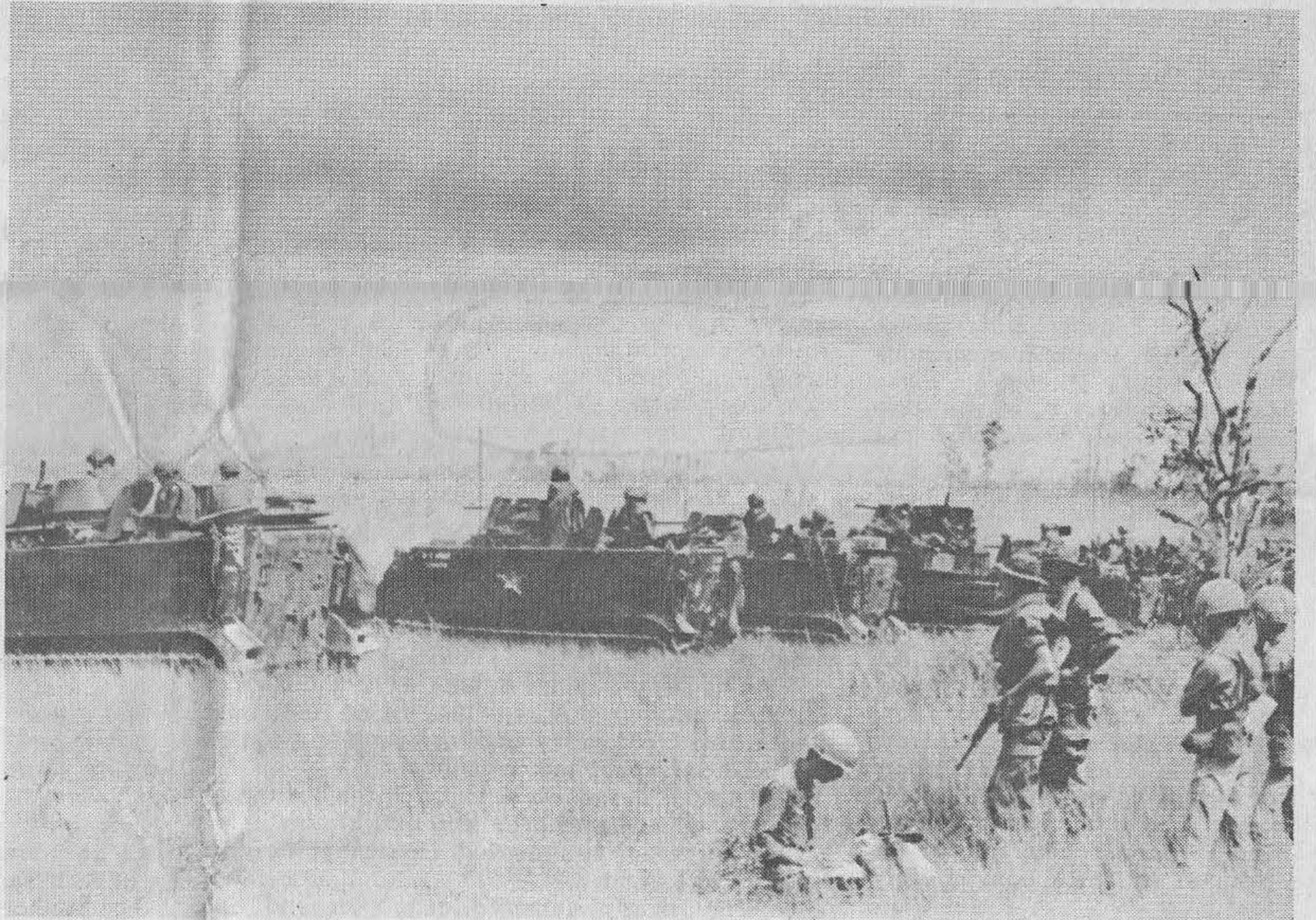
Most of the Region's only local training program is provided by the government. Therefore, the assistance means the RF soldiers to assist but also to give them the opportunity to improve their fighting

