

# MISSION VIETNAM





# SEVENTH AIR FORCE



## *Principal Organizations*



3rd Tactical Fighter Wing



8th Tactical Fighter Wing



12th Tactical Fighter Wing



14th Special Operations Wing



31st Tactical Fighter Wing



35th Tactical Fighter Wing



37th Tactical Fighter Wing



56th Special Operations Wing



355th Tactical Fighter Wing



366th Tactical Fighter Wing



388th Tactical Fighter Wing



432nd Tactical Recon Wing



460th Tactical Recon Wing



553rd Reconnaissance Wing



633rd Special Operations Wing



377 Combat Support Group



632nd Combat Support Group



834th Air Division



315th Special Operations Wing



483rd Tactical Airlift Wing

2nd Aerial Port Group

## *Other Units*

1st Civil Engineering Group

3rd Air Rescue and Recovery Group

1st Weather Group

505th Tactical Control Group

1964th Communications Group





# MISSION VIETNAM

## CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Why Vietnam?	3
Vietnam – Historically Independent	4
Vietnam – Unlimited Potential	12
Seventh Air Force	14
Total Air	16
The Allies	17
The Vietnamese Air Force	18
Air Force Advisory Group; Free World Forces	19
Forward Air Controllers	20
Strategic Air Command and the B-52s	22
Tactical Air	25
Airpower in Vietnam	29
Maintenance	34
Airlift – Lifeline to Survival	36
Air Rescuc	40
Communications	42
Munitions	43
Security	45
Reconnaissance	46
Psychological Operations	48
Defoliation	50
Other Support	51
The Enemy – and His Tactics	56
Civic Action	58
Scenic Vietnam; A Photographic Portfolio	60
Epilogue	64



*Contrails spew from the wingtips of a Seventh Air Force A-1 Skyraider as it pulls out of a bomb dive.*

MISSION VIETNAM is an unofficial publication of the Seventh Air Force, for distribution to Seventh Air Force personnel. Comments herein do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the U. S. Government or its agencies, or the U. S. Air Force.

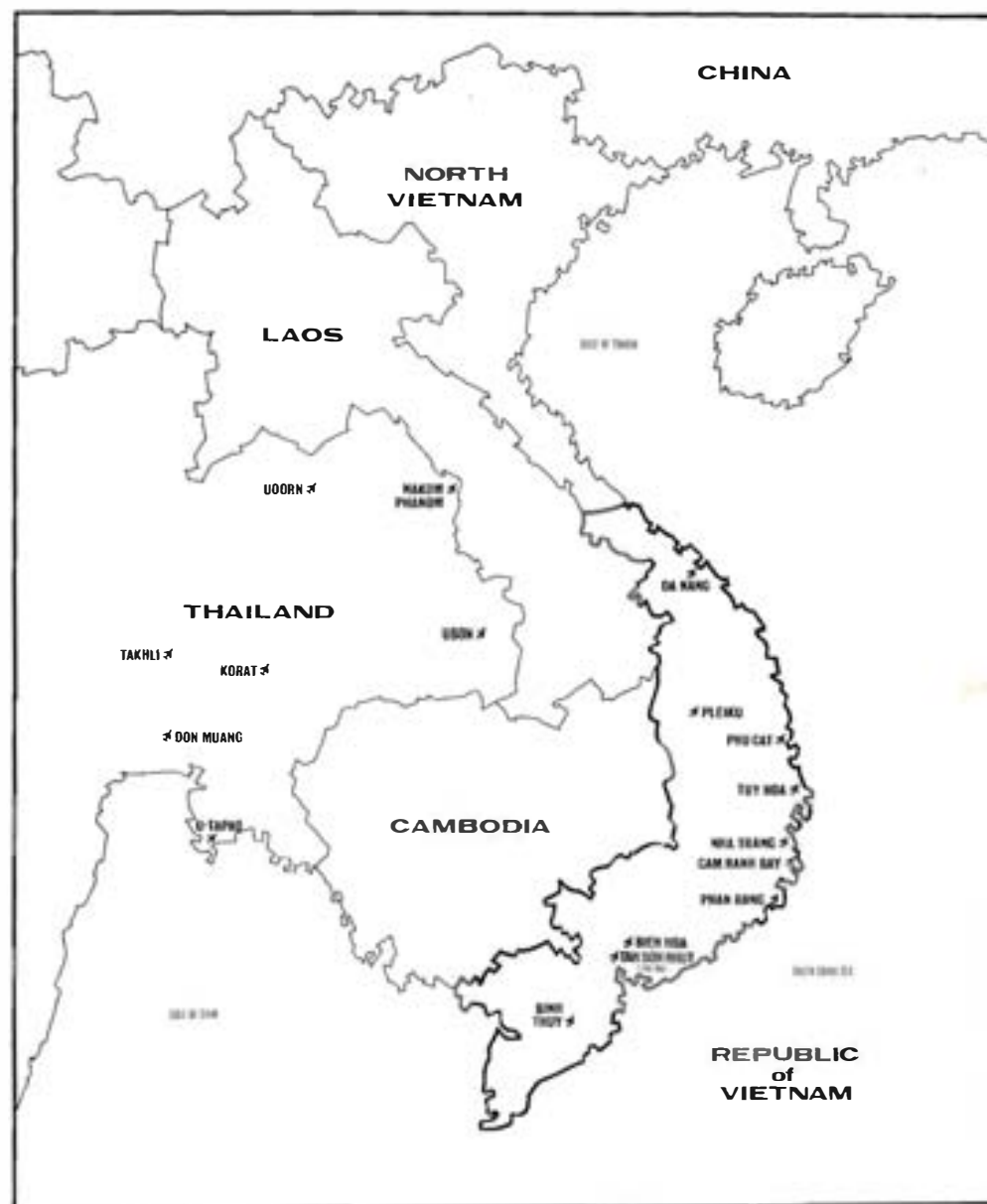
# Introduction

AS EVERY military man knows, the last item on a travel voucher itinerary ends with the notation, "mission complete." So it is now with you, and the thousands of men like you, who have served combat tours of duty in Vietnam and are preparing to go to a new assignment, or, in some cases, home; your mission here, as far as you personally are concerned, is now "complete."

WHEREVER you go, you will frequently be asked about your experiences here. "What is Vietnam like?" , "What are we accomplishing in Vietnam?" , "Why are we involved in the Vietnam war?" are only some of such questions you will be expected to answer. This booklet has been prepared to help you reply to some of those queries, and also to provide you with a souvenir of an important part of your life to keep through the years ahead.

THIS BOOK is for you - the officer, noncommissioned officer and airman who have served with Seventh Air Force in Vietnam.

TO THOSE of your comrades-in-arms who have fallen here and will not return with you, it is most respectfully and reverently dedicated.



# Why Vietnam?

**The past four American Presidents  
explain U.S. military presence  
in Southeast Asia ...**

The territorial integrity and governmental freedom of the countries of Southeast Asia — especially South Vietnam, whose people have had the gravest threat to their way of life — has been the concern of world statesmen for many years. Several U. S. presidents have made some definitive statements about Vietnam in the past:



*Eisenhower*

"The loss of South Vietnam," said President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1959, "would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have grave consequences for us and for freedom."



*Kennedy*

Three years later, President John F. Kennedy re-affirmed the American stand on Vietnam, saying: "The United States is determined to help Vietnam preserve its independence, protect its people against Communist Assassins, and build a better life through economic growth."

It was further amplified by President Lyndon B. Johnson in

1965, when he said: "The central issue of the conflict there (in Vietnam) is the aggression by North Vietnam against the brave and independent people of South Vietnam. If that aggression is stopped, the people and government of South Vietnam will be free to settle their own future—and get on with the great tasks of national development."



*Johnson*

Before he became President, Richard M. Nixon said, in 1968, "A settlement which respects the territorial and political integrity of South Vietnam to choose its own way — that would be an honorable settlement... "



*Nixon*

Finally, on March 4, 1969, he said in a press conference: "Our objective is to get this war over as soon as we can — on a basis that will not leave the seeds of another war there to plague us in the future."

# Vietnam Historically Independent



*General Ngo Quyen defeats a Chinese armada, from an old print.*

## Prehistoric Cultures

The origin of the first people living in Vietnam is lost in antiquity, but descendants of the earliest Southeast Asian men still live in the remote mountains of west central South Vietnam.

Popularly called "Montagnards," these aboriginal peoples speak Malayo-Indonesian-Polynesian languages, and still live rather much as did their primitive forebears.

Among them the Cham number about 100,000, the Moi and Kha about one million, and, in the North, the Muong, Man and Meo (probably of Chinese descent) number about half a million. Additional ethnic and tribal stocks are found in Tonkin and Laos.

Most of the present-day Vietnamese come from a non-Chinese, Mongoloid people who traveled from their south China tribal lands to settle in the area of the Red River in North Vietnam, near present-day Hanoi.

Ancient Chinese historical documents make the first mention of a country called Nam-Viet, "People of the

South," in southern China and led by a rebel Chinese general, Trieu Da, who drove the primitive local inhabitants forcibly into the mountains in the third century B.C.

## Conquest By China

The kingdom of the Viets lasted less than a hundred years. Under constant pressure from war-like Han dynasty armies from China in the north, it was defeated in 111 B.C.

Except for sporadic moments of independence throughout the next millenium, Vietnam was under more-or-less constant and severe rule of its Chinese conquerors.

Although the Chinese governing Vietnam and its people were cruel and oppressive, considerable progress was made during that era: the plow was introduced and carabao were domesticated, agricultural methods were improved and expanded and the difficult art of planting and cultivating rice replaced the raising of other, less bountiful, cereal grains.

The Chinese also introduced modern (at that time) construction methods. Commerce expanded as highways and canals were built, and walled masonry buildings and fortresses were raised where only thatched huts had stood before.

China's greatest gift to Vietnam was the art of writing, and it helped raise the cultural level of the Viets to a comparatively high degree.

But the gifts of Chinese civilization were not enough. Throughout the 1,000 years of Chinese domination, the Viets yearned for independence, and periodic revolts were fought - sometimes briefly successful foreign rulers.

## Breaking the Shackles

Finally, in 939 A.D., a great revolt, led by General Ngo Quyen, defeated the Chinese armies decisively, and drove



them across the border.

Although several attempts were made to retake Vietnam, the Chinese were never again able to maintain their former domination over the Vietnamese.

Succeeding rulers established an uneasy peace for Vietnam from China, and Vietnam entered a period of territorial expansion of its own. Moving south, the Vietnamese took over lands long-neglected by the maritime people of Champa, a nation founded by seafaring Indian adventurers in the second century. After considerable incursion and frequent wars, the Cham empire was completely defeated by the early 17th century.

