

AMERICAL



JULY, 1970



Battle

I don't know anything about it. I only know what we see from our worm's-eye view, and our segment of the picture consists only of tired and dirty soldiers who are alive and don't want to die; of shocked, silent men wandering back down the hill from battle; of jeeps and smelly bedding rolls and C rations and blown bridges and hospitals and shirt collars greasy black from months of wearing; and of laughter too, and anger and wine and lovely flowers and constant cussing. All these it is composed of; and of graves and graves and graves.

Ernie Pyle



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AMERICAL

The Quarterly Magazine of the
Americal Division, Vietnam

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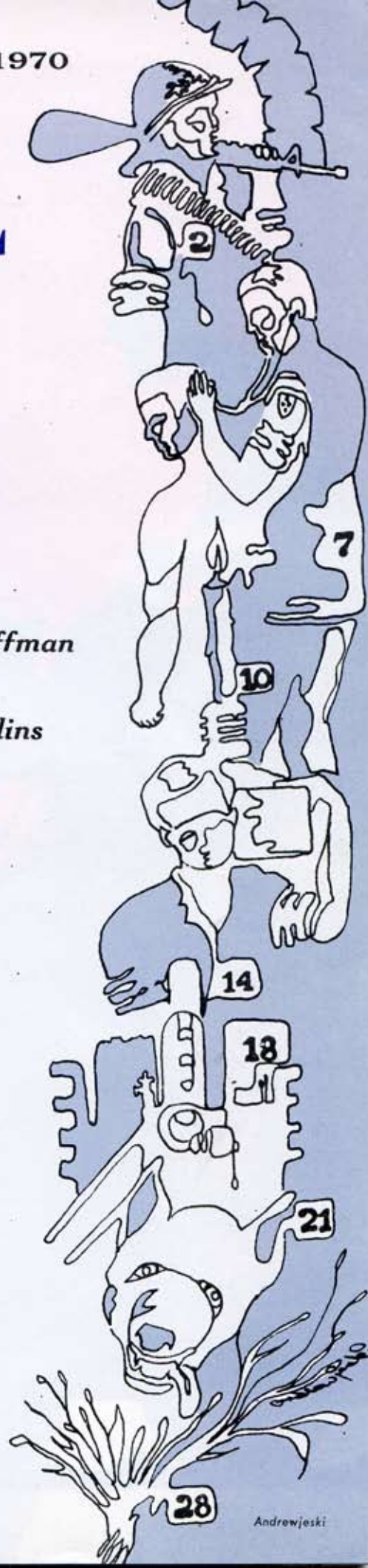
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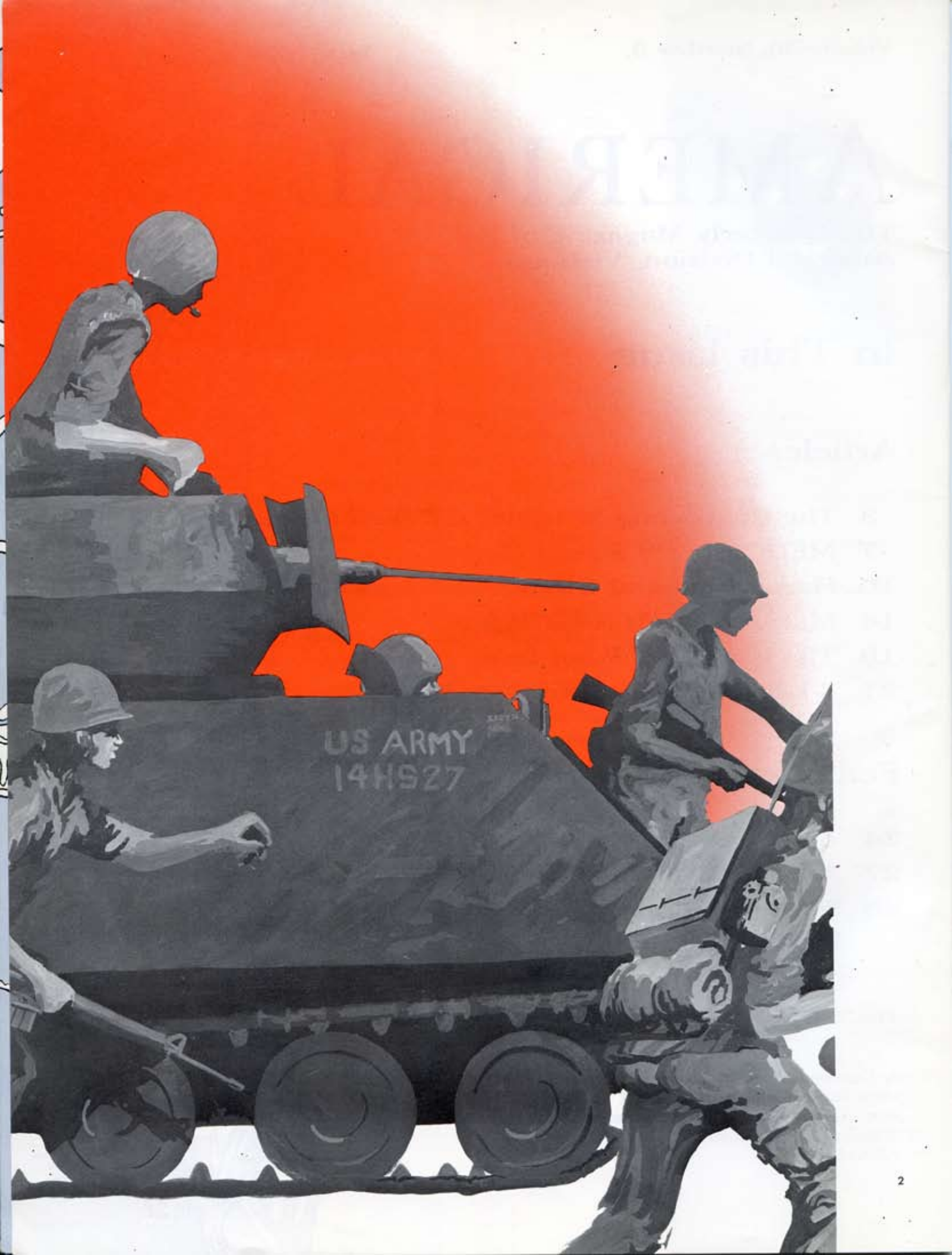
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The Cover

A Division soldier keeps a sharp
vigil for enemy movement as the
sun rises across the perimeter.
(Photo by SSG Lloyd Perkins,
Division IO)





THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE

By 1LT DAVID COFFMAN

The gray clouds of January hung forebodingly over Quang Tin Province. The 196th Infantry Brigade had received a steady flow of intelligence about enemy intentions from Hoi Chanhs, detainees and captured documents.

"We anticipated that the NVA would try to overrun the populated areas around Thang Binh and Tam Ky," said Captain Robert Russell, assistant operations officer, 196th Inf. Bde. "The mission of our units was to block the enemy's attempts to enter these regions."

American and Vietnamese forces deployed on a north-south line to meet this threat. Screening Thang Binh was Task Force 3-21, consisting of Alpha and Delta Companies, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, and F Troop, 17th Cavalry. Further south were infantry units from 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry. A task force under the operational control of Quang Tin Province was screening Tam Ky. The task force consisted of Vietnamese Popular and Regional Forces along with 3rd Troop, 4th Armored Cavalry Squadron, 2nd ARVN Division, and Alpha Troop, 1st Cavalry, AMERICAL Division. At the southern tip of the screen were two battalions from the 5th ARVN Regiment.