Sergeant First Class Assistance Team (MA) RF Company, 57th observation of the

going forward



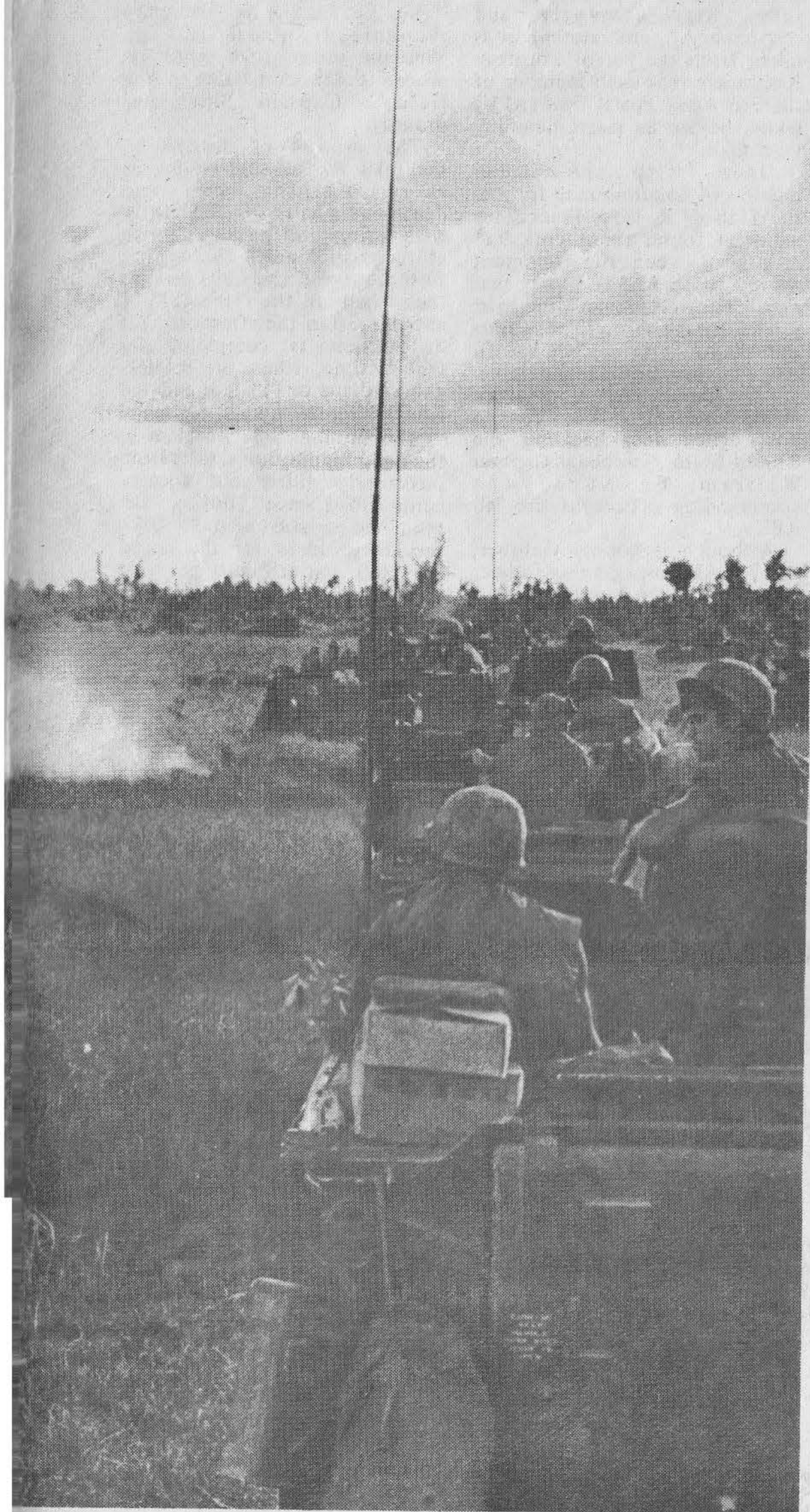
Vietnamese Regional Forces troops mount up and move out with their US counterparts.



K Troop on line recons an area by fire prior to inserting the RF troops.



Constant communication between the RF and US commanders during an operation is a must.



Rod Covington

with the U.S. unit the entire operation. ned to each RF unit, provide a link of the RF and U.S.

along with the troops until we get to an area a little more closely on," Capt. Ader RF's dismount and conduct an immediate re also responsible for re find."

"Progress has definitely been made in the field performance of the RF troops; due to the success of the past two exercises conducted with K Troop of the 11th Cav, the confidence and morale of the Regional Forces units have greatly improved. And this is one of the biggest steps to be taken."

In earlier operations, the RF's would participate with the U.S. units mostly on a day-to-day basis, primarily accompanying them on a jungle bust or remaining on an "on call" status in the general area of U.S. activities. But as progress is being made and the proficiency of the Regional Forces troops improves, the operations have been extended to an average of three or four days duration and the Vietnamese troops now share an equal role in the execution of the mission.