But, even before the Chams were conquered, the Vietnamese also began to move westward – against the Khmer empire in Cambodia.

Tough, battle-hardened Vietnamese farmer-soldiers staked out fertile pieces of land and dared anyone to take it away. The Khmers, like the Chams, went down in resounding defeat in 1660.

The amazing thing about the southward and westward expansion of the Vietnamese people is that it was made during the time of a civil war within their own country between the Trinh, in the north, and the Nguyen clan in the south.

Two huge walls were built by the Nguyen to prevent incursion by the Trinh into their territory. The remains of these walls still stand – only a few miles from the 17th parallel that now divides North from South Vietnam.

## European Expansion

With the discovery of the New World, European nations began, in the early 16th century, to make commercial inroads into the territories of the Far East. The Portuguese, beginning with Antonia de Faria, were the first to establish trading posts in Vietnam, and were, by and large, the only nation to do so for a hundred years.

Then, in 1636, the Dutch set up shop in Vietnam. Their arrival coincided with the height of the civil war between the Trinh and Nguyen clans, and the Dutch constructed arms factories in the north and began selling arms to the Trinh. The Portuguese provided the same service for the Nguyen in the south.

Following a truce between the warring factions, commerce dropped off, and, by 1700, was non-existent;



*Bay of Tourane (later re-named Danang) at the end of the 18th Century. From an old print.*

both the Portuguese and the Dutch pulled up stakes, leaving behind only a few merchants and a group of people who also were destined to leave a mark on Vietnam – missionaries.

## Early Christian Missions

Portuguese ships brought the first missionaries to Vietnam, many of whom did important work. Two of them – both Frenchmen – helped change the course of Vietnamese history.

The first was Monseigneur Alexander de Rhodes, who adapted, using the Latin alphabet combined with radical markings to indicate tone values, the difficult Vietnamese language into western writing. It was called Quoc Ngu, and it was the basis for present-day written Vietnamese.

After five brief years in Vietnam, during which time de Rhodes had, by his own count, made over 6,700 converts in a two-year period, he was exiled by the Vietnamese rulers who felt that Christianity presented a threat and a danger to their way of life.

Over a century later, another priest, Pigneau de Behaine, appeared on the Vietnamese scene.

Another revolt, called the Tay Son rebellion, broke out in 1772, and within five years had destroyed all leaders of the house of Nguyen in the south except one: sixteen-year-old Prince Nguyen Anh.

Anh fled from the rebels and took sanctuary with the priest (then Bishop) de Behaine, who helped the young prince raise an army of loyal followers and regained the empire for the Prince in 1778. It was lost again to the Tay Son rebels four years later, and the Bishop and the Prince took refuge in Thailand. From there, Pigneau set off on a mission that took him back to France where he persuaded officials there to provide arms and assistance to the Prince.



*Alexandre de Rhodes*

According to historical sources, Pigneau returned to Vietnam and called on the local French Governor, Conway. Conway turned down Pigneau's request for help, whereupon the indomitable priest set about to win the war on his own.

Raising money, ships and arms from local French merchants, he set out on a ten-year series of battles to regain the throne for Prince Anh. Pigneau died in 1799, three years before the final victory. He failed in the two things he wanted most – to establish a foothold for France in the Far East and to convert Anh to Christianity, so that Vietnam would be ruled by a Catholic.

Tragically, when Anh finally ascended the throne as the Emperor Gia Long, it ushered in a new dynasty that persecuted Catholics more than ever before. Gia Long also changed the name of the country from Cochinchina, as it was then known, and restored the ancient name of Vietnam.

Although Gia Long's fondness for his dead benefactor,

Bishop Pigneau, stayed his hand against the Catholic missionaries, his successors were not bound by his reservations.

Under Minh Mang, Thieu Tri and Tu Duc – the last three monarchs of a free Vietnam – attitudes toward Europe and the missionaries hardened.

Restrictions were placed on missions, and gradually preaching and spreading Christian doctrine became punishable by death. In 1833, the first missionary was executed. Others followed, and the French protested.

Meanwhile, European nations maneuvered for positions of power throughout the Far East. The defeat of China by Britain in the Opium War of 1839 caused Minh Mang, watching on the sidelines in Vietnam, to have second thoughts. He sent emissaries to France and England, offering to ease persecution of Catholics and even extending a willingness to enter into free trade. He died before the envoys returned, and his son, Thieu Tri, and grandson, Tu Duc, feeling that further diplomacy was useless, resumed the anti-Catholic campaign.

## French Colonialism

Nearly 20 years passed, and Napoleon III, nephew of Bonaparte, under great economic pressure to establish colonies in the Far East, used the persecution of the missionaries as an excuse to attack Vietnam.

A French fleet, joined by several Spanish ships, sailed into the Bay of Tourane on August 31, 1857. The following day, the ships shelled the city and landing parties stormed the ramparts. Tourane (now called Da Nang) fell to the invaders on September 2, and the drive for empire was underway.

The French conquest of Cochinchina, as they called it, was easier said than done. After the fall of Tourane, it took the French over 50 years before anything resembling peace was maintained.

In addition to gaining control of Vietnam, they also took over two other territories – Cambodia and Laos – and obliterated all traces of each of their national identities by calling the conglomerate the Indochinese Union.

The French rule of Vietnam was almost perpetually beset with sporadic uprisings and dissent. In spite of the dissatisfaction, the French did introduce many improvements of western culture, thought, agriculture and industry



*Pigneau de Behaine*

– railroads, textile mills, cement plants, coal and mineral mining, rubber and coffee growing, and schools were implemented or improved.

The change, for the Vietnamese – whose culture and way of life hadn't changed much since the Twelfth century – was comparatively sudden, and extremed Long-established customs and procedures were done away with, royal families were stripped of power and authority, and many western institutions were initiated.

But, even with "civilization," Vietnamese were not permitted, during most of the period of French rule, to work in the government except at the very lowest echelons of civil service, and those that were fortunate enough to obtain such jobs had to learn French.

Some few Vietnamese were sent to France to study.

There, they were exposed to the concepts, first espoused in the French Revolution, of liberty, equality and fraternity. Many of these students returned to Vietnam more determined than ever to make their country free.



Meanwhile, a booming prosperity brought an influx of Chinese immigrants – nearly a 300 percent increase in a span of a little more than 40 years – who became a critical element in the economic life of Indochina. Most were engaged in trade and light industry; others were bankers, artisans and merchants. In a short time they managed to acquire a virtual monopoly over rice mills, and were firmly entrenched in the forefront of lumber, shipping and other industries.

Some few of the landless peasants broke away from the farms and villages and went to work in factories, mines and rubber plantations. The industrial revolution in Vietnam was creating a new group of people – a laboring class.

As French control of the country increased, old systems broke down, and dissent fomented among peasants and middle-class workers.

The seeds of revolt had been sown, and, in 1925, following a series of clandestine movements to overthrow the French, a new group – the first communist unit to be organized in Indochina – appeared on the scene, headed by a Moscow-trained revolutionary called Ho Chi Minh.

### Ho Chi Minh

Even today, as head of the North Vietnamese government, there is some question as to Ho Chi Minh's exact age. The year of his birth has been variously reported as 1890, 1891 and 1892. North Vietnamese officials now give it as May 19, 1890.

His real name is not Ho Chi Minh (one of his many aliases, meaning "Ho, who enlightens"). Authorities are not certain what his real name is, although most have narrowed it down to either *Nguyen That Than* or *Nguyen Van Than*.

His father was *Nguyen Sinh Huy*, a minor government official and member of several secret nationalist groups. As a youngster of 9, Ho, according to several sources, served as a messenger for some of the revolutionary organizations to which his father belonged.

As a youngster, Ho studied at the Lycee Quoc Hoc, considered the best high school in Indochina at that time. Other students there included two persons who were later to rise high in the communist North Vietnam hierarchy: General *Vo Nguyen Giap* and Premier *Pham Van Dong*.

Ho did not finish school at Hue. After a series of odd jobs, he sailed to France in 1912 as a ship's dishwasher,



Ho Chi Minh

under the name of "Ba" – his first alias.

He stuck with the sea, travelling to ports throughout Europe, Western Africa and North America. Following the outbreak of World War I, Ho jumped ship and went to London, where he started to work as a cook's helper, working his way up to a position as pastry chef.

Following the end of World War I, Ho made his first attempt at a role in the political scene. He appeared at Versailles with an eight-point plan for revising colonial rule of Vietnam. Participants there were taken up with policies of far greater import, and no one listened to him.

Ho later affiliated himself with the 3rd Communist International (Comintern), and, in 1924, went to Moscow to study communist doctrine. While there, wrote the articles under the alias *Nguyen Ai Quoc*, "Nguyen the Patriot." Nationalists in Vietnam, where the pamphlet was smuggled, mistakenly considered him to be for their cause. He wrote more pamphlets, using still another politically-inspired pseudonym, *Nguyen O Phap*, "Nguyen who hates the French."

At about that time, Ho received his first active revolutionary assignment: he was sent to China, officially as an interpreter on the staff of Michael Borodin, the Comintern's legendary revolutionary trouble-shooter. The group was called the Russian Political Mission; their real task: start a communist revolution in China.

An efficient organizer, Ho put together two organizations while in China – the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth Association, comprised of Vietnamese political exiles living in China, and the League of Oppressed Peoples of Asia, an out-and-out communist group that later became the Communist Party of the South Seas.

Ho took advantage of a temporary alliance between the Chinese communists and Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist government, sending some of his officers to attend the Whampoa military academy for training under Chinese and Soviet military officers and specialists. Ho was able to send as many as a hundred or more revolutionary cadres back to Indochina every year.

Ho fled China when the communists and Nationalists split again in 1927. The record of his whereabouts for several years after is vague, but he did become a Soviet citizen during that time. Then, he turned up in Thailand with a shaved head, pretending to be a Buddhist priest but actually continuing revolutionary business as usual among a group of Vietnamese refugees living there.

From Thailand, Ho travelled to Hong Kong, where he formed a new organization, later known as the Indochinese Communist Party.

Several brief uprisings by nationalist groups in Indochina brought swift French reprisal; the communists wisely bided their time and stayed in the background.

And what of Ho, by then? He was caught in a dragnet, prompted by the confession of a captured Comintern agent in Hong Kong and arrested by British officials. After serving a six-month sentence, he dropped out of sight for a while, and then reappeared in Moscow in 1934, studying at party schools and waiting for another assignment. In 1938, he returned to China, serving with Mao Tse-tung's communist forces. Then, in December, 1940, after an absence of 30 years, Ho returned to Vietnam.