On January 6 Alpha Company, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. was moving towards a suspected NVA basecamp. Along the way they met steady enemy resistance, and each outpost they encountered had to be assaulted. As the men of Alpha Co. pushed through the high grass, they were hit by intensive AK-47 rifle and .30 caliber machinegun fire. The Americans called in artillery and the dug-in enemy soon found themselves caught in a deadly rain of 105mm and 8-inch shells. Helicopter gunships from F Troop, 8th Cavalry, raked the NVA positions from above. After the firing had ceased, the Americans swept the area and found 22 enemy dead. They had found the basecamp.

The next morning Alpha Co. spotted another large group of NVA in the distance. Artillery accounted for 15 more kills.

But the day's biggest battle was developing one mile south. Seven tracks from F Trp., 17th Cav., were moving in column, accompanied by the Second Platoon of Delta Co., 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. A Scout observer on the command track, Specialist Four Larry R. Gibbs, spotted a lone NVA.

"He was running into a woodline to our right," said Spec. 4 Gibbs. "We wheeled around toward the woods and opened up."

The men of Delta Co. dismounted and moved after the enemy. The infantrymen found two abandoned Rocket Propelled Grenade Launchers and a complete 60mm mortar near the edge of the jungle. The NVA had been eating, and the food they left behind was still hot.



The infantry pushed on into the dense, tangled woods. "Just as we started to search the area," said Staff Sergeant Tony Alfieri, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., "they cut loose with automatic weapons and RPGs."

The infantry assaulted the enemy positions. A large group of NVA were in a trench line, and the Americans charged in on top of them. A series of vicious hand-to-hand encounters followed. When the Americans left, the ditch was strewn with enemy dead.

Meanwhile the armor, under the command of Captain Klein S. Harrison, had moved in and linked up with the infantry. The vehicles barreled through the jungle, grinding trees and brush beneath their tracks. The roar of enemy fire was deafening. An RPG round whistled past the command track, tearing off the antenna. The enemy was well-entrenched in a maze of ditches and bunkers barely visible through the thick vegetation.

"You couldn't spot where they were until you were right on top of them," said Specialist Five David Crevitz, medic for F Trp., 17th Cav.

But the cav rumbled on, with the infantry on line. The M113A1, "A Cavs" raked the NVA with machinegun fire. The new M551 Sheridan Assault Vehicles lobbed one deadly round after another into the enemy's midst. As the assault gained momentum, air strikes and artillery were called in to cut off any retreating NVA.

While the machinegunners and drivers stayed on the tracks, Capt. Harrison and others leaped to the ground. They moved alongside the vehicles with the infantry, hurling grenades and rooting the NVA out of underground hiding places.

The enemy fire died down to a whisper, then ceased altogether. The Americans began to search the area. A total of 39 enemy dead were found in bunkers, ditches and brush. In addition to the weapons they had captured earlier, the Americans turned up 16 AK-47 rifles, two machineguns, two more RPG launchers and over 70 Chinese Communist grenades.

In two days the 196th Inf. Bde. soldiers had killed 95 enemy and destroyed two base camps.

In the next few days the allies continued to take their toll of enemy in a series of isolated encounters. In the largest of these, Alpha Trp., 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav., combined with 3rd Troop, 4th ARVN Cav. Sqdn., to kill 13 NVA and capture 11 AK-47 rifles.

By this time the 196th Inf. Bde. had received information that the enemy was engaged in another troop build-up in "Pineapple Forest," five miles west of Tam Ky.



To meet this, task force 1-1 under the operational control of the 196th was formed. The task force consisted of Alpha and Bravo Trps., 1st Cav., with one platoon each from Delta Co., 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, and Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Inf. This force was to drive north and push the enemy into blocking positions held by Alpha and Charlie Companies, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf.

The first encounter came earlier than the Americans anticipated. "We were sweeping towards a woodline," said Private First Class Earnest Harrison, "when we spotted a bunker to our front."

Rifle and machinegun fire spewed from the enemy emplacement. The Americans dove for cover, then opened up with M-16 rifles. A lone soldier rushed the bunker from its blind side and tossed a hand grenade through the portal. Four NVA were killed, including two officers. Another enemy opened fire from a spider hole, and he too was brought down by grenades.

By this time the entire hillside had erupted with enemy fire. The 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., soldiers had come upon the enemy force which they were supposed to block. The Americans halted their advance and called for air and artillery support.


"The air strikes lasted all day," said Specialist Four James Steele. "The whole side of the hill was covered with smoke."

The next morning the Americans found no trace of the savage enemy resistance encountered the day before. The NVA had abandoned their fortifications during the night.

The NVA had had ambitious plans for Quang Tin Province. A 196th Inf. Bde. intelligence report written in late January reads:

The general enemy effort appears to have been directed at neutralizing the GVN (Government of Vietnam) pacification gains of 1969... with the political objective of destroying civilian confidence in the power of the GVN to protect them.

The enemy plans had turned to ashes. In a week of fighting the allies had killed 253 enemy while Thang Binh and Tam Ky remained untouched. Several ingredients had gone into the allies' success, and these were summed up by Colonel James M. Lee, at that time commanding officer of the 196th Inf. Bde.

"We received good intelligence and were able to formulate an effective plan. Most important of course, was the splendid performance of the Vietnamese and American soldier once the fighting started." 





Kelly

medcap

The sun glared down on the Vietnamese village as the jeeps pulled into the village square. Curious women peeked out of the dark doorways of hooches, while the less timid children ran out to meet the Americans. A MEDCAP mission was about to begin.

The medical civic action program (MEDCAP) is designed to provide medical treatment for Vietnamese civilians. A typical MEDCAP team includes a doctor, a clinical technician and two medics. One such team operates out of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Brigade. The team travels to the small villages around LZ Hawk Hill to provide free medical services to the Vietnamese.

On a typical working day the team was invited to Binh An, seven miles northwest of Tam Ky, by the village chief. First Lieutenant William Bacon, civil affairs officer, 2nd of the 1st, went to the village to survey the many thatch-covered hooches that line the street. Lt. Bacon decided that the white masonry meeting hall in the center of the village would be the best place for the team to set up.

The next day two jeeps pulled to a halt in front of the meeting hall, and the team entered the building. As they spread their medical supplies over a rough-hewn table, a large crowd gathered outside.

The Vietnamese people approached the interpreter one at a time. The interpreter listened to the complaints and then translated these to the American medics.

The medics treated a variety of ailments. "Skin diseases are very common," says First Lieutenant Fluerney Walker, medical operations assistant. "Many types are relatively easy to cure, and the people can see the improvement. They become more confident about us and more willing to undergo treatment."

Sometimes the group of medical officers and personnel include Army nurses from one of the hospitals in Chu Lai. First Lieutenant Nadine Wahner from the 27th Surgical Hospital readily admits that she enjoys her trips with the MEDCAP teams.



Perkins

On one MEDCAP mission to the Son Tinh district, Lieutenant Wahner found herself the center of attention. "Most of the patients had never seen an American woman before," she relates, "and were suffering from a case of curiosity." The treatment prescribed was a combination of ingredients—a warm smile to ease shyness, and a friendly greeting to promote comfort.