Time has thus far shown itself to be the deciding factor in the overall success of the assistance activities rendered by the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment towards the Regional Forces of Tan Uyen Province, but by the encouraging trends shown in these stages the operations may even now be called a success for both U.S. and Vietnamese commands.

forces soldiers have had ded by the province has been the objective not only to prepare more of the fighting, chance to actually ability. ter Glen, the Military member for the 574th Battalion, made this its of the program:

Lifeline to the field

"Truck convoys are the lifeline," says Captain Robert E. Sandlin, the transportation officer of 3rd Squadron. And these lifelines to field troopers run daily from Di An to the fire support base, carrying water, fuel, ammunition and repair parts.

The beginning of a Bandit Support Platoon day begins at six the night before the convoy. This is when it receives a status report telling what each element of the squadron needs. In addition to the normal convoy items, they receive the order for hot food, ice, and small parts, and also additional materials which may be needed, such as culverts and sandbags.

"We even got a request for bamboo poles one time," declared the Support Platoon Leader, First Lieutenant James Luedeke.

Lt. Luedeke and his fifteen men have a fleet of vehicles, including five-ton trucks and five-thousand-gallon water trailers, to get the supplies out to the field. Food, ice, and small parts are lifted by Chinook.

When the convoy leaves, each vehicle has been fully loaded, normally carrying more than six tons. Blivets have been filled with diesel and loaded on trucks. Each week, the squadron uses more than twenty thousand gallons of fuel.

Water presents a special problem for the supply men. "We have to get our water at either Long Binh or Lai Khe each day because the points in Di An can't handle our five-thousand-gallon tankers," explains Sergeant First Class Robert Webster.

Once the trucks are underway, the main

responsibility rests in the hands of the drivers. Specialist 4 J.C. Pool has been driving a truck for nine months and is well aware of the importance of driving carefully and watching for the unexpected.

"We try to stay in the center of the road when driving on muddy, rain-covered surfaces, explained the Carmi, Ill. native. "And if you're in the lead, you have to make sure all the trucks behind you are not lagging and are keeping up."

Pool is constantly looking out for traces of mines or enemy soldiers when traveling over the side roads. But he also has to worry when driving through heavily populated areas where children are running around and Lambrettas are scattered all over the road.

"So far I've been lucky with both the enemy and the pedestrians, and hope it stays that way," Pool said.

The arrival of the convoy at the fire base is timed to coincide roughly with that of the Chinooks. "If the Chinooks are flying late, the convoy goes out late," Captain Sandlin says.

Once the convoy reaches the fire base, a three-man team, under First Lieutenant Richard Franks, directs the unloading and prepares the supplies which will be looked out to the line troops.

Once unloaded, the convoy heads back to Di An, where the men will pull maintenance on their vehicles, take the status reports which come in at six, and prepare for tomorrow's convoy.

7th APU

Blackhorse mailmen

"A patron is someone who seeks a service - it is our job to serve him promptly and courteously." This statement is taken from the list of Courtesy Reminders that each member of the 7th Army Postal Unit (APU) learns before he starts handling your mail.

Once, with the limited mission of handling mail for just the 11th ACR, these Blackhorse mailmen found their work had multiplied when the Regiment moved to Di An. The forty-two man unit now provides the mail service for the more than sixteen thousand men in units in the Di An, Phu Loi, and Lai Khe area.

"We handle just about every postal requirement that a civilian post office does back in the United States," explains Captain William F. Shea, the commanding officer of the 7th APU.

Although it is only October, the 7th APU is beginning to bear the brunt of the busiest time of the year, the Christmas season. This year's operation, called "Operation Reindeer Express", began October 1 and will continue until January 5.

The captain advises mailing most Christmas packages home in October to insure that they reach your family in time.

Each month the 7th APU handles more than sixty tons of outgoing mail and one hundred fifty tons of incoming mail. Pay day means money orders sometimes approaching one and

one-quarter million dollars, both in base camps and in the field. "The 7th APU is the only recognized postal unit in Vietnam today that sends its money order clerks out in the field," Captain Shea says proudly.

The process of distributing the mail to the soldiers begins every morning when two deuce-and-a-halves loaded down with letters and packages arrive at the postal unit. The mail is sorted out and the units pick up their mail at the 7th APU at about 1:30 in the afternoon. All distribution is completed by dinner time, when the soldiers and civilians in Phu Loi and Lai Khe receive their mail.

The number one problem in the daily distribution results from incorrectly filled out locator cards. Wet mail during the monsoon season used to be a serious problem for the postal unit, but that difficulty has been virtually eliminated by the new plastic bags.