### Japan Takes Over

Following the fall of France in June, 1940, French officials, civilians and soldiers in Indochina were cut off

from home. Japan needed Indochina, both for its strategic military value and its abundance of natural resources.

On June 19, 1940, five days after Paris fell to the Nazi blitzkrieg, Japan issued an ultimatum to the Governor General of Indochina, General Georges Catroux, who capitulated the next day.

Ho Chi Minh then set about expanding his influence and, in May 1941, formed a new organization: the Vietnam Doc Lap Dong Minh, or League for the Independence of Vietnam, later shortened to Viet Minh. Ho became its secretary-general.

It was at this time Ho took the name that he has used ever since. Except for a few select people, no one at that time knew that the well-known communist, Nguyen Ai Quoc, and the new Vietnamese patriot, Ho Chi Minh, were one and the same man.

Ho dispatched a group of his more able assistants, including General Vo Nguyen Giap, to work and study with Mao Tse-Tung's communist armies.

In 1942, on one of his numerous trips into China, Ho, who was not trusted by Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalists, was arrested because of his communist background, and spent more than a year in prison.

Upon release, he returned to Vietnam, where, with General Giap, he helped train and arm more than 10,000 guerrillas.

Then, as it began to lose the war in the Pacific, Japan suddenly, on March 9, 1945, seized full power in Vietnam, to forestall an expected uprising from underground Free French forces there.

The Japanese asked the young Emperor, Bao Dai, to form a government; for the first time since the nineteenth century, Vietnam was to be free of French rule, but the move by Japan was the opportunity Ho and his guerrillas had been waiting for. They expanded the scope of their attacks, and shortly had a number of villages and towns above the Red River Delta under their control.

## The War Ends

When Japan surrendered to the U.S., Ho called upon his forces to take over. On August 17, 1945, Viet Minh troops under General Giap entered Hanoi, and quickly took over all government buildings. Bao Dai abdicated. Within ten days, the Viet Minh had gained control of the entire

country, and Ho became its president. But not for long.

From the south, British troops entered Vietnam; Chinese armies entered from the north. Both began to disarm Japanese troops throughout the country, and the British commander, General Douglas Gracey, armed French soldiers with weapons that had been taken from the Japanese.

The change was swift and caught the Viet Minh by surprise. In the south, Viet Minh forces withdrew into the countryside, where they began guerrilla tactics again.

Following the communist takeover of China by Mao Tse-Tung, the French position in Indochina became precarious, to say the least. American aid to the French increased.

Giap stepped up the fighting in the north, and, one by one, wiped out a string of French forts along the Chinese border. Shortly after, as the Chicoms crossed the Yalu River in Korea, Chinese communist assistance to the Viet Minh dwindled. The war in Indochina dropped to a lull that lasted for three years.

## Dienbienphu

Then, in 1953, when Viet Minh forces stepped up a new guerrilla offensive, General Henri Navarre arrived to take command of the French forces in Vietnam.



*The French commander at Dien Bien Phu (right) turns over his garrison to a Viet Minh representative.*

Navarre set about laying a trap for General Giap at a fortress near the town of Dien Bien Phu in northwestern Vietnam, hoping to lure the Viet Minh into a major engagement there.

For months, the French parachuted men and supplies into the jungle bastion. The fort, surrounded by high ground occupied by the Viet Minh, was under constant mortar attack, but the sturdy French bunkers withstood. Only heavy artillery could pound them to bits, and the French felt that the Viet Minh could not bring such weapons across the rugged, roadless mountains and through the impenetrable jungles.

They were wrong. For six long months, thousands of men hacked a road through the jungle and moved massive artillery into positions on the hills surrounding Dien Bien Phu.

On March 13, the first serious artillery barrages began to fall on the fortress. The French, outnumbered and outgunned, held on tenaciously for 54 days, finally capitulating on May 7.

Two weeks before the final agreement of the Geneva Conference, a young, prominent Vietnamese nationalist, Ngo Dinh Diem, was named by Emperor Bao Dai to be Prime Minister of Vietnam with full power. The Geneva accords partitioned the country along the 17th parallel, its unification to be decided by vote at a later date.

The United States, feeling that a communist takeover of Vietnam would lead to dangerous communist pressure elsewhere in Southeast Asia, lent its support to the Diem government.

## Guerrilla Warfare

After the French withdrew, Diem was beleaguered by Viet Minh troops which remained in the south in violation of the Geneva Accords. Bandits also roamed the countryside. The new government had difficulty exercising power outside Saigon.

Diem, a strong Catholic, was confronted with opposition from various other religious groups. Additionally, there was some doubt of the loyalty of segments of the Armed Forces. He dealt with his enemies one at a time, beginning with the relief and exile of General Nguyen Van Hinh, his Army chief of staff. Diem then took on the Binh Xuyen, a gang of former river bandits who ran all gambling and vice



operations in Cholon, Saigon's Chinese suburb. Diem's troops moved into the gambling dens and shut them down, and after considerable struggle, pushed the Binh Xuyen out of Saigon.

Then he turned to the military-religious groups, capturing and executing Ba Cut, a leader of the Hoa Hao sect, and forcing the leaders of another group, the Cao Dai, to flee into Cambodia.

In a major achievement, the Diem Government resettled the nearly one million refugees who had refused to live under communist rule and had come south following the 1954 partition.

In a referendum held in October, 1955, Emperor Bao Dai was deposed and Diem recognized as Chief of State and President of the Republic. Diem won overwhelmingly over the emperor - 5,722,000 to 63,000. The United States Government immediately recognized Diem as the new Chief of State of Vietnam.

### Geneva Accords

The communists acceded to the Geneva Accords in 1954 because they believed that, due to the political problems in the south, they would easily gain control of the government. Because of that the north would not agree to supervised elections throughout Vietnam. Also, Diem did not believe that he was bound by agreements that he did not sign, and, the elections, scheduled in 1956, mentioned by the Geneva Accords to determine whether the two Vietnams would be reunited were not held. The United States supported Diem in this view.

During this period, the economy of South Vietnam began to boom, growing faster than that of the North despite the North's larger industrial complex. Politically, South Vietnam established such institutions as an elected Presidency and a National Assembly under a Constitution.

The South Vietnamese government was soon to face, however, not an overt communist invasion from the North, but a full-scale guerrilla war that would try to collapse the country from within. Much of the personnel and most of the supplies for such a campaign would be infiltrated from the north.

Assassinations of government officials began to increase,



*Viet Minh troops enter Hanoi.*





*In 1963, Vietnamese Army troops were carried into battle on these helicopters.*

and terrorism threatened most of the villages of South Vietnam. In the summer of 1959, another stage of the communist plan began to unfold. Insurgents began to attack military bases, and cadres from North Vietnam – mostly Southerners who had gone North in 1954 – began trickling into the South to join the struggle.

In 1960, the National Liberation Front was created by Hanoi's Lao Dong Party to direct all political operations in South Vietnam and to absorb all Viet Cong fighting units under a central command called the People's Liberation Army.

The communists soon boasted that they controlled 80 percent of the countryside, and the United States was faced with two problems in Vietnam: the Viet Cong, and President Diem, the man they were supporting.

American officials in Saigon kept urging Diem to instigate numerous democratic reforms; Diem refused. Two attempted coups against Diem – in 1960 and then again in 1962 – were thwarted, but they were forewarnings of events to come. But it was clear that Diem's authoritarian

policies had cost him much of the popularity he had earlier earned.

On November 1, 1963, another coup overthrew Diem. Both he and his brother were killed, and the junta that took over was overthrown itself three months later by another military junta led by General Nguyen Khanh, who became premier.

The tempo of the war increased, and, on August 2, 1964, several North Vietnamese "PT" boats fired on the American destroyer USS Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin. They again attacked the Maddox and another destroyer two days later. Assisted by naval aircraft, the warships returned fire and sank two of the attackers.

In retaliation, American naval aircraft bombed and strafed four North Vietnamese torpedo boat bases on August 4 and 5, causing heavy damage and sinking 25 vessels.

President Johnson was authorized by both American houses of Congress to take "all necessary measures to repel or prevent aggression in Southeast Asia."

Those powers were fully exercised the following February, when, hours after Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces struck the American airbase at Pleiku, 49 U.S. Navy planes bombed and strafed the North Vietnamese naval base at Dong Hoi, just north of the 17th parallel, a major staging area for troops being sent south for duty with the Viet Cong.

Three days later, the Viet Cong and their northern allies struck the coastal base of Qui Nhon in central South Vietnam, killing 21 officers and men. In return, American planes struck selected targets in the north. Then, on February 18, for the first time, U.S. combat aircraft flew sorties against the Viet Cong in South Vietnamese territory. The war entered a different phase.

An ever-increasing number of North Vietnamese soldiers infiltrated the south, and bombers that had flown north only in retaliation were assigned such missions on a regular basis.

## American Assistance

On March 8, 3,500 Marines – the first American combat units – waded ashore at Da Nang.

Meanwhile, governmental instability continued in South Vietnam. Nguyen Khanh was followed as Prime Minister by Tran Van Huong, a civilian, and then by another civilian, Dr. Phan Quy Quat. Quat's tenure lasted three short months; he resigned on June 12, and Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, 34-year old commander of South Vietnam's Air Force, was named new premier.

Again the communists increased the pressure, with numbers of vicious attacks at both South Vietnamese and American outposts. American troops were sent to Vietnam at an accelerated rate. Names of tropical villages – Chu Lai, Plei Mei, Duc Co and Bu Dop – leaped from anonymity into military history, as battles raged for the territory they occupied.

But, in less than two months, the new communist drive had been blunted. Nevertheless, communist forces increased to an estimated 230,000 men by the end of 1965 – even though they lost an estimated 34,000 dead during that year.

Then, following Christmas, 1965, both sides stopped



*The American destroyer, USS Maddox*

fighting. When the fighting resumed, American bombers stayed on the ground — for 37 days, while diplomats and emissaries tried, vainly, to arrange peace negotiations with North Vietnam.

Meanwhile, the North used the pause to advantage, repairing roads, bridges and highways that had been destroyed by the bombings. New anti-aircraft defenses bristled in vital target zones, and infiltration rates to the south were increased.

Reluctantly, and with the approval of important members of Congress, President Johnson gave the order for the bombers to fly north again. More battles were added to the list: A Shau, Khe Sanh and Duc Lap, to name a few, as well as the enemy's 1968 Tet offensive.