The womanly understanding that the nurses show on these MEDCAP missions does much to let the Vietnamese civilians know that many Americans care enough to help.

The 23rd Medical Battalion not only runs weekly MEDCAP's, but they help the Vietnamese people to care for their own medical needs.

For the past several months the battalion has been assisting the 2nd ARVN Division with on-the-job training for medical personnel. One of these programs involved training Vietnamese girls to become nurses. This program began at the request of the Village Chief of Ky Xuan Island.

Four young girls, ages eighteen to nineteen, from the Island began a ten week course of intensive study.

The nurses soon got a chance to utilize their newly learned skills. Doctor (Maj.) Bruce Usher from the 91st Evacuation Hospital combined the four Vietnamese nurses with his MEDCAP team during a visit to Ky Xuan island.

The village headquarters located in the center of the island was used as an out-patient clinic. Three shots were fired into the air to signal that the MEDCAP was underway.

By noon Doctor Usher and his medical assistants had seen more than 200 patients, most of whom were women and children.

"You get a very good idea of what it's like to be a country doctor out here. Treating so many people for so many different things is a unique experience," the doctor remarked.

A different kind of MEDCAP is also underway in the Americal. A medical team of Army personnel live with the Vietnamese people in the community of Son Hoa. The team serves the community as a permanent medical station.

Ever since this 196th Infantry Brigade MEDCAP liaison team moved into the village courthouse, they have offered daily check-ups to 1,500 Son Hoa inhabitants.

Cut to the bone on supplies because of field requirements, these medics treat cuts, boils, jungle rot and a number of other minor ailments. Medical aid is a premium that few of these Vietnamese families can afford. A splash of hydrogen peroxide,

salve and a bandage can mean the difference between a shallow flesh wound and crippling gangrene.

"It's almost impossible to reach a Vietnamese doctor from here," said medic Specialist Four Roderick Tolbert, (St. Louis). The nearest doctor is in Tam Ky, 18 miles southwest of this mountain valley.

The most tangible services of the team have helped to make Son Hoa a healthier, more prosperous settlement. Before the team arrived the villagers could barely support themselves.

"Viet Cong attacks drove several families in here for safety," said Sergeant John Duque, NCO-in-charge of the medical team. "We had to help them find room. Some were hurt and needed a 'baksi'—a doctor."

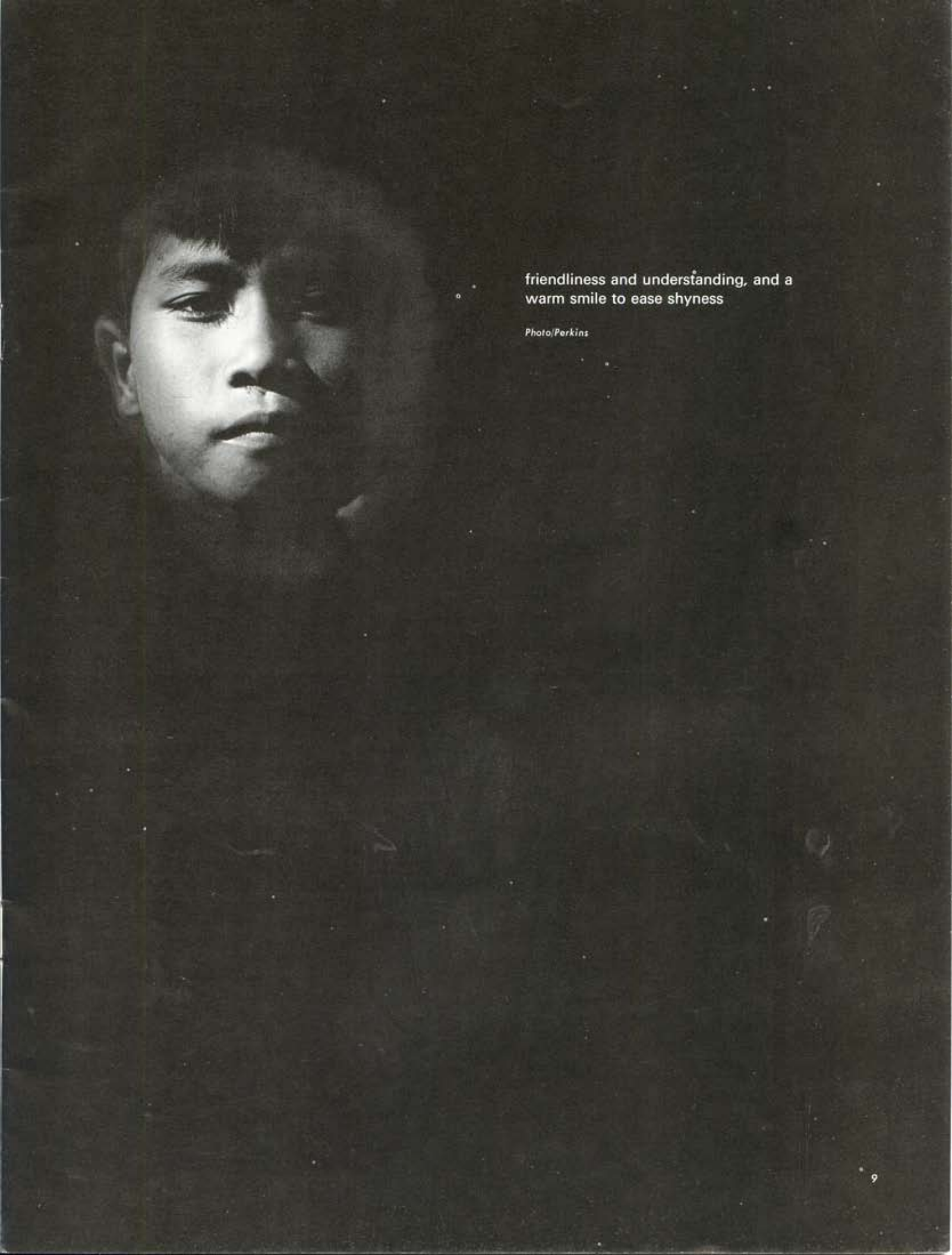
Sergeant Duque notified First Lieutenant Michael Donohoe, his supervisor across the valley on fire base West. Donohoe consulted with battalion medical officers. A week later, Sgt. Duque was the busiest man in Son Hoa; Lt. Donohoe was sending in a MEDCAP team and Duque had to alert the village.

A thatched hut—a mini-dispensary—was scrubbed down and the medics filed in and arranged bandages and bottles on the table provided. About 35 women and children were watching. The village chief was there, and the American battalion commander. The crowd held back, but not for long.

"Bring your sick here every day," a Vietnamese spokesman told the crowd. A tiny mother with discolored sores pitting her leg moved in under the hut. A little boy pulled at the medic's sleeve, wanting candy. As the days passed, the medics added to their clientele. When they heard about the American "baksi," mothers trekked in from afar bringing their sick and ailing to visit the live-in MEDCAP at Son Hoa.

Whether it's a once a week outing to some remote village, or a team living with the people, friendliness and understanding are the keynotes for a MEDCAP mission. The medical civic action program not only provides a much needed medical service to the Vietnamese people, but also opens new channels of friendship between Americans and Vietnamese. ♣

By
SP4 RICHARD MERRITT
196th Inf. Bde.



friendliness and understanding, and a
warm smile to ease shyness

Photo/Perkins

And things had been discouraging Jones recalled. The VC reign of terror over Van Troung had pushed the people beyond the limits of trust. They were fearful and suspicious of everyone. They had felt trapped: if they befriended the Americans, surely the VC would exact savage revenge on them when Bravo departed.