Mailing Gifts

There are four ways you can send your gifts home, but the two best ways are Space Available Mail (SAM) and Parcel Air Lift (PAL).

SAM will deliver items weighing up to five pounds and not exceeding sixty inches in length and girth within ten days inexpensively.

PAL, which costs about a dollar more than SAM, is for packages under thirty pounds which do not exceed sixty inches in length and girth. Your gifts usually make it home within seven days.

The cheapest way to send your gifts home is by surface mail, but the long boat trip means that your gift will take six to eight weeks to arrive home.

Airmail, the most expensive method of shipping your gifts, can be used to ship items up to seventy pounds which do not exceed one hundred inches in length and girth. It usually takes about five days to reach home.

2nd Squadron

Trying a little harder

"It's a hundred miles from Di An to the field, so we have to work just a little harder to get our supplies to the men without any delay," says First Lieutenant Jerry E. Matzen, the supply platoon leader for 2nd Squadron.

When the Blackhorse 2nd Squadron moved into its new area of operations along the coast, it had to deal with a whole new set of logistics problems.

Because of the distance, the squadron set up a forward support area at Fire Base Riviera. Fixed-wing aircraft from Bien Hoa bring the daily supply of fresh food and fuel to Riviera, while vehicle parts, ammunition, and C-rations come out to the troopers by truck convoy every few days.

Once at Riviera, the supplies

are "hooked" out to the troops.

In anticipation of problems caused by a terrain which includes mountains, dense jungle, and numerous streams, each troop in the squadron was assigned its own Armored Vehicle Launch Bridge (AVLB).

"Probably the biggest problem of all," says Captain James F. Kelley, assistant squadron operations officer, "was to get everybody back into the supply groove after stand down."

Troopers find bunkers

First Squadron's A Troop and the ARPs of the Air Cav Troop converged on an enemy bunker complex September 13 after a scout pilot was fired on.

Warrant Officer James A. Rohrer, of the Air Cav Troop, was flying his Light Observation Helicopter over a suspected enemy bunker complex when he started receiving ground to air fire.

One of the rounds went through the bottom of the LOH, glancing off the side of Rohrer's boot. "What we had," commented Lieutenant Colonel Don A. McKnight, the 1st Squadron commander, "was one slightly damaged helicopter and one terribly upset pilot."

On the sweep through the area where the ground to air fire came from, troopers from A Troop and the Aero Rifle Platoon uncovered thirty-seven recently occupied bunkers.

PFC Gary W. Bowling, of A Troop said, "We found a place where they had just started building new bunkers. We know the bunkers were just used because some of the stones on the fires were still hot."

The only supplies uncovered in the bunkers were one damaged AK47 and one American M72 Light Anti-Tank Weapon.

The bunkers were destroyed.

Where's Baldy?

HIGHFLY, TRAVELLER, WINCHESTER - these names and others make the Hueys of the Regimental Aviation Platoon easily recognizable.

What is not so well known is the source of these names. Each of these slicks has been named after a horse of a famous general, either Union or Confederate, of the Civil War.

General Grant's horses, CINCINNATI and FOX, and General Lee's, TRAVELLER and AJAX, all lend their names to Blackhorse helicopters.

These names were selected from a list of 23 sent to the platoon by the chairman of the Department of History at the Citadel in Charleston, S.C. The final choices were made by the ships' crew chiefs.

According to the Regimental Aviation Officer, Major Charles W. Abbey, it was easier to rule out some of the suggested names than to make the final decision. "None of the crew chiefs wanted NELLIE GRAY (Fitzhugh Lee's) or BALDY (George G. Meade's)," he said. "They didn't think those names fit the image, I guess."

213th Aviation Company

Keeping Chinooks up, troopers fed

Each day a fleet of noisy Chinooks, the resupply helicopters that keep the 11th ACR on the move, fly out of the 213th Aviation Company in Phu

Loi. A significant part of everything that the Blackhorse uses has slung from the belly of one of these giant Chinooks at

some time.

When the Chinooks leave Phu Loi, they have a schedule set up for the day's flight.

But the pilots and aircraft commanders of the Chinooks have learned to be flexible to be ready for any changes in the situation on the ground.

"We depend on the ground crews to give us accurate information on how prepared landing zone personnel are to receive supplies and to tell us which supplies have priority," remarked First Lieutenant Charles R. Tackett, an aircraft commander of a Chinook.

But even if the schedule runs smoothly, the pilot still has to contend with the unavoidable problems of rain and poor visibility.