Since then, the once-tottering South Vietnamese govern-

ment has emerged stronger than ever under the Constitution adopted April 1, 1967, and the Presidency of Nguyen Van Thieu. The United States, ever trying to bring the struggle to an honorable close, first imposed restrictions on its bombing of the north, and then again, on October 31, 1968, ceased bombing north of the demilitarized zone altogether.

### **The War Today**

Finally, all concerned have managed to gather in Paris for peace talks — an indication of some progress. But as this is written (May, 1969) the war goes on.



*President  
Thieu*



*Vice  
President  
Ky*





# Vietnam— Unlimited Potential

The Republic of Vietnam came into being as a result of the Geneva Accords of 1954.

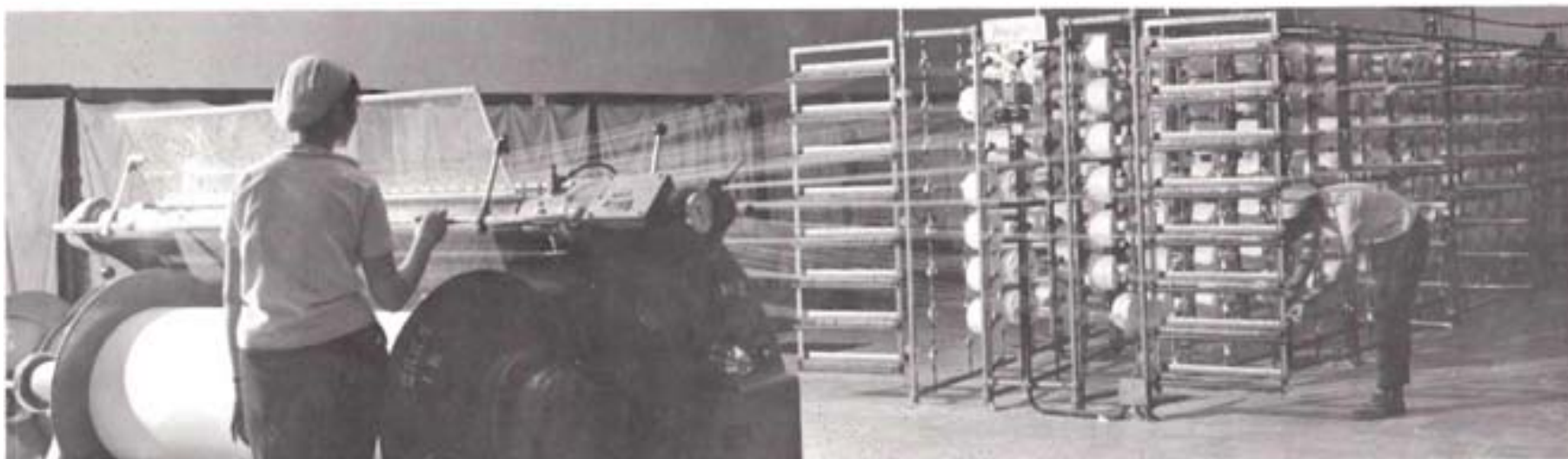
The Agreement partitioned French Indo-China into Laos, Cambodia, the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam).

South Vietnam, immediately after the 1954 split, was very largely agricultural. North Vietnam took the country's only real manufacturing industry, based on mineral deposits near Hanoi, and South Vietnam was left, as far as industry was concerned, with only the rice mills, sugar mills, and other plants engaged in processing agricultural products. The population of South Vietnam in 1954 was about 85 percent rural, and the only major city, Saigon, owed its existence chiefly to its position as one of the world's leading rice milling and shipping ports. In peacetime, before 1954, Saigon had sent abroad as much as a million tons of high quality rice a year, all grown in the

---

*Rice – the staple of Asia – grows amid strands of barbed wire in war-torn Vietnam.*





*Increasing numbers of textile factories are indicators of South Vietnam's expanding industrial complex.*

Mekong Delta and mostly milled in Saigon. Through Saigon also passed the output of the rubber and tea plantations spread in an arc to the north and east of the city.

Since 1954 this relatively simple economic pattern has changed sharply, partly because the authorities of the newly independent South strove for a more balanced economy, partly by natural change such as growth in population, and partly because of the disruptions of a prolonged war.

After 1954 a textile industry, a paper industry, a cement industry, and many lesser manufacturing industries were created, most of them wholly new. Benefiting from American aid, most of the new plants are modern and efficient. They have considerably reduced the dependence of the economy on manufactured imports, though all metals, and almost all sophisticated mechanical products, must still be procured abroad. Many of the latter, however, are now assembled in Vietnam. The combined effects of war and population growth have meanwhile taken away South Vietnam's exportable rice surplus. The country imported around 750,000 tons in 1967. Production of rice in that year was about 600,000 tons lower than peak years, due chiefly to the abandonment of insecure land and movement of farm families to the

cities. The population increase in South Vietnam has been such that, unless new agricultural technology were widely utilized, the country would now be hard put to meet all its own rice needs, even if all the abandoned land were again cultivated.

The 14 years since Geneva have also seen a marked change in the degree to which South Vietnam is an urbanized country. Population in cities of over 20,000 inhabitants now probably exceeds 35 percent of the total (statistics on this as on many other economic matters are today unreliable). Saigon, which had some 300,000 inhabitants in 1939, may have well over 2,000,000 in 1968.

The unusual pressures acting on this economy during the last few years have not altered the fact that it is a rather rich country by the standards of Asia. The income per inhabitant is about double that of India or Pakistan. While income distribution is very uneven, malnutrition and other indications of extreme poverty are almost entirely lacking in South Vietnam. The war has caused great suffering to many, but the immense natural wealth of the country, chiefly embodied in the soil, water, and climate of the Mekong Delta, survives.

# Seventh Air Force

## ***"Just One Island After Another"***

The history of Seventh Air Force, Pacific Air Forces' present field operations command in Southeast Asia, began in 1916, when an air office was established as a special staff section of the Hawaiian Department Headquarters in Hawaii.

It had the distinction of being the first American air force organized outside the continental limits of the United States. Entry of the United States into World War II brought an almost immediate reorganization of air activities in the Hawaiian Department and on February 5, 1942, the Hawaiian Air Force was redesignated as the Seventh Air Force.

What an operation in a theater containing more than 16 million square miles—five times the area of the U. S. and more than 99 percent water—did to a shore-based Air Force is the World War II story of Seventh Air Force. It was the smallest of the air forces operating in the largest theater

of the war, bombing the most minute targets with the fewest airplanes, and until the advent of the B-29s, it flew the longest missions in the world.

During and after the initial attack on Hawaii's military and naval installations in December 1941, aircraft took to the skies in search of the origin of the attacking aircraft, patrolled the perimeters of the Islands and engaged the enemy in combat.

Seventh Air Force began the U. S. aerial war against Japan in the Battle of Midway. Its B-17s joined with Navy forces in June 1942 to smash a huge enemy invasion fleet off Midway. Seventh Air Force conducted strikes against enemy positions in the Gilbert Islands at Nauru and Tarawa, Eniwetok, Guam and Saipan.

By the close of war in mid-August, FEAF pilots, including those of Seventh Air Force, had flown nearly half a million combat sorties against the Japanese. They

defeated the Japanese air forces in the Pacific, spearheaded the way for General MacArthur's island-hopping campaign and supported the massive amphibious assaults which leap-frogged to Japan.

Seventh Air Force crews flew nearly 28,000 sorties, dropped more than 30,000 tons of bombs and destroyed at least 458 enemy aircraft.

After the heat had subsided, the Seventh Air Force's mission was generally defensive in nature. Daily submarine patrols, with sightings, bombings and claims of submarines sunk, became routine.

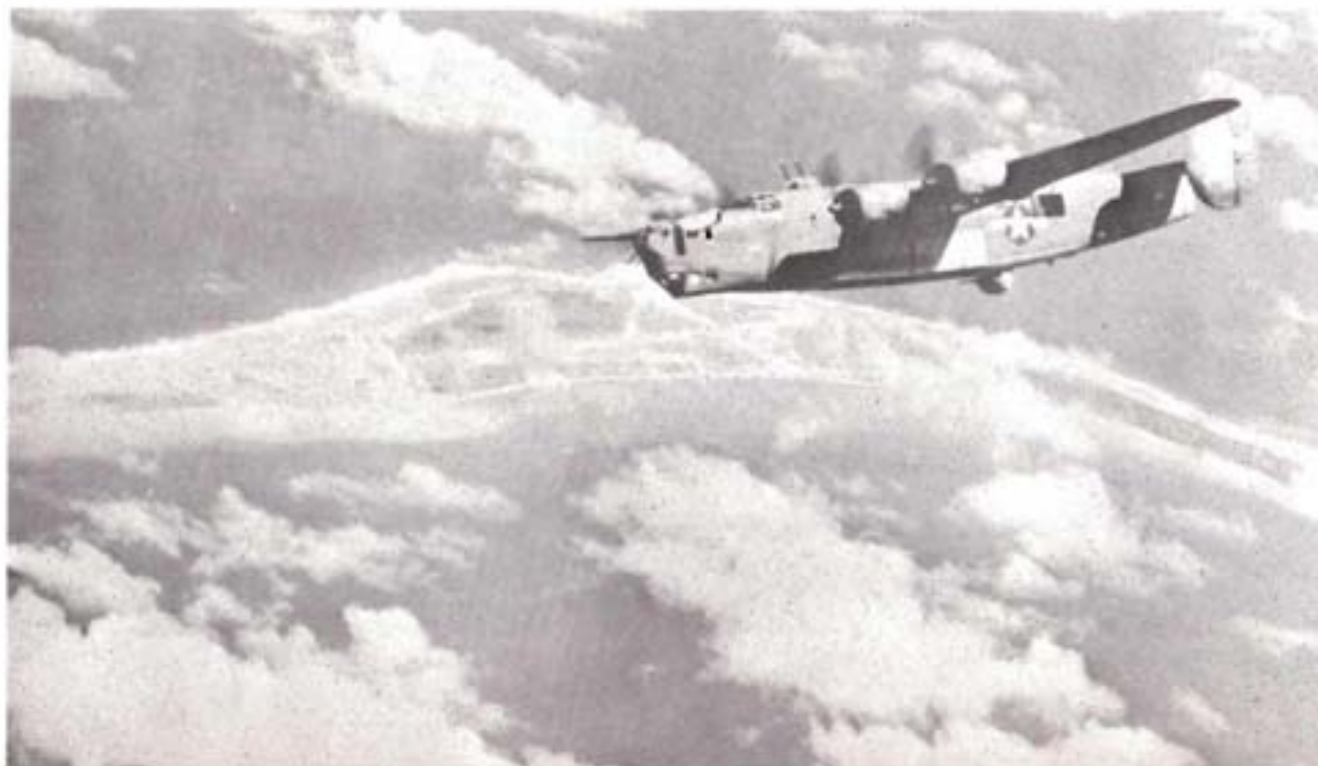
Seventh Air Force returned to Hawaii January 1, 1946, and was redesignated the Pacific Air Command (PACAIRCOM) on December 15, 1947. It was deactivated May 26, 1949 and its role was assumed by the Pacific Division, Military Air Transport Service.