It was the small material dividends of security they noticed first. The few extra bowls of rice that for the first time in years had escaped the VC larder; the fistfull of piasters that were previously set aside for the VC tax collector.

The presence of the 11th Brigade unit sparked a new wave of industriousness, for the people now could keep the fruits of their labor. With it came a trend of prosperity—a modest one to be sure and again evidenced by small things: candy and clothes for the children, a new bicycle tire, or an occasional tin roof. Vendors—the entrepreneurs of the agricultural village—flourished and multiplied, hawking their rice-bread, fish nets, and popsicles up and down Highway One. The reign of the VC food scavenger had ended in Van Troung.

Jones was awakened from his reverie by movement on the other side of the table. A twisted sickle—the one Harpo had clutched as the final death tremors shook his body was being passed round the table. It was venerated almost as a relic.

Yuravich accepted the sickle from the village casket maker—a customary guest at funeral dinners. There was not much left of it now.





A group of villagers, Harpo among them, had volunteered to help clear fields of fire on the southern sector of the Van Troung perimeter. The stuff was thick—nourished by months of monsoon rain. The graceful sweeping strokes of their curved sickles beat a centuries-old rhythm through the dense vegetation. These were men of the land, lean and sinewy. They worked with dignity.

The blast shook the hamlet with such force that it killed several fish in a nearby paddy. A large mine or booby trap. What it was makes little difference now. Yuravich and Jones carried Harpo's body to his home. They had first pried the sickle from his death grip. He died instantly which was just as well for there is no mercy in allowing a man enough time to utter his final words when he cannot speak.

They laid him on Jones' bed. The small room was soon filled with weeping villagers.

Some of the men had cried too. I mean it was like losing your own brother. A poor deaf and dumb guy. But a happy kid.

So it was that five American soldiers and seven Vietnamese villagers shared a meal of mourning together.

I know, I was there.

By 1LT JAMES COLLINS

11th Inf. Bde.

Mary Ann

Fat Hueys hover above the valley floor. In a few moments they disgorge their scrambling load of heavily laden troops and then strain to reach a safer altitude.

Tearing, grasping vines slow the determined push to the hill's summit. The stillness spreads its ominous cloak over the terrain. The Americal soldiers have come to do a job.

Mission:
Seize and build FSB
Mary Ann.

19 Feb:

D Co, 1/46 air assaulted into LZ Mary Ann. HQ, second, and third platoons of A Co, 26th Eng. Bn. lifted into LZ Mary Ann at 1045.

Okay, lets clear this brush.

This damn thing won't start.

Kick it!

Easy now.

Hey! Watch that blade.

Case 450 bulldozer brought into LZ Mary Ann at 1145.

Perimeter positions here, here, and here.

Where ya want the pits?

Three gun pits, FDC, and command bunkers finished at 1400.

Demo team clearing treeline to NW.

Brush on south perimeter being cleared.

Fire in the hole!
Where?

Over there.

Fire in the hole!

Now where?

The other side.

Where's my pot?

Ouch! Damnit!

Hurt?

Only when I laugh, clown.

It's getting dark.

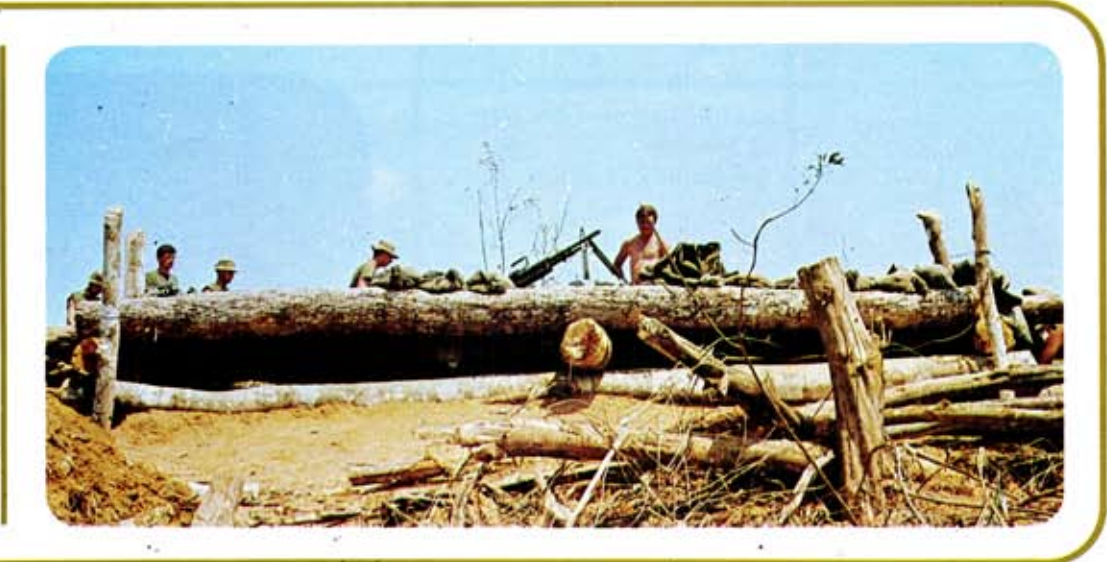
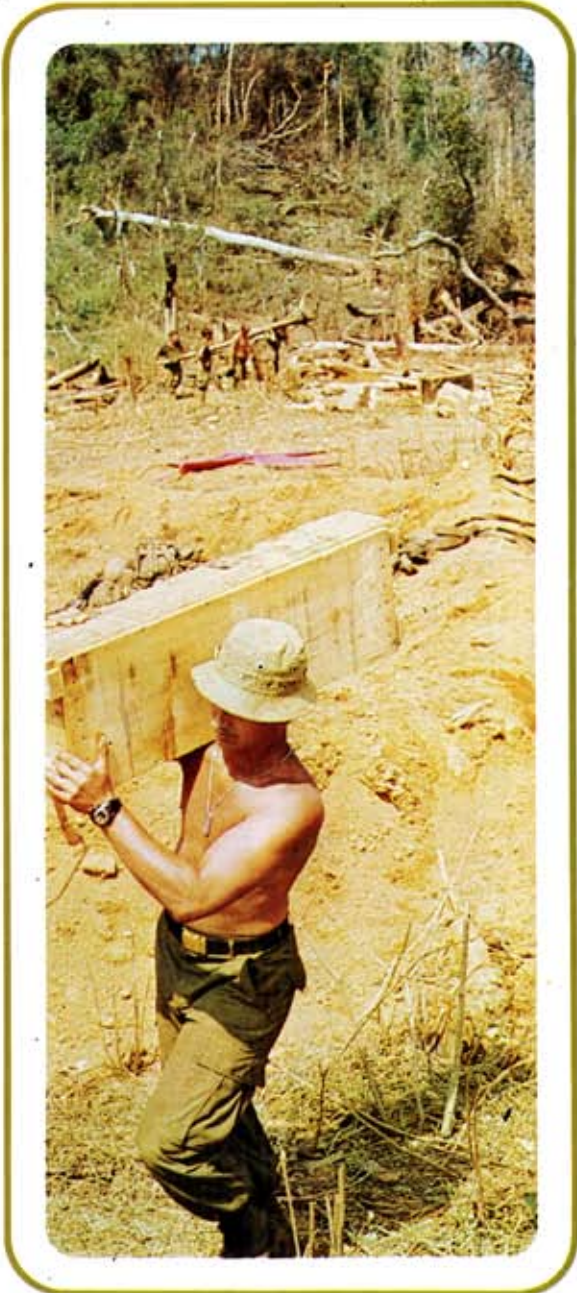
I know. I can't see.