With a look of frustration, Tackett said, "The monsoon season makes it really hard to fly. Some of the areas we have to reach are actually in the clouds."

But in spite of all the frustrations, Tackett seems pleased with his job. "I would rather fly a Chinook than any other rotary aircraft in Vietnam. They are a lot safer because you have two of everything - two pilots, two engines, two M60's."



Mechanics of the 213th Aviation Company prepare a Chinook for a day of shuttling supplies to the field.

Air Cav Troop

Keeping the Cobras flying

Quick and violent response have been the trademarks of the 11th ACR's Cobra gunships. Their reaction time, from helicopter pad to the scene of a contact, can be just a matter of moments.

But such speed does not come about without painstaking preparation. It's the job of the nine Cobra crew chiefs of the Air Cav Troop to keep their helicopters ready for just such quick responses.

The men start each day by checking out their ships and rearming the rocket pods, if necessary. If a helicopter is expected to fly that day, the crew chief will prepare it. If not, he will go over the ship, cleaning it and taking care of any "write

ups," or minor maintenance problems.

During the day, as each ship comes in from a mission, it is immediately rearmed and prepared for another mission. The only time a ship is disarmed is when it is sent to the 398th Helicopter Maintenance Company.

According to Sergeant Paul E. Rose, the crew chief section leader, a ship may be rearmed as many as seven times in one day, if the action is heavy.

After each 25 and 100 hours flying time, each Cobra is sent to the 398th for an intermediate or periodic inspection. The crew chief goes with his ship and works on it while the mechanics of the 398th do their work.

... and prepared to fight

If it takes nine men to keep the cobras in the air, it takes 10 to keep their complex weapons systems working.

The Air Cav Troop armament section has the continuous job of cleaning, maintaining and reloading the miniguns, 40 millimeter grenade launchers, 20 millimeter cannons, and the rocket pods that make up the fire power of the nine gunships.

Working with the sophisticated weapons and their involved electrical systems presents a challenge the men readily accept. "I wouldn't want to be in anything else," says PFC Alfred Solomon, one of the members of the section.

The men maintain and clean all the weapons

and reload the miniguns and grenade launchers after each mission. The crew chiefs reload the rockets.

Each of the weapons is regularly taken from the ship to be cleaned. "Whenever we take a gun off a cobra to clean it we check to see if there are any worn parts," says Specialist 4 Richard Carter.

When they do take a gun off, they replace it with another. A ship is without its weapons only during maintenance at the 398th.

A ship returning from a mission during a contact can be airborne again, fully loaded with 4,000 minigun rounds and 300, 40-millimeter grenades, in less than 20 minutes.

Blackhorse RE-UP facts

Blackhorse troopers may now re-enlist for their choice of stateside assignments, whether they are on their first hitch in the Army or their tenth.

This new Army offer replaces the old policy of reserving the

choice only for first term enlistees, according to Staff Sergeant Eugene G. Steele, the 11th ACR career counsellor.

Those re-enlisting for the first time may still choose specialized Army training or an overseas tour.

An average fifteen men re-enlist each month in the 11th ACR, about one-third for the first time. Sergeant Steele pointed out that those eligible for VRB, by re-enlisting while in Vietnam, can get all of the money tax-free, even if the re-enlistment bonus is taken on the installment plan.

To be eligible for re-enlistment, a man must have served at least twenty-one months, have qualifying test scores, be recommended by his commanding officer, and have no "bad time" on his record.

In special cases a man may take the qualifying battery of tests over again or obtain a waiver on the "bad time"

prohibition, providing his recommendation is strong enough.

Those interested in re-enlisting should contact their re-enlistment NCO at least thirty days before DEROS or ETS, Sergeant Steele said. The RE-UP NCO for 2nd Squadron is Sergeant Barnett Smith and for 3rd Squadron, Staff Sergeant Edward Deneale.

Staff Sergeant Gary Suttles recently arrived from assignment in Germany. He is serving with Sergeant Steele in the Regimental Re-enlistment Office.

Top wears all the hats

by Darrel Jensen

"It's been said that a first sergeant runs the company while the captain commands it," says First Sergeant James W. Porter,

of 2nd Squadron's H Company.

In any unit, "Top" is the organizer who sees that the unit functions as a team.