Seventh Air Force was reactivated and assigned to the PACAF command on January 5, 1955. Its mission was to discharge Air Force responsibilities in the Pacific east of 140° longitude to include service support to other military and U. S. Government agencies.

Concurrent with the assignment of Seventh Air Force to PACAF, Detachment 1, Seventh Air Force, was organized at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. On April 1, 1955, the 6486th Air Base Wing, with headquarters at Hickam Air Force Base and with jurisdiction over all bases in the Hawaiian area, was transferred to Seventh Air Force.

Then on July 1, 1957, Seventh Air Force was concurrently deactivated.

In November 1961, PACAF's 2d Advanced Echelon (ADVON) was organized in Vietnam. The original units consisting of several hundred officers and men were located at Tan Son Nhut, Da Nang and Nha Trang air bases. Most of the personnel were on temporary duty from other PACAF units or the Tactical Air Command (TAC). On October 8, 1962, 2d ADVON was inactivated and 2d Air Division was



---

*A Seventh Air Force B-24 Liberator flies over Wotje Island following a World War II bombing raid.*

organized under the operational control of Thirteenth Air Force.

United States airpower in Southeast Asia grew steadily during the ensuing years, as the Vietnam War grew in magnitude.

Following North Vietnamese attacks against U. S. vessels in the Gulf of Tonkin, squadrons of tactical fighters, bomber and reconnaissance aircraft were deployed to Southeast Asia in August 1964.

Heavy ground fighting in early 1965 increased 2d Air Division's commitment for air support. United States Air Force strike aircraft flew their first mission over North Vietnam in support of Vietnamese A-1H Skyraiders on February 1, 1965. Later that month, USAF F-100 Super-sabres and B-57 Canberras hit Viet Cong positions in South Vietnam, the first use of jet strike aircraft within the borders of the republic. Except for planned pauses and periods of restricted bombing, these missions have not stopped.

Seventh Air Force was reactivated April 1, 1966, to replace 2d Air Division.

On June 29, 1966, for the first time, pilots struck against strategic petroleum, oil and lubricant (POL) depots in and around Hanoi and Haiphong.

The air war reached a new intensity in 1966, as critically important targets such as the Thai Nguyen industrial complex, thermal power plants and the Kep and Phuc Yen airfields were hit.

For the first time, an occupied North Vietnamese airfield was struck when Air Force fighter-bombers, striking from bases in Thailand, bombed Hoa Loc airfield April 24, 1967.

May 1967 was the biggest "MIG-kill" month of the war — 20 MIGs were downed. Six of the 20 MIGs were downed May 20, the second time in four months that six or more MIGs were destroyed in a single day.

Air Force fighter-bombers hit the Hanoi (Paul Doumer) highway and railroad bridge August 11, 1967. Two days later, F-105 Thunderchiefs hit the Lang Son Railroad yards, less than 10 miles from Red China's border.

One of the biggest tactical airlift operations of the Vietnam war began January 21, 1968, when Khe Sanh, a U. S. Marine stronghold, came under heavy enemy attack. U. S. Air Force, Army and Marine strike aircraft flew around-the-clock in support of the embattled installation. During a four-day period, U. S. aircraft flew 1,615 tactical air strikes against enemy positions around Khe Sanh.



*The T-28 -- one of the first tactical aircraft used in the Vietnam War.*

Following the 1968 Tet and June offensives, through the balance of the year, and then beyond the 1969 post-Tet increased enemy activity, Seventh Air Force men and aircraft have continued carrying the war to the enemy where it hurts him hardest.

#### SEVENTH AIR FORCE'S MISSION

The mission of the Seventh Air Force is to fly and fight. In more specific terms, it is to conduct, control and coordinate offensive and defensive air operations in accordance with tasks assigned; to maintain assigned forces at a level of readiness to insure successful completion of directed military operations; and to advance the national policies and interests of the United States.

All Air Force personnel and aircraft in Southeast Asia are under the operational control of the Commander, 7th Air Force, who reports directly to the Commander, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) and to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Air Force.

In performing its task of conducting and controlling Air Force operations in Southeast Asia, Seventh Air Force has

maintained air supremacy while providing close air support and tactical airlift for ground forces in South Vietnam and tactical air interdiction, and, before the November 1968, bombing halt, and destruction of military targets in Communist North Vietnam.

In the south, tactical fighters have kept the insurgents on the move by being able to locate his hiding places and destroying them. Air Force aircraft have also been able to suppress any offensive attempted by the enemy. The in-theater airlift aircraft move almost all of the troops and material from point to point in Vietnam.

In the North, before the bombing halt, Air Force jets impeded the flow of infiltrators and supplies into the South, striking enemy transportation networks, hitting airfields, petroleum storage areas and other targets which contributed to his war-making potential.

Seventh Air Force also advises and assists the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) in achieving a state of combat readiness through applications of proven techniques for logistics, engineering, maintenance, communications, planning operations, tactics, training and personnel functions.



# Tactical Air

Airpower has become a key to almost every phase of the war in Vietnam. Moreover, almost every element of United States Air Force operational capability has been called upon in this conflict.

The primary role of the U. S. Air Force in South Vietnam is providing close air support for U.S. and Free World ground forces. There is no aerial combat in South Vietnam – the war is exclusively on the ground. All of the Air Forces' air activities are directed toward furthering operations of friendly ground forces or halting the communist ground actions.

To meet the challenge in this war, the Air Force has developed new operational concepts and tactics to work in concert with both old and new equipment. Units of the 7th Air Force perform missions ranging from close air support of ground units to assistance to the Revolutionary Development of the Republic of Vietnam.

A partial listing of U. S. Air Force activities includes: aerial observation, photo reconnaissance, air rescue, cargo and passenger airlift, direct air support of ground troops, tactical air strikes, psychological warfare, air evacuation, strategic bomber attacks, air defense, medical support, civic and humanitarian actions, and air liaison with ground forces.

To maintain these vital activities, separated from the mainland of the United States by 8,000

miles, demands thorough administration, security, armament, maintenance, communications, and logistics support.

Nearly every aircraft in the Air Force inventory has been adapted to the air war in Vietnam. From the single seat O-1 Bird Dog, flown by forward air controllers on scouting, ordnance placement, and bomb assessment missions, to the giant eight-engine jet B-52 Stratofortress bomber, which now performs precision, high-altitude bombing raids over enemy troop concentrations and supply zones in Vietnam.

Most of the transport in Vietnam is by air. Men and cargo move by C-123 and C-7A for intra-theatre airlift as well as deployment for combat operations. Airlift in Vietnam has long since exceeded the tonnage of the Berlin Airlift. Moreover, the huge C-124, C-133 and C-141 air trans-

ports are the primary logistical link between Vietnam and the United States.

Daring and dramatic rescues are daily occurrences conducted by helicopters on land and at sea. Psychological warfare operations support the successful "Chieu Hoi" program and informs combatants of the objectives of the allied forces.

On the ground, Air Force men of war become men of peace supporting civic and humanitarian programs. Doctors and corpsmen give freely of their time and talents to improve the health and lives of the people of Vietnam. Crew chiefs and clerks, pilots and engineers, all combine efforts and skills to build schools, hospitals and homes for the Vietnamese.

The effectiveness of the air effort can best be measured by comments of Allied and enemy troops. Friendly forces, from generals to privates, have heaped praise and thanks upon the airmen for their accurate and effective operational support.

Captured and surrendering enemy forces have made it clear that air power has seriously hampered their operations, kept them off balance, destroyed their supplies and fortifications, stopped their attacks and lowered their morale.

Airpower substitutes firepower for manpower. It saves allied troops, inhibits the enemy, overcomes his advantages and provides the initiative essential to halting communist aggression in South Vietnam.



A South Vietnamese F-5 makes a bombing attack. Most Vietnamese Air Force pilots undergo training patterned after U. S. Air Force standards. ▶

Opposite: Free World Forces flags are lowered at a Phan Rang Air Base retreat ceremony. ▶

# THE ALLIES







## The Vietnamese Air Force

The Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) separated from the French Air Force in July 1955. At that time, VNAF's inventory included 32 C-47 transports and a number of outdated combat-weary French aircraft.

From such a modest start, VNAF spread its wings and blossomed into a full-fledged airpower. The 1955 VNAF consisted of five squadrons, a training center, and a supply depot; since then it has grown into five tactical wings, an expanded Air Training Center, an Air Logistics Wing, and also includes a Tactical Air Control Center, an AC&W Group, and an Air Medical Center -- all under the control of VNAF Headquarters at Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

VNAF's strike aircraft fly approximately 20 per cent of the in-country strike missions. The 522nd Fighter Squadron at Bien Hoa Air Base has operated F-5 Freedom Fighters in combat since mid-1967. Other fighter squadrons are currently equipped with the dependable A-1 Skyraider. Recently joining the VNAF inventory was the A-37, assigned to 524th Fighter Squadron at Nha Trang.

C-119 Transports were integrated into the transport force early in 1968. Along with two C-47 squadrons, they fly throughout South Vietnam, delivering vital cargo and equipment and providing airlift for the Vietnamese Army.

Important helicopter roles are filled by the H-34, including supply, medical evacuation, and airmobile operations. The UH-1 jet-powered helicopter is being phased into the VNAF inventory.

VNAF O-1s and U-17s fly psywar missions and serve as airborne forward air controllers.

Although VNAF is a young air force, it already has fighter pilots who have flown more than 4,000 hours, liaison pilots with over 4,500 hours, helicopter pilots who have over 4,000 hours, and transport pilots who have amassed in excess of 10,000 hours. Many of the VNAF pilots have flown over 1,500 combat missions.

An Air Training Center at Nha Trang provides courses ranging from pilot training to English language instruction. Thousands of VNAF officers and airmen are trained at Nha Trang each year, drastically reducing the requirement for costly training in the United States.

An Air Logistics Wing at Bien Hoa is the VNAF supply center. It is also where engine build-up and major aircraft and propeller repairs are accomplished.