Fire in the hole!

Not again.

Story and Photos by
SP4 JAMES MAJERUS







21 Feb:
 Two 105mm howitzers
 brought in from
 B Btry, 3/82 at 1140.
 Pop smoke!
 Bring 'im in.
 Ptu! Damn dust.
 Stack those boxes right.



20 Feb:
 D 1/46 continues
 construction of LZ Mary
 Ann.
 Resupply on demo.
 Pop smoke!
 Smoke out.
 Let's get that stuff off.
 Wow! Is this heavy.
 Quit bitchin'. It might
 save your neck.
 That makes it lighter?
 Fire in the hole!
 Why?
 Can't they do that
 quietly?



Dreesen



Get off your ass!
Where we settin' up?
We got any water?
Of course not.
Bring that 50 over here!
Careful.
Hangin'.
Can you raise 'em?



Fire in the hole!
On the hill.
Got any soda?
You're kidding.
Pop smoke.
Overhead cover on perimeter bunkers completed.
How's that ?
Not bad.
Think it'll hold?
Sure.
All finished?
Let 'em try.
And they did. ♣





THE KING

By PFC ROBERT SMITH

The school of hard knocks. That is what some people call it. They are talking about life and referring to living. The school is a vast academy that covers a complex world. Everyday we learn a little bit more so that between sunrises and sunsets we become a little wiser, a little better prepared to move from classroom to classroom. As with any academy, the more we learn, the easier life becomes.

The sunrises here are seen over the South China Sea. The sunsets . . . somewhere over western Asia. "Here" is Vietnam. Here is also a country fighting to be free; free so that its people may go on with the living and the learning, unrepressed. The lessons being taught now must be learned well so that a country can take its place in the world. A failing mark here may mean that there will be no next semester.

The men of AMERICAL Division Artillery are doing their part to assure there will be no failing marks. They are teaching members of the 2nd ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) Division Artillery lessons that result in better fire support for the infantrymen of both countries. The courses are not easy ones to master, but the ARVN are fast learners and the Americans are determined teachers.

METRO. Complex in both equipment and computations, artillery ballistic meteorology (metro) is vital to artillerymen throughout the world. Air pressure, wind velocity and temperature change can not only affect a projectile enough to cause it to miss its target, but possibly to detonate near friendly forces.

Taking into consideration the complexities of filling weather balloons, tracking their flights with a theodolite, and compiling data with slide rules, charts, and graphs, the first class was scheduled to span eight weeks. Because few interpreters have had the opportunity to study the terms unique to the field, the major problem was expected to be the language barrier.

"At first it appeared that the ability to communicate the exact meanings was a very serious problem," said Staff Sergeant James R. Sweet (Pittsburg, Pa.), "but the one

officer in the class, Second Lieutenant Dinh Van Thu, proved to be an exceptional interpreter and the overall willingness of the men dispelled any misgivings we first experienced."

In a mere 18 days the men had mastered successfully the intricacies of the course. They then left for Quang Ngai to set up their own Metro unit.

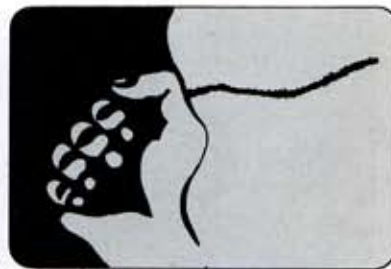
FADAC. Another complex facet of modern artillery is the Field Artillery Digital Computer (FADAC). On the 2nd Infantry Division (ARVN) Organization Day, a demonstration in the use and capabilities of FADAC was conducted by Lieutenant Ngugen Van Thong and three enlisted members of the 2nd Infantry Division Artillery.

Lt. Van Thong and his team had received two weeks of instruction and training on the FADAC under the close supervision of SFC Donald W. Thomas (Lawton, Okla.), Operations Sergeant of the 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery.

"The Vietnamese artillerymen were terrific; just terrific," SFC Thomas pointed out. "They responded quickly to the instruction and mastered the procedures for computing fire missions."

CALIBRATION. Once the big guns are on target, there must be assurance that they will remain that way. This, then, is the objective of calibration: keep the guns on target even after extensive firing through the highly technical method of determining the individual peculiarities of each howitzer through the use of advanced radar tracking devices.

This program, like all good schooling, sows the seeds of learning and improvement. So the men of AMERICAL Division Artillery continue to teach and work with the Republic of Vietnam soldiers, not only in the techniques and practices of fire direction, but also on the guns themselves.



On a bright afternoon at LZ New Hau Duc, a bald and blistering hilltop violently erupted as an entire battery of 155mm howitzers fired simultaneously with the sureness and the precision of lessons well learned. And for one of the first times in South Vietnam, artillerymen from two countries worked as one battery; a battery using firing data obtained from either their ARVN or American commanders.

The new technique enables combined artillery units to fire in support of the infantry of both armies with less liaison red-tape. Forward observers can call their own artillery command and with the aid of only an interpreter at the fire bases, the support is quickly provided. Both armies are the beneficiaries of the harvest of learning.

"What impressed me most," said one American soldier, "was seeing the ARVN work-out for what we knew was an American element. We do the same for them, but this is the first time we have seen each other in action."

Throughout the periods of instruction at the many different places, Americans and ARVN worked together. Living side by side, digging bunkers, carrying ammo, cleaning their howitzers, and sweating through fire missions both day and night, the men got to know and respect each other.

As any veteran instructor knows, teaching can be a two way street. The teacher also learns. Here in Vietnam, there are extension courses of the school of life. The Americans and Vietnamese, have gone beyond the understanding of machinery and guns.

There are things learned about artillery, yes, but these other things go beyond artillery. Human things such as fellowship and teamwork. A willingness to help and a desire to support.

There is a job to be done and they are doing it. Vietnamization. But there is also what First Lieutenant Forrest T. Pever (Shawnee, Okla.) calls a "personal" Vietnamization. It has to do with the men of two different countries working and playing together, singing songs of each other's country, and learning. It is a feeling of goodwill toward other men that makes you feel better somewhere inside.

Goodwill. It makes the school of hard knocks a little simpler, a little easier. ♣



Andrew Jesti



Cautiously approaching and sniffing the can, "Panther" sat down, clue to his handler that the can may be booby-trapped. An explosive charge was prepared to destroy the can and its contents. There was the initial detonation then a secondary explosion. Once again the Army's four-legged soldier had made the right decision.

"Panther" is a mine and tunnel dog assigned to the 63rd Infantry Platoon (combat tracker's). He came to the Americal Division from Fort Gordon, Georgia, where mixed breed German Shepards are trained to detect by smell the presence of mines and tunnels.

The tunnel dog is utilized in areas suspected to contain underground passages, or when a unit finds an opening into a bunker complex and wants to seal off all other entrances.