"In armor, a first sergeant is almost certain to go to the

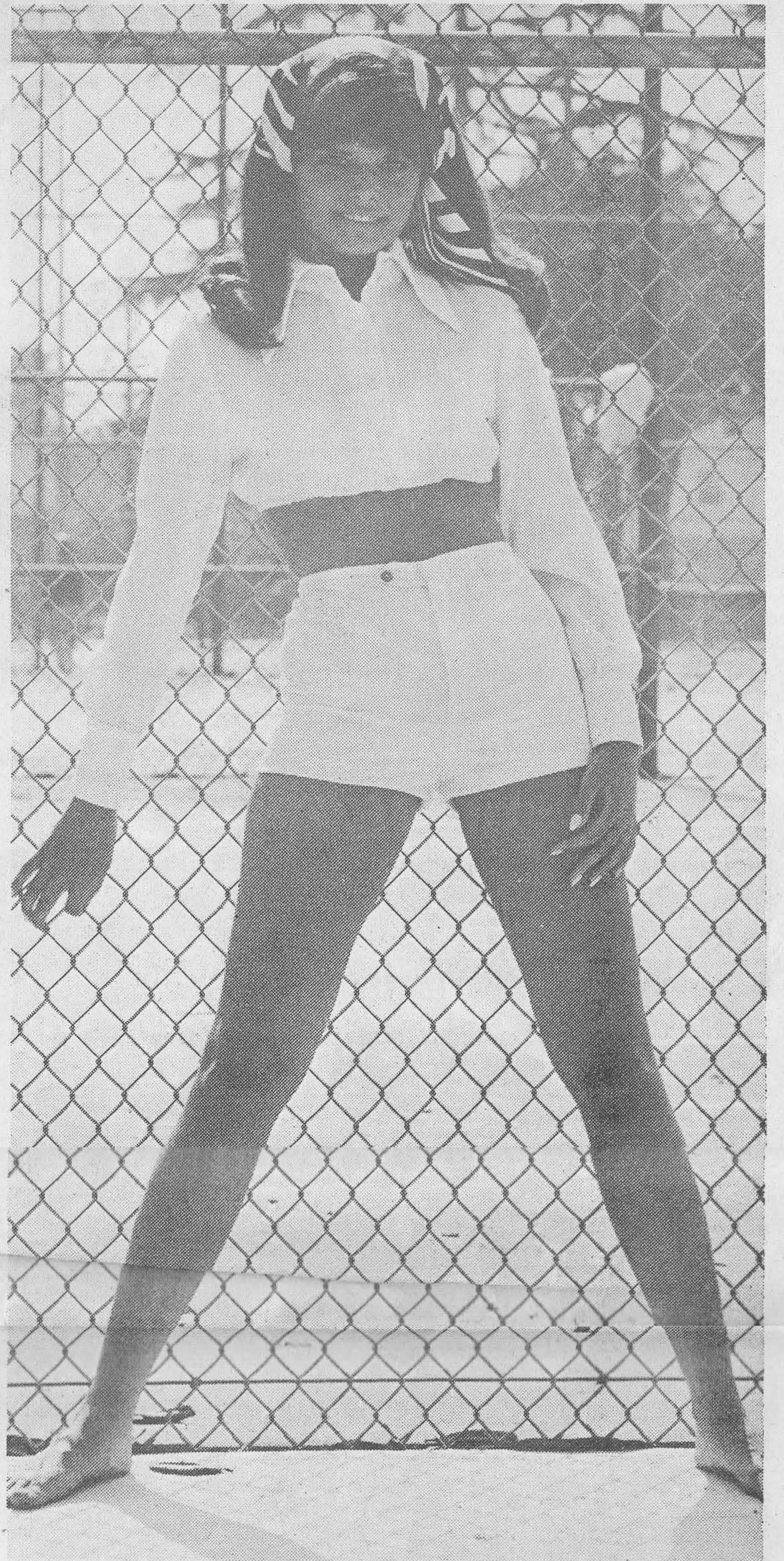
field," says First Sergeant Porter. "I've seen a lot go either way in an infantry unit. Some stay in the field their entire tour, while others just stay in the rear."

As the senior enlisted man, a first sergeant acts as go-between for the men to the commander. He advises the commander about his men, takes care of much of the paper work and administration, and acts as a sometimes personnel clerk, R and R advisor, and chaplain.

Morale is one of the principal concerns of a troop's topkick. Mail, chow, and deliveries of soda and beer all come under his scrutiny. "I make sure that the troopers get everything they have coming to them," says First Sergeant Orliff D. Griffin, of G Troop.

First Sergeant Mark F. Boyle, of F Troop, considers one of his most important jobs to be that of counseling new personnel in the field. "I was in their position once," he says, "and I can understand some of the frustrations and problems new men go through."