---

*Personnel of the Air Force Advisory Group work hand-in-hand with the Vietnamese Air Force at all levels of command.*



## Air Force Advisory Group

The Air Force Advisory Group (AFAG) advises the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) and Seventh Air Force commanders on Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) matters. It also advises VNAF in combat operations, logistics, maintenance, and personnel management, as it has since 1956.

The Advisory Group commander provides support to the commander, Vietnamese Air Force. Similarly, each individual of the group works directly with his Vietnamese counterpart to support VNAF goals. Where possible, advisor and counterpart are located in the same office.

More than 500 American airmen and officers work in advisory positions to VNAF, 170 at Advisory Group Headquarters at Tan Son Nut. The remainder are assigned to Air Force Advisory Teams (AFATs) at key bases.

## Free World Forces

In addition to the U.S. and Vietnamese Air Force units, several other Free World nations also fly missions in the skies over Vietnam.

The Royal Thai Air Force provides aircrews to Vietnam on a rotating basis, flying mostly with C-123 Providers of the 19th Special Operations Squadron at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, thereby assisting both the overall war effort and gaining invaluable combat experience as well.

The RAAF also operates a number of C-7A Carabou cargo transports in country, assisting the U.S. Air Force's 834th Air Division in the overall aerial logistic program throughout Vietnam.

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) has one B-57 Canberra squadron stationed in country, at Phan Rang. Their battle record is an enviable one, and ground commanders have frequently credited the B-57 crews' skill and accuracy with turning, firmly and quickly, the tide of battle on the ground.

The Republic of Korea flies a limited number of helicopters and U-21 light aircraft in support of its units in the field.

Philippine National Forces in Vietnam do not have any aircraft in their inventory; rather, they rely on U.S. Air Force units for aerial support, as needed.



*Royal Thai Air Force crews fly regular missions with Seventh Air Force air transport crews in Vietnam.*



*A Royal Australian Air Force pilot explains his B-57 Canberra to his U.S. Air Force counterpart.*

# Forward Air Controllers



*The OV-10 Bronco, newest FAC aircraft in the U.S. Air Force arsenal.*

The forward air controller (FAC) in Vietnam has proven to be one of the most effective weapons against Viet Cong activity. FACs have been cited numerous times as being the single most effective element in spotting the enemy and winning a battle.

FACs use the O-1 Bird Dog, the O-2B Super Skymaster, the OV-10 Bronco and other aircraft over the Republic of Vietnam to seek out the enemy wherever he may be hiding. Once the enemy is located, FACs request approval from proper authorities for tactical air strikes on the target area.

The FAC flies low and slow over his target, marks it with smoke grenades or smoke rockets, and calls in strike aircraft or artillery support. He remains near the target, working with the tactical pilots so bombs and other weapons hit the target with maximum precision.

After the attack, the FAC flies in to check battle damage and to determine if the target is successfully destroyed or if more firepower is needed.

A FAC is assigned to operate from a particular area. He flies over the same area time after time to become intimately familiar with every foot of the

terrain. His trained eyes then can detect any unusual or suspicious movement.

Most FACs have been fighter pilots; their knowledge in fighter tactics make them invaluable when they request support to attack a target and direct aircraft in their strikes.

All new forward air controllers reporting to the Republic of Vietnam attend a special FAC school at Phan Rang air base before reporting to their posts. FACs and their aircraft are located throughout Vietnam at all major air bases and many small air fields.





*The F-100 "Misty" forward air controller is fast and accurate.*



*The O-1 Bird Dog has been used in Vietnam since the beginning of the war.*



*The twin-boom O-2 Super Skymaster makes its mark with a smoke rocket.*



*The Planes: B-52s Ready for Takeoff from Guam.*

# SAC and the B-52s

Sometime during a Vietnam tour, most Air Force men and women feel the awesome rumble of a distant — and sometimes not so distant — B-52 raid. The giant, eight-engine jet U.S. Air Force bombers each deliver up to thirty tons of conventional ordnance. Six of the high-flying aircraft can saturate a target area two kilometers square — an area about the size of 425 football fields.

Because such immense sudden destruction is delivered from six or more miles altitude, the bombers are normally invisible and inaudible, thereby providing no warning to an

enemy. Results of the bomber missions are frequently lauded by both field commanders and foot soldiers alike, but perhaps the greatest indication of their success comes from captured enemy troops and documents. They reveal nothing is more feared than this unannounced rain of bombs.

The Strategic Air Command (SAC) B-52s are under the operational control of the command's Third Air Division at Guam. The first B-52 strike against the enemy in South Vietnam was conducted in June 1965.



*The Mission: Refueling over the Pacific enroute to Vietnam.*



The specially-configured B-52s used in Southeast Asia—other Stratofortresses in the United States remain the backbone of our country's nuclear deterrent force—have been carrying out three primary missions:

Sanctuary Denial—Continuous harassment to prevent the enemy from assembling large forces for sustained attacks against allied ground forces;

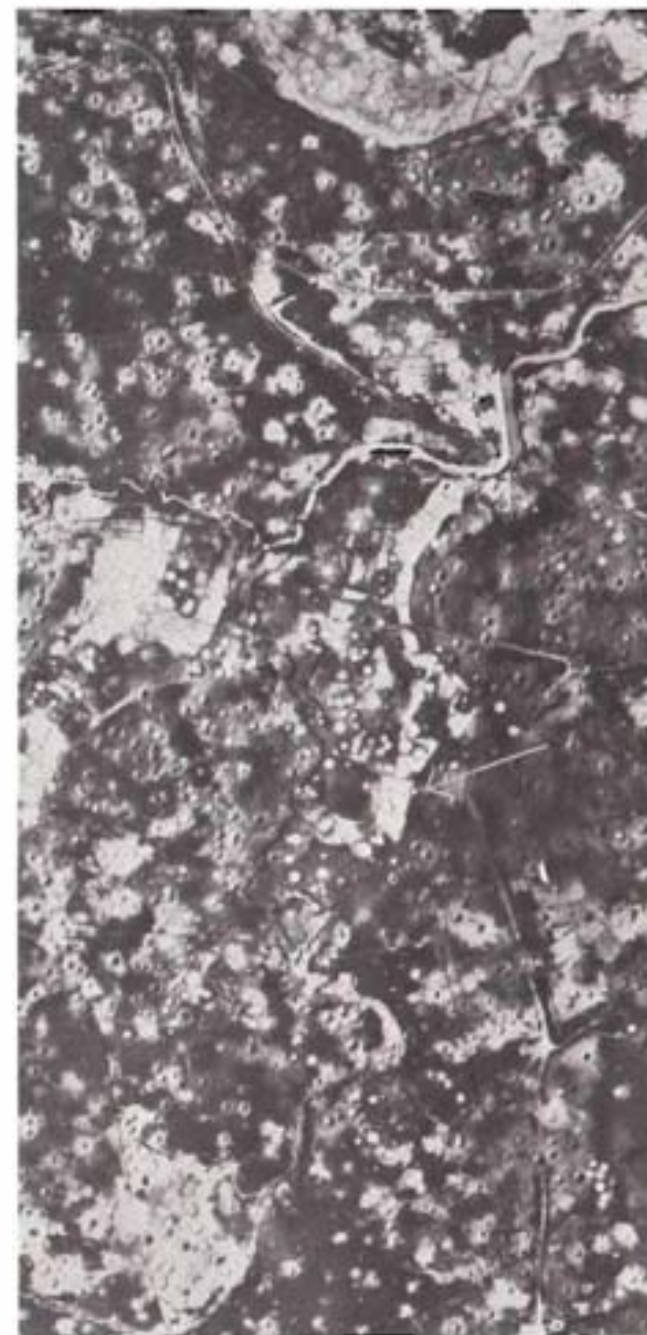
Direct Support of Ground Forces—Khe Sanh, where the bombers struck within one kilometer (.6 mile) of our Marines, was a vivid example of this role; and

Interdiction—cutting of enemy supply lines to the battlefield.

Another significant, but often unheralded, SAC mission in SEA is known by all fighter pilots who rely upon it: refueling support provided by the command's KC-135 Stratotankers. By timely refueling, many aircraft were saved, and the effective range of tactical aircraft was greatly increased. In slightly more than four years, SAC tankers off-loaded well over 3½ billion pounds of fuel in air-to-air refueling, servicing more than 330,000 aircraft.



*The Strike: Bombs from B-52s explode in an enemy-infested jungle.*



*The Result: A pockmarked area following a B-52 mission.*





# Total Air

Air Force aircraft in Vietnam run the gamut of manufactured flying machines — as old as the C-47 Skytrain, now re-vamped into a new, lethal, gunship version, the AC-47 Dragonship; as new as the OV-10 Bronco forward air controller; as small as the single-engine, twin-seat O-1E Bird Dog; and as large as the eight-jet B-52 Stratofortress.

The bulk of the actual aerial combat in the war falls on a select group of aircraft — some jets, some propeller-driven — all feared by the enemy.

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

## F-4 PHANTOM

The F-4 Phantom II has become one of the most versatile and widely used jet fighters to date, flying a variety of important missions in Vietnam.

The Phantom II record has proven it to be an extremely durable supersonic fighter in Vietnam, where flying longevity is critically important.

Powered by two J-79-8 engines, the F-4 is one of the Air Force's newest and fastest tactical fighters. Capable of 1,600 m.p.h. speeds, it can carry twice the bomb load of a World War II B-17 Flying Fortress and has an all-weather bombing system for accurately placing its bombs on target. In addition, the versatile aircraft can carry Bullpup, Sidewinder, and Sparrow III missiles.

A dependable fighter-bomber, the Phantom II has proven highly effective in the diverse roles of air defense; close air support, interdiction, air superiority, and long

range attacks over North and South Vietnam.

## F-100 SUPERSABRE

The F-100 Supersabre, the first Air Force aircraft to fly at supersonic speeds in level flight, is used as an air strike aircraft in South Vietnam. With 11 F-100 tactical fighter squadrons located in Vietnam, this single engine jet fighter has become a workhorse of the tactical air units.

The Supersabre can carry four 20mm cannon, a full spectrum of conventional bombs, and a combination of missiles. The versatility of weapons make this aircraft

ideally suited for air strike missions in support of ground units in South Vietnam.

The North American Aviation aircraft can fly faster than 800 miles per hour, and, with an in-flight refueling capability, has almost unlimited range.

## F-105D THUNDERCHIEF

The F-105D Thunderchief is one of the most versatile tactical jet fighters in the Air Force inventory.