Mine dogs locate enemy devices, above and below ground. They can see a trip wire that is invisible to a man's eye, sometimes smell it, and even hear it as it vibrates in the wind.

4 LEGGED SOLDIER

By
SSG VERN KAISER
DISCOM

Tracker dogs differ from the mine and tunnel dogs in both training and temperament. The tracker dog—normally a Labrador Retriever—functions as a member of a six-unit tracker team (four infantrymen trackers, a dog handler and the Labrador Retriever). The men track by sight, the dogs track by scent to detect the location of the enemy.

The forward visual tracker concentrates solely on signs left on and above the ground by the enemy. The two flank visual trackers observe primarily for enemy presence in order to protect the team.

The fourth visual tracker, acting as team chief, constantly observes the conduct of all members and coordinates and directs the actions of all team members.

The dog handler, the fifth member of the team, serves as rear security and provides for the safety of his dog. When the forward visual tracker is no longer certain of the trail, the dog is brought forward to follow the scent until the visual tracker can read the trail. Thus, the dog and visual trackers complement each other.

Scout dogs are another type of four-legged soldier employed in Vietnam. Scout dogs are German Shepherds that are used to provide early silent warning of snipers and infiltra-

tors for infantry patrols. In addition, they are also taught to assist in finding tunnels, booby traps, and caches of food and equipment.

If a Scout Dog picks up an unfamiliar scent while on patrol, he will give an alert, which the handler will pass on to the company commander or platoon leader. There is no special method by which all dogs alert. Each dog is an individual in his manner of alerting. Therefore, the handler must be well aware of his dog's behavior so he does not miss its signal of alert.

Scout dogs, in many cases, are able to detect the enemy hiding underwater. If the enemy is using a reed to breath through, the canine will have little trouble picking up the scent.

These dogs and their handlers go through an intensive training program in preparation for their duty in Vietnam. The course lasts 12 weeks and is broken down into two parts.





Basic obedience, the first phase, takes place during the first two weeks of the training. This includes teaching the dog to respond to such basic commands as "heel, sit, stay and crawl."

At the end of two weeks, the second phase of training is begun, which involves ten weeks of field instruction. The purpose of the field instruction is to teach the handler and dog to work as a team in alerting others to enemy presence. Also, the dog must be taught to give only a silent warning, since barking would alert the enemy.

During the ten week period, the dog and handler are exposed to every type of condition they will encounter in the jungle areas of Vietnam.

Bien Hoa Air Base is the next stop for both handler and dog.

After two weeks of in-country training at the Air Base, the dog and his new master are old friends, and each knows just what to expect from each

other. The training is a refresher of what was originally accomplished at Ft. Benning, and helps the team adapt more readily to their environment.

From Bien Hoa, the scout dog teams are assigned to a scout dog platoon. Teams designated for the 63rd Infantry Platoon (combat tracker's) are sent to Chu Lai, where they will assist infantry units in the Americal.

After the teams reach the Americal and become accustomed to their new habitat, they undergo more training to familiarize themselves with the terrain in which they'll be working.

Often, dogs which have worked in other parts of Vietnam are sent to the Americal. First Lieutenant Christian Benton, 63rd platoon leader explained the reason: "In addition to knowing what to expect here in southern I Corps, it is a great advantage to have dogs that are familiar with situations that are uncommon to this area. One never knows when the enemy may deploy a technique used in another section of the country."

The dog and its handler work together as a team. Together they may mean the difference between success and failure. And together they definitely mean trouble for the enemy. It's no wonder that in Vietnam the dog is considered the enemy's worst enemy. ♣



AMERICAL LOG

AMERICAL LOG—Prologue

Combat activity in Southern I Corps increased considerably in the quarter of March, April and May. Major battalion and company-sized contacts again centered around Tam Ky and the resettlement village of Hiep Duc.

More than 2,000 enemy soldiers were killed by Americal Division units during the three-month period, while 503 weapons were captured, 28 of which were crew-served.

In March, combat action was quite heavy, though sporadic throughout the division as Americal units accounted for more than 680 enemy soldiers killed.

In the month of April, fewer enemy were killed, but an increase in the size of unit contacts was noted.

In May, a sharp rise in enemy activity was noted with several rocket attacks on Chu Lai and a flare up of fighting in the resettlement village of Hiep Duc, 22 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

By SP4 DENNIS SELBY

MARCH

The first two weeks of March saw light to moderate action, with the Americal cavalrymen playing an important role in several skirmishes with the enemy.

On March 9, a task force of Bravo Company, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., F Troop, 1-1 Cav., and Delta Co., 3-21 Inf. killed 15 enemy soldiers in a seven hour battle, 13 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

An element of Bravo Company, 2-1 Inf. and F Troop swept the southern bank of a stream; while other elements of the same units moved along the northern edge of the waterway.

Contact was made almost immediately with the enemy. "We were next to the water when a VC ran across a trail and dove for the cover of a spider hole," said SP4 Charlie Callahan (Imperial, Mo.).

The 196th Inf. Bde. soldiers brought down the enemy with a barrage of hand grenades. Moments later, Bravo Company flushed three enemy from the heavy foliage. "They ran into the stream and tried to reach the woodline on the other side," stated Callahan. A burst of M-16 fire brought down the three foe.

"We kept making contact all day," said PFC Larry Lamoureaux (Sergeant Bluff, Iowa). "We had at least ten fire-fights throughout the day and killed 12 enemy soldiers."

On March 19, Major General Lloyd Ramsey, commanding general of the Americal Division was hoisted from the thick jungle where he had been stranded overnight following the crash of his command and control UH1 helicopter in which two men were killed and six injured.

Army and Air Force rescue units flew to the area and an infantry element of the 1st Bn., 6th Inf. was airborne to within two miles of the crash sight.

Radio contact was lost at 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 19 and was not regained until 8 a.m. when Major Tommy P. James (Bixby, Okla.) arrived in the area in a helicopter.

Major James was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his outstanding actions in the successful rescuing of the downed personnel.

On March 22, following the injury of General Ramsey, Major General A.E. Milloy (Fayetteville, N.C.) assumed command of the Americal Division.

MG Milloy, a distinguished combat veteran of three wars and a master parachutist, assumed command of the





America following seven months as the commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division.

While large enemy contacts were few in the last two weeks of March, an aerial broadcast paid rapid dividends to cavalry soldiers of the 196th Inf. Bde.

The brigade light observation helicopter made a "VIP" broadcast the morning of March 24 near Tam Ky, urging local villagers to bring forth information concerning VC activities in the area. Within 30 minutes, a 10-year-old Vietnamese boy approached a Kit Carson Scout from F Troop, 17th Cav. The boy explained that there was a 250-pound bomb only 20 feet in front of the command track. The well-camouflaged bomb was destroyed in place, leaving a crater five feet wide and three feet deep.

"Without the boy, we would have run right over the mine," said CPT Roscoe Cartwright (Cincinnati) commanding officer of F Troop and riding on the command track at the time. "That would have been number 10."

APRIL

The month of April was ushered in with several attacks on firebases of the 198th Inf. Bde.

Incoming small arms fire, RPG's, 60mm mortar fire and satchel charges erupted in the early morning hours of April 1, as an undetermined number of VC were repulsed following a futile attempt to penetrate LZ Bayonet, headquarters of the 198th Inf. Bde.