The first sergeants in the Regiment are known for keeping in as close touch with each other as the demands of their jobs allow. "We're all pulling on the same rope in the same direction," says First Sergeant Porter.



Long way to go for a hat

by Darrel Jensen

He had to go through War Zone C, Cambodia, and all the way back through Di An to the eastern coast of Vietnam, but Specialist 4 Larry W. Maltbe, of Lenoir, N.C., finally found his hat - 10 months and 100 miles from where he lost it.

When Maltbe came to the Blackhorse Regiment last November, he got a brand new jungle hat and, like many others, had his initials and home state sewn on the brim.

His hat was easy to identify because the girl who did the sewing left out the last "a" in Carolina.

But he only had his hat for a few days before he lost it while in-processing at the finance office at Bien Hoa.

Then, in mid-September, while working with the 2nd Squadron supply platoon at Fire Support Base Riviera, he saw a familiar-looking hat atop a young Vietnamese boy's head. It was his long lost jungle hat, right down to the mission "a".

The boy, whose name is Ba, said that he had found the hat in a trash pile near Riviera, and had cleaned it up. Maltbe offered to buy the hat from the boy, but he was turned down.

He consoled himself by saying, "It won't make any difference. I'll be going home in a couple of months anyway."

Platoon sergeants

by Ed Yokum

"Responsibilities? We're responsible for just about everything."

This quick response by a platoon sergeant in the 11th ACR may just about sum up his job.

To his platoon leader, a platoon sergeant is a teacher and the main link with the enlisted men.

To the EM under him, he is a leader who can be trusted. He's been in combat before and he knows what to do when the platoon makes contact with the enemy.

To his first sergeant he is a fellow non-commissioned officer who understands the problems in controlling men. "Top" can depend on his platoon sergeants to keep the men combat ready.

Platoon Sergeant Ramon Vega, of A Troop, 1st Squadron, is a professional soldier with the respect of officers and enlisted men alike.

"Sgt. Vega could operate the whole platoon without any trouble. He's done it before when a platoon leader got dusted off," says his platoon leader, First Lieutenant John Mancinelli.

Lt. Mancinelli says he depends on Sergeant Vega to assign the right man for the right job and to give

him advice on running the platoon. "If he believes I'm doing something wrong, he'll tell me. We've got a good working relationship because we understand we both can make mistakes. He helps me out a lot, especially in personnel. He's good in seeing the potential in his men."

Sgt. Vega has the reputation for being the best man in the troop on a dismounted patrol. "I haven't seen a man yet who wouldn't go on a dismount with Sgt. Vega," remarked Lt. Mancinelli, who added that Vega gets almost all the kills when the platoon goes on dismounts.

"Sgt. Vega is definitely squared away on a dismount," agrees PFC Frank Yucovich. "He knows it's no game. He knows his job."

First Sergeant Joe M. Holloman, of A Troop, summed up the importance of a platoon sergeant this way: "A platoon sergeant is here for a year's tour. He usually has three platoon leaders in that time. He sees that the platoon continues to operate smoothly and he aids the platoon leader in his new command. The platoon sergeant must be able to take charge of his platoon at any time in the absence of the platoon leader.

"He's a strong link in the chain of command."

Professionals in the field

1st Squadron's air thrust

by Ed Yokum



The command and control ship takes off from the pad outside the fire support base.

The sun was up only a few minutes, but Specialist 5 Walter Gensemer was already hard at work. A crew chief for the 1st Squadron aviation section, he checks out his ship each morning before the pilot arrives.

While Gensemer inspected the Huey, the door gunner, Specialist 5 Robert Lee latched the two M60 machine guns in place and made sure they were ready to fire.

"We leave the pad at Di An at seven each morning, not knowing what may happen," Lee explained. "Our mission might be a milk run or it might be a medevac called in the midst of a contact."

Their main job is to fly the squadron commander on command and control flights.

Sitting in their gunner's seats during a flight, Gensemer and Lee watch for other aircraft which might cross the flight path and keep a look out for ground fire. "We're the eyes of the pilot from the sides," says Gensemer.

A squadron's ships may stay in the air as much as eight hours in a single day. Usually everything goes smoothly, but the going can get rough, especially over contacts. "On June 16, C Troop got into a contact," recalls Gensemer. "We flew out immediately and took ground to air fire twice. Before it was all over we took a total of eight hits."

Chief Warrant Officer Edward W. Papin, a pilot, remembers being completely enveloped in fog, with O/O visibility, with the job of calling in a Cobra strike. "I don't know how we did it," he says. "We couldn't see a thing."