Flown in combat for the first time in Vietnam, the all-weather F-105 has become the mainstay of our fighter-



*Opposite: An F-100 Supersabre blasts an enemy position.*

*Right: An A-1 Skyraider tucks up its wheels as it sets off on a bombing mission.*



*The primary role of TacAir is close air support—as close as possible, sometimes.*

bombers, which daily fly missions over North Vietnam.

Flying 1,400 miles per hour, the aircraft is capable of delivering 12,000 pounds of bombs.

It can pinpoint its bomb load from low levels at speeds of Mach 1 to high altitude at Mach 2 speeds.

Thunderchiefs are equipped with the 100-rounds-per-second Vulcan automatic cannon and can be fitted with air-to-air or air-to-surface rockets or missiles, plus other close support weapons. Its radar allows it to deliver firepower on enemy positions from very low altitudes under adverse weather conditions.

#### A-1E SKYRAIDER

The Douglas-built A-1E Skyraider is a single engine, propeller-driven fighter bomber which first saw service with the U.S. Navy late in World War II.

The Skyraider was introduced in Vietnam in the summer of 1964, and since then, has become the workhorse of the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) and the forerunner in U.S. Air Force counterinsurgency operations. 8,000 pounds of ordnance can be hung from its wings, and long endurance (in excess of four hours) makes it an ideal aircraft for close support, rescue escort or forward air controller (FAC) missions. Its ability to fly in poor weather, to withstand small arms and automatic weapons

fire, and to carry a large and great variety of ordnance makes the Skyraider a favorite with pilots and FACs.

Air Force Skyraiders figured prominently in the historic battles of Dong Xoai, the Ia Drang Valley and the A Shau CIDG camp.

#### A-37

Arriving in Vietnam in July 1967, the A-37 was designed to meet specific requirements of the U.S. Air Force for counterinsurgency operations and close air support for ground forces in SEA. A modified version of the T-37 trainer, the A-37A has about three times the power and twice the gross weight of the T-37 which has been in production since 1955.

Due to the small amount and simplicity of the equipment needed, the A-37 is relatively easy to support at remote sites. Single-engine performance is listed as the outstanding feature of the aircraft. If one engine is lost after lift-off at a gross weight up to 11,700 pounds, the mission can still be completed on the remaining engine.

This aircraft retains the training features of the T-37 and has a satisfactory delivery platform. The maneuverability of the aircraft at a relatively low rocket firing and strafing speed allows it to "press in" to a target for greater delivery accuracy.

Eight wing pylons are installed along with self-sealing

fuel cells and 90-gallon fuel tanks on each wing.

Changes also include new electronic equipment, installation of larger wheels, tires, and brakes, a gross weight increase from 6,000 to 12,000 pounds, and provisions for a 7.62mm rapid fire mini-gun in the nose.

Other installations include a fire-control and electrical system designed to accommodate all weapons for close support missions; provisions for an access door for aerial cameras under the fuselage; massive defense equipment including armor plating and shatterproof glass and provisions to carry long-range fuel drop tanks.

#### B-57B CANBERRA

The B-57B Canberra, developed from the British Electric Canberra in 1953, has become an important light tactical bomber over the combat zone of Vietnam.

The two-engine jet, able to fly at speeds of 600 m.p.h. and possessing extremely quick reaction time, is ideally suited for day and night interdiction. Carrying a 5,000-pound bomb load, the B-57 supports ground forces on preplanned strikes and breaks up strong enemy forces as encountered.

A modified longer wing version of the Canberra, the RB-57, is used in the Vietnam conflict for aerial reconnaissance.



## C-47 SKYTRAIN

The C-47 Skytrain is a military version of the DC-3 airliner which first flew in 1935. More than 10,000 have been manufactured. The C-47 was the backbone to troop-carrier commands in all theaters of operations during World War II. It was used extensively in Korea. There are 25 different models of the basic C-47, and the famous, twin engine transport has been a valued workhorse in the USAF and other services for years.

Seeing its third war in Vietnam, the C-47 is used extensively by the Air Forces of the United States and Vietnam for theater airlift. One modified version of the C-47 is used for psychological warfare, including leaflet drops and loudspeaker missions.

In November 1965, a new model was introduced in Vietnam. The venerable "Gooney Bird" became a tactical attack aircraft, the AC-47 Dragonship. Christened originally as "Puff the Magic Dragon," the AC-47 has three 7.62mm mini-guns jutting from two windows forward of the cargo door. The 6,000 rounds-a-minute mini-guns are fired by the pilot who aims the guns through a side window sight while turning the aircraft in a steep, left bank.

The Dragonship is employed primarily for night airborne alert, dropping flares and providing firepower for outposts or friendly forces under night attack by insurgent forces.

## AC-119 "SHADOW" GUNSHIP AIRCRAFT

One of a new generation of gunships, the AC-119 Shadow was the first Air Force aircraft designed for close support mission large enough to carry all the equipment and sensors needed to locate enemy materiel such as trucks, storage areas or troops, even when hidden under a jungle canopy at night.

Conversion of C-119 aircraft to a gunship configuration was first proposed in 1967.

The AC-119 production program was scheduled in two phases. Phase I covered the production of 26 AC-119-G models retaining the Flying Boxcar's original two piston-engine configuration and armed with four side-firing 7.62 mini guns.

Phase II converted the other 26 aircraft into four-engine AC-119-K models. The K model gunships have two J-85 jet

engines augmenting the power of the piston engines and are armed with six side-firing guns including two 20mm cannon and four mini-guns.

The jet engines provide significantly higher load-lifting capability and greatly improved takeoff, flight and landing performance. The jets are mounted in pods slung under the wings outboard of the piston engines.

With the added jet power, the AC-119-K can takeoff in less than 2,500 feet at more than 77,000 lbs. gross weight with a payload of more than 17,000 lbs., nearly double the former normal load. Its rate of climb is greatly increased even with one piston engine out. In flight, it has far greater endurance and a considerable increase in speed.

All the guns on both the G and the K models have a rate of fire up to 6,000 rounds per minute. Both models are armored for crew protection and equipped with gunsight, fire control systems, flare launchers, illuminators and a variety of sensors and electronic equipment. Additional sophisticated radar, sensors and communications gear are included in the K model.

## AC-130 GUNSHIP II

Gunship II, big brother to the famous AC-47 Dragonship, is the first of a fleet of new gunships. Gunship II was modified and outfitted in Aeronautical Systems Division shops at Wright Patterson before proving its mettle in combat in Vietnam.

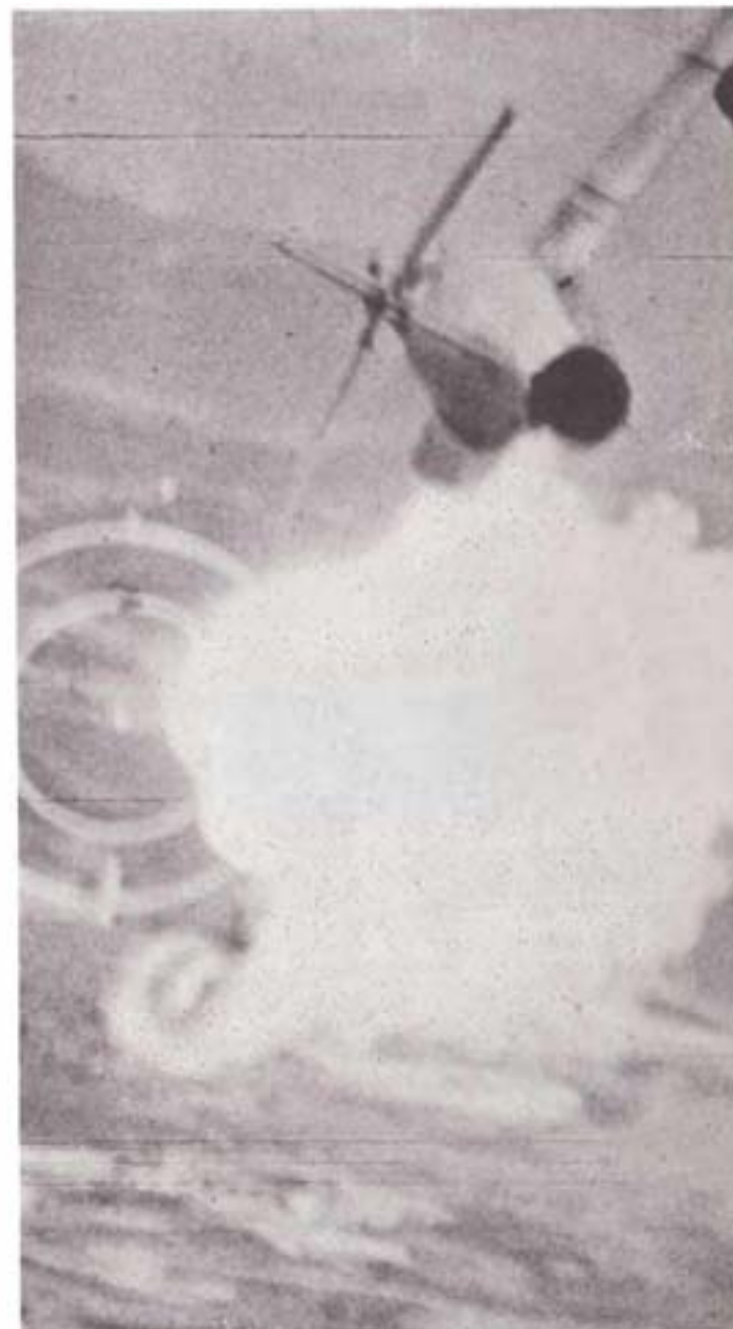
The modified C-130 Hercules aircraft carries improved sidefiring weapons which almost triples the firepower of the AC-47. In Vietnam, the aircraft is used to hunt out enemy night activities and to respond to trouble calls from outposts under attack.

The C-130 incorporates many other advancements over the AC-47 gunships, including less vulnerability to enemy fire and greater range, both in time and distance.

The AC-130, or Gunship II, further increases the U.S. Air Force's ability to acquire targets under adverse conditions and strike with increased fire power.

It is an integrated attack system, combining both reconnaissance and strike capabilities. The aircraft can make effective strikes despite conditions of poor visibility. It utilizes high intensity lights and flares for battlefield illumination plus advanced detection devices. Armament includes four mini-guns and four M-16 20mm cannons.

The AC-130 is not meant to replace, but rather, complements other gunships operating in Southeast Asia.