The 30-minute mortar barrage which initiated the action one mile south of Chu Lai, sent the ready-reaction force to the bunker line.

Artillery, mortar and gunships teamed up to saturate the outer perimeter of Bayonet with deadly fire, killing one VC.

In similar action, two platoons of B Co., 5-46 Inf. fought off a fierce ground attack on LZ Fat City, five miles northwest of Chu Lai the same morning. The action accounted for one VC killed, one VC detained and an AK-47 captured.

On April 16, infantrymen of C Co., 2-1 Inf., gunships and ground troops of F Troop, 8th Cav., teamed up to bring down eight VC in an operation 11 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

The action began when a "Blue Ghost" gunship located six VC. The ship swooped down, guns ablaze and killed the six enemy.

The Blue Ghost infantry platoon was inserted into an area as Charlie Company, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. swept in from the other side. The Blue Ghost platoon made instant contact, killing two more VC with small arms fire.

On April 20, twenty-two NVA fell to rocket and gunfire of the 174th Avn. Co. (Assault Helicopter) in the 11th Brigade area of operation as the "Shark" gunships turned a routine combat assault into a two hour air-ground battle.

While the company's "Dolphin" utility ships were lifting in one battalion of the 4th ARVN Regiment and a rifle company of the 3rd Bn., 1st Inf. into landing zones 20 miles northwest of Duc Pho, a heavy fire-team of gunships spotted fresh .51 caliber gun emplacements.

Said CPT Stephen S. Riddle (Weaver, N.C.), "While we were marking the enemy positions with smoke grenades, we spotted movement. We saw, engaged and killed three well-equipped NVA who were trying to

evade along a river. Our rocket fire must have hit a command post because a company-sized element of confused NVA split into large groups and ran." It was then that the gunships were able to take full advantage of their lethal firepower and kill 19 more enemy soldiers.

In an action the following day, April 21, the recon element of the 1st Bn., 20th Inf., National Police Field Force and "Shark" gunships teamed up to kill 15 VC while detaining 10 VC suspects.

Three AK-47 rifles and three SKS's were confiscated in the action which took place in the lowlands six miles north of Duc Pho.

In a "non-action" in the 11th Brigade area on the 22nd of April, Bravo Company, 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. uncovered a 10 to 15 ton salt cache in the mountains six miles west of Duc Pho. The cache was discovered in a pit inside of a well-camouflaged hooch. The hut was located near a well-used trail.

MAY

Ninety NVA/VC were killed Friday, May 1 by the 2nd ARVN Division supported by an aero-scout company of the Americal's 123rd Avn. Bn.

After fierce fighting for two days, the ARVN unit re-claimed the re-settlement village of Hiep Duc from the NVA, killing 44 of the enemy. According to an ARVN report, approximately 15% of the village had been destroyed by fire and several civilians had been killed by the enemy.

The Americal aero-scout company supporting the ARVN attack accounted for 46 enemy kills.

"We came in hot with rockets on a .51 caliber machinegun position and knocked it out," explained the aero-scout commander, MAJ Stalker (Enterprise, Ala.), "there were four large secondary explosions after the attack."


At mid-afternoon the same day, the 1st Co., 1st Bn., 5th ARVN Regt. waged a fierce battle with an unknown number of NVA. The fight resulted in 18 NVA killed. A search of the area exposed six enemy weapons including two AK-44s and one MAS-36. Also found were a Chicom sub-machinegun 2,000 rounds of ammunition and 60 Chicom grenades.

May 13 proved to be an unlucky day for an NVA Company in the 196th Inf. Bde's area of operation as Alpha Battery, 3rd Bn., 82 Artillery reported killing 25 enemy soldiers.

While cutting their way through thick vegetation nine miles north west of Tam Ky on May 23, the point element of the recon platoon of the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. decided to attend a VC garden party even though they were not invited, after they heard voices in the jungle.

"The voices were coming from about 10 meters on the other side of a hedgerow," said SP4 Larry Hardin (Steger, Ill.) pointman for the recon element. "Our Kit Carson Scout could tell they were Viet Cong by what they were saying. Their weapons were lying on the ground."

The VC were working in a large garden that apparently supplied a battalion of enemy soldiers.

The "Legionaires" crashed into the hedgerow and came face to face with 15 enemy soldiers. "We killed two before they even knew what hit them," said Hardin. "And we dropped five more as they scattered." 



AMERICAL LOG

AMERICAN MIRTH

By SGT DENNIS BRAUN
196th Inf. Bde.

WHAT CAN I SAY



"Morning men, I'm your NCO in charge of simulated jungle games."



"PVT Krebs, I did say right 100, not drop 100, d-d-didn't I?"



"You see Sir, I turned the claymores around so that if they get past the wire I can get 'em in the back!"



"Sure, everyone makes mistakes HoChe, but leaving the ammo in Hanoi..."

In the year 2800 B.C. a fabled Chinese Emperor drew his followers together in the courtyard of the royal palace. On that occasion, which ultimately set the stage for centuries of emulation, the ruler proclaimed a ceremonial ordinance to commemorate the planting of the grain "Oryza Sativa"—cultivated rice.

To over half of mankind, rice represents the staple diet of subsistence. Since its discovery as a food over 2000 years ago, rice has been deeply imbued within the cultural and gastronomical composition of the majority of the world's population. It has enjoyed repeated and evergrowing success in its popularity throughout the ages.