One of the most important missions of the aviation section is to provide medevacs. "We can generally get an injured man out before a normal medevac ship even arrives," says Warrant Officer Douglas Mercer.

Since most of the enlisted men now in the section have been with line troops previously, they understand how important a fast trip to the hospital can be.

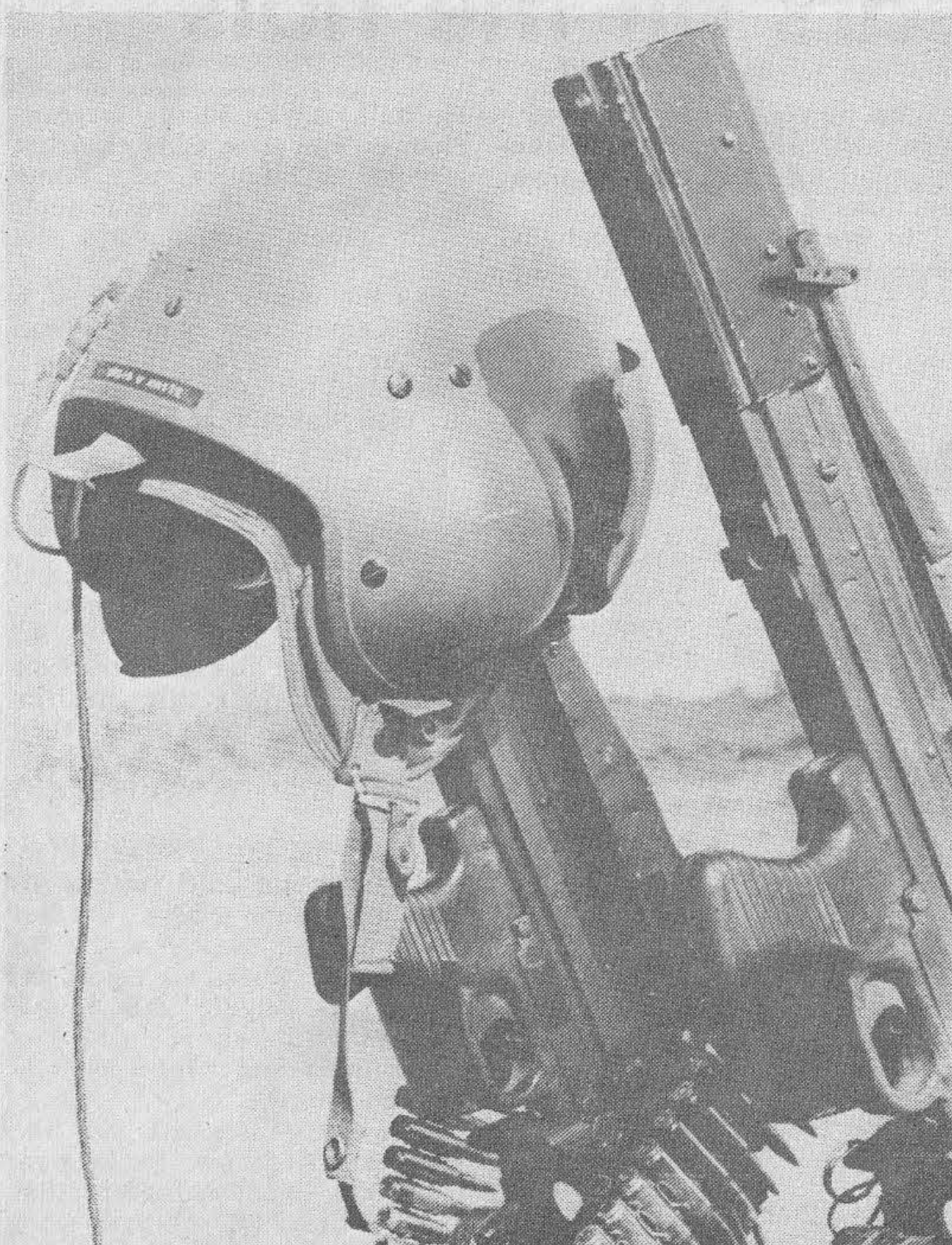
"These guys are probably more responsible for saving lives than anybody else," maintains First Lieutenant Patrick Collins, the 1st Squadron medical officer. "They go into areas where even medevac ships won't."



The LOH flies the S-3 over the Squadron's AO.



Men at the controls -- the ship's aircraft commander and pilot.



Break time -- a gunner's helmet sits on top of his twin sixties.



Lt. Col. McKnight, Squadron commander, checks with his pilot before beginning a flight.