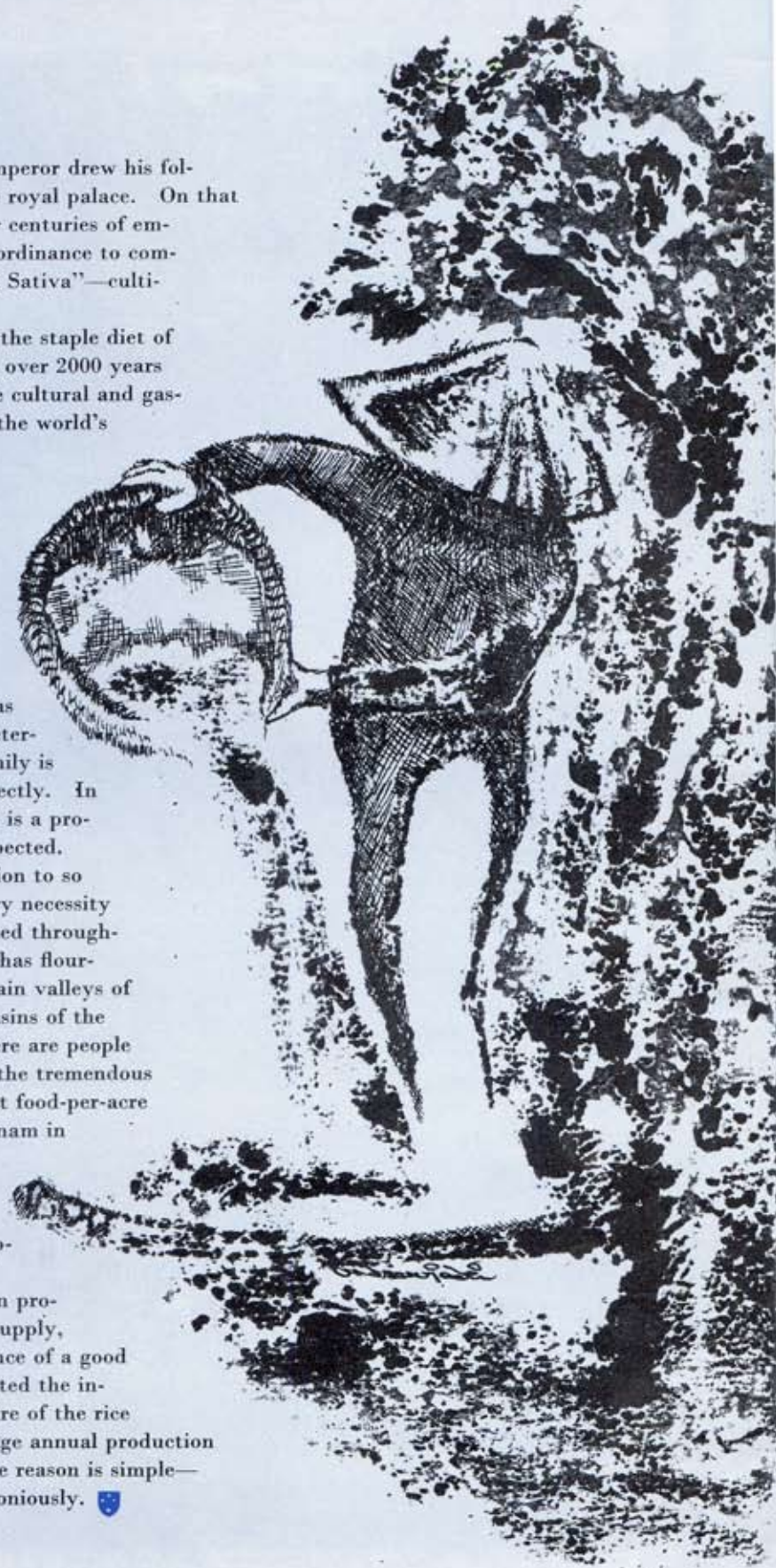
In Vietnam the culture of the population is derived largely from the Chinese, perhaps only part of the reason for the tremendous dependence there upon rice for survival.

Additionally, in thousands of villages and hamlets throughout Vietnam, as well as most of Indo-China and Asia, the prime determiner of domestic efficiency within the family is the matriarch's ability to prepare rice correctly. In no other country, nor indeed culture itself, is a product of the land so highly revered and respected.

One of the prime reasons for such devotion to so fragile a commodity is grounded in the very necessity for existence which the grain has represented throughout Vietnam for ages. Traditionally, rice has flourished all over the country from the mountain valleys of the central highlands to the water-filled basins of the southern deltas. It is grown wherever there are people to care for it, accounting considerably for the tremendous annual yield—which makes rice the highest food-per-acre grain of them all. Food is needed in Vietnam in large quantities to feed large numbers of people, underlying again the abundance and significance of rice as a staple, both in Vietnam and all of the heavily populated areas of Asia.

Contributing heavily to the overall Asian production of nine-tenths of the world's rice supply, Vietnam has long understood the importance of a good annual yield. History has repeatedly related the incidence of famine and starvation to a failure of the rice crop. Little more than 2 to 3% of the huge annual production of rice finds its way into world trade. The reason is simple—the rice is grown to be consumed. Ceremoniously. 🍚

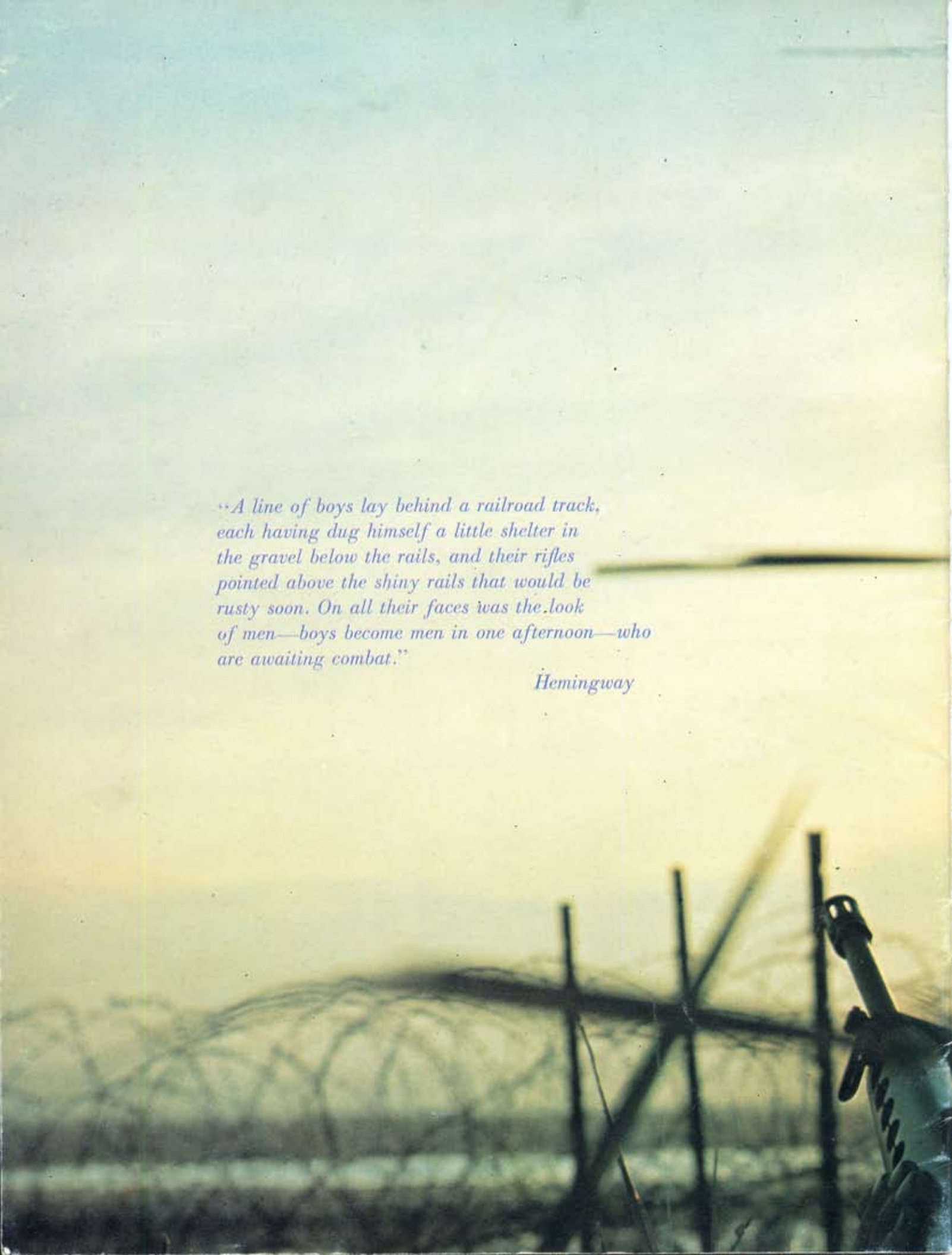
By SSG TIMOTHY PALMER



Andrewjeski



U. S. ARMY



“A line of boys lay behind a railroad track, each having dug himself a little shelter in the gravel below the rails, and their rifles pointed above the shiny rails that would be rusty soon. On all their faces was the look of men—boys become men in one afternoon—who are awaiting combat.”

Hemingway