*This Mig-17 pilot found out the true meaning of air superiority — the hard way.*



*An AC-119 Shadow gunship crew, Air Force Reservists on active duty in Vietnam, starts a mission at sunset.*



# Airpower In Vietnam

***A Pictorial Essay on  
the Role of  
Seventh Air Force  
in the Vietnam War.***



*Above: An A-37 pilot – at work.*



*Right: In this photograph, taken from a special aircraft belly camera, bombs (top of picture) streak down toward a target where bombs from a preceding aircraft have just exploded.*



*Thirsty F-105 Thunderchiefs*



*A-1 Skyraider: The eagle returns to its aerie*



*B-57: versatile bomber*



*An F-100 Supersabre takes out its target. Air National Guard units fly some F-100s in Vietnam.*





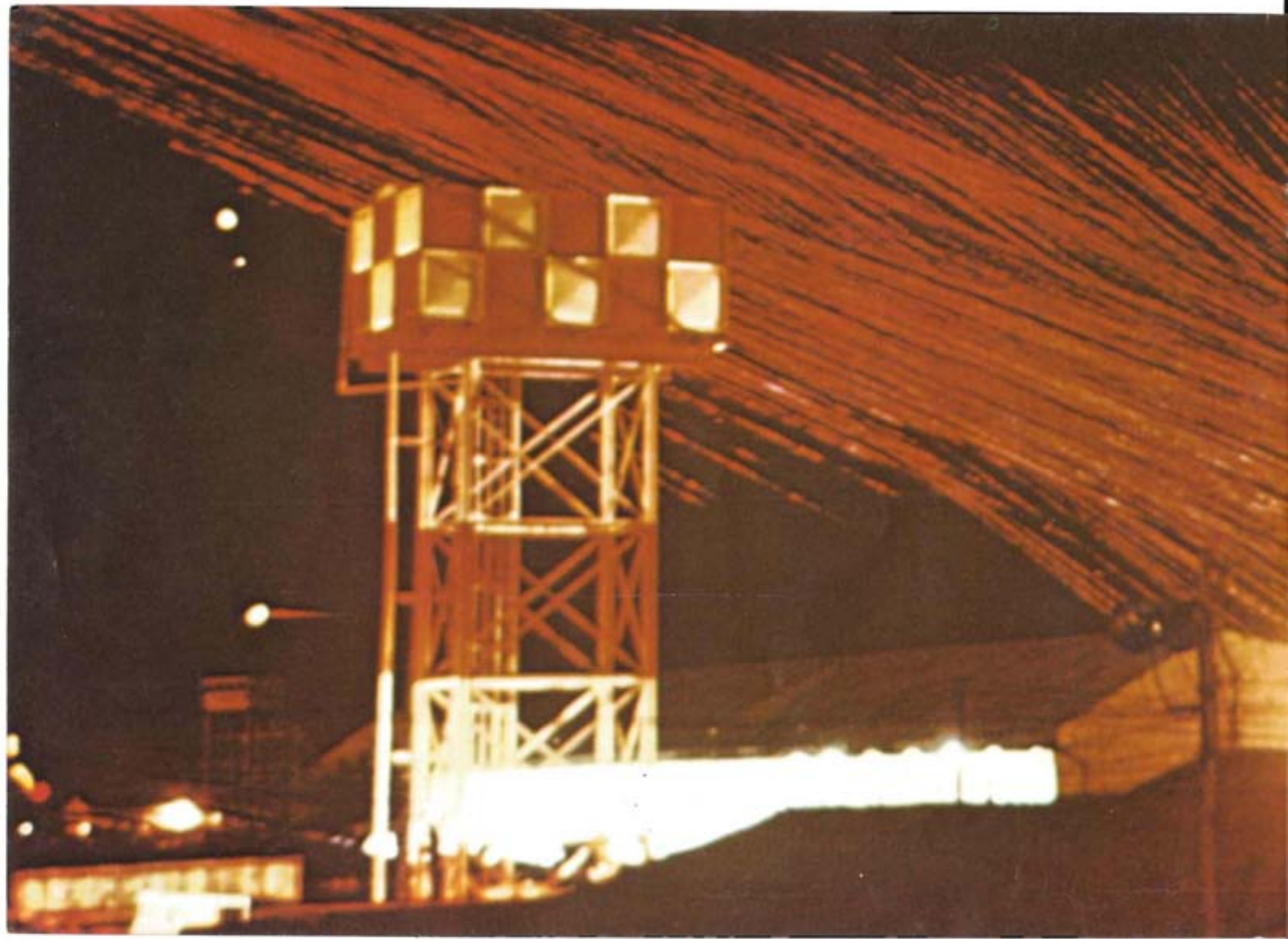
*An A-37 Rocket Attack*



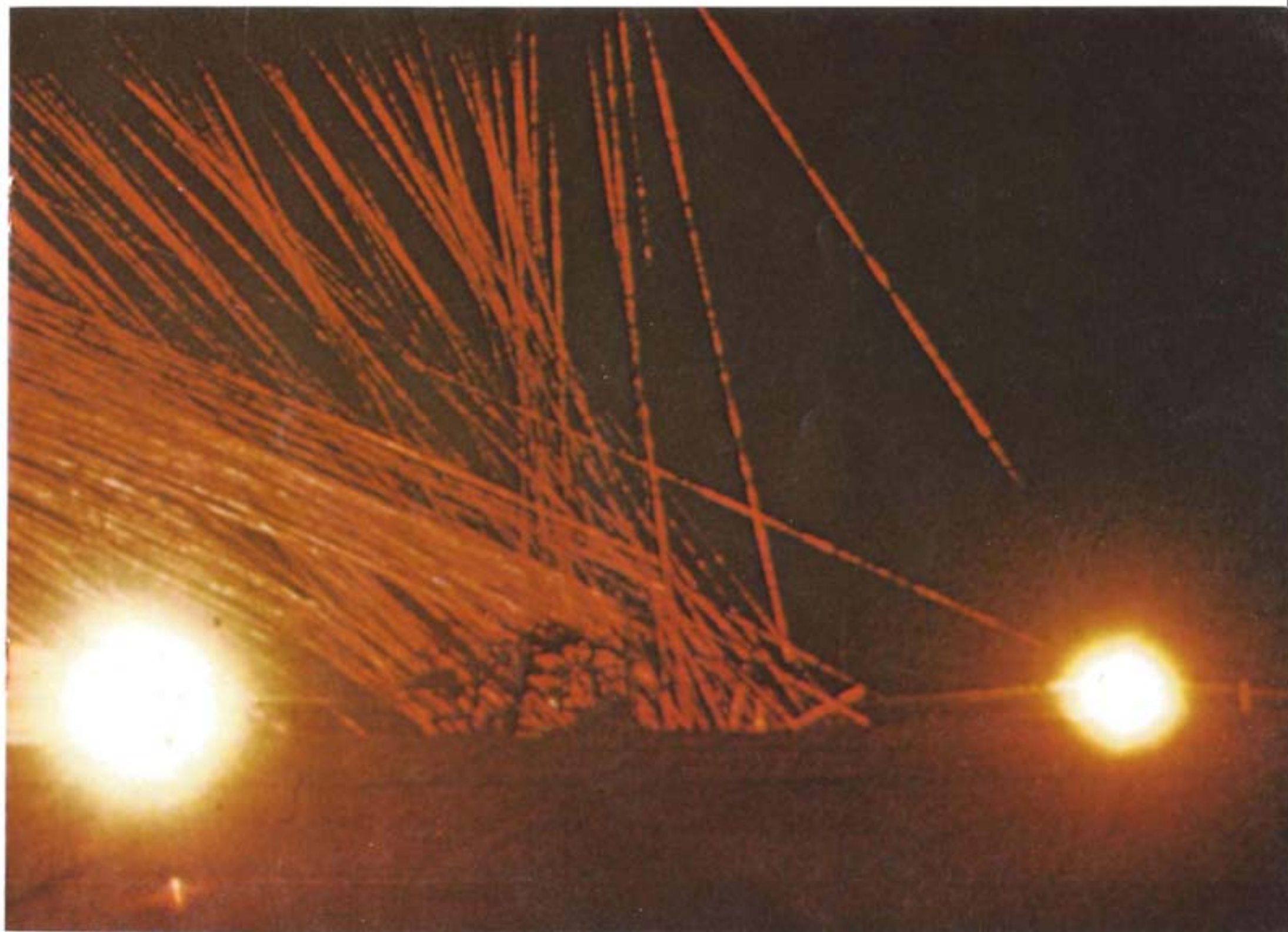
*Above: An F-4 Phantom releases high-drag bombs. Right: Bombs away, over a North Vietnamese air base, before the 1968 bombing halt. Following page: A currain of tracers stream earthward during AC-47 Dragonship mission; an awesome, never-to-be-forgotten spectacle.*













*After performing maintenance on one airplane...*

# Maintenance

An air arm is only as good as the men who maintain the aircraft within that air arm. Seventh Air Force boasts some of the most skilled aircraft maintenance personnel to be found anywhere in the world.

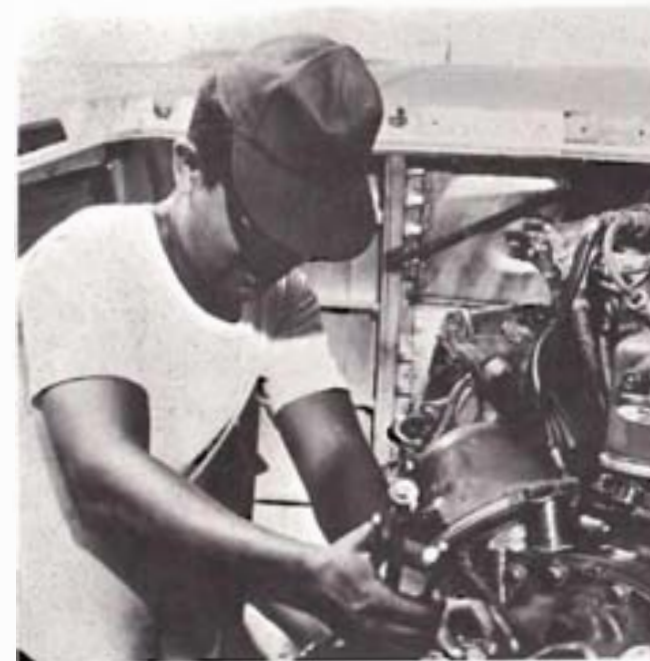
Their outstanding work, performed on a round-the-clock basis under enemy harassment and grueling climactic conditions, is a strong indication

of the dedication and motivation of the thousands of hydraulic and electrical systems specialists, radar and armament technicians and airframe experts, to name a few, as well as plain, old-fashioned "grease-monkeys."

Every air crew member in Seventh Air Force realizes that his life is literally in the hands of the men who maintain his aircraft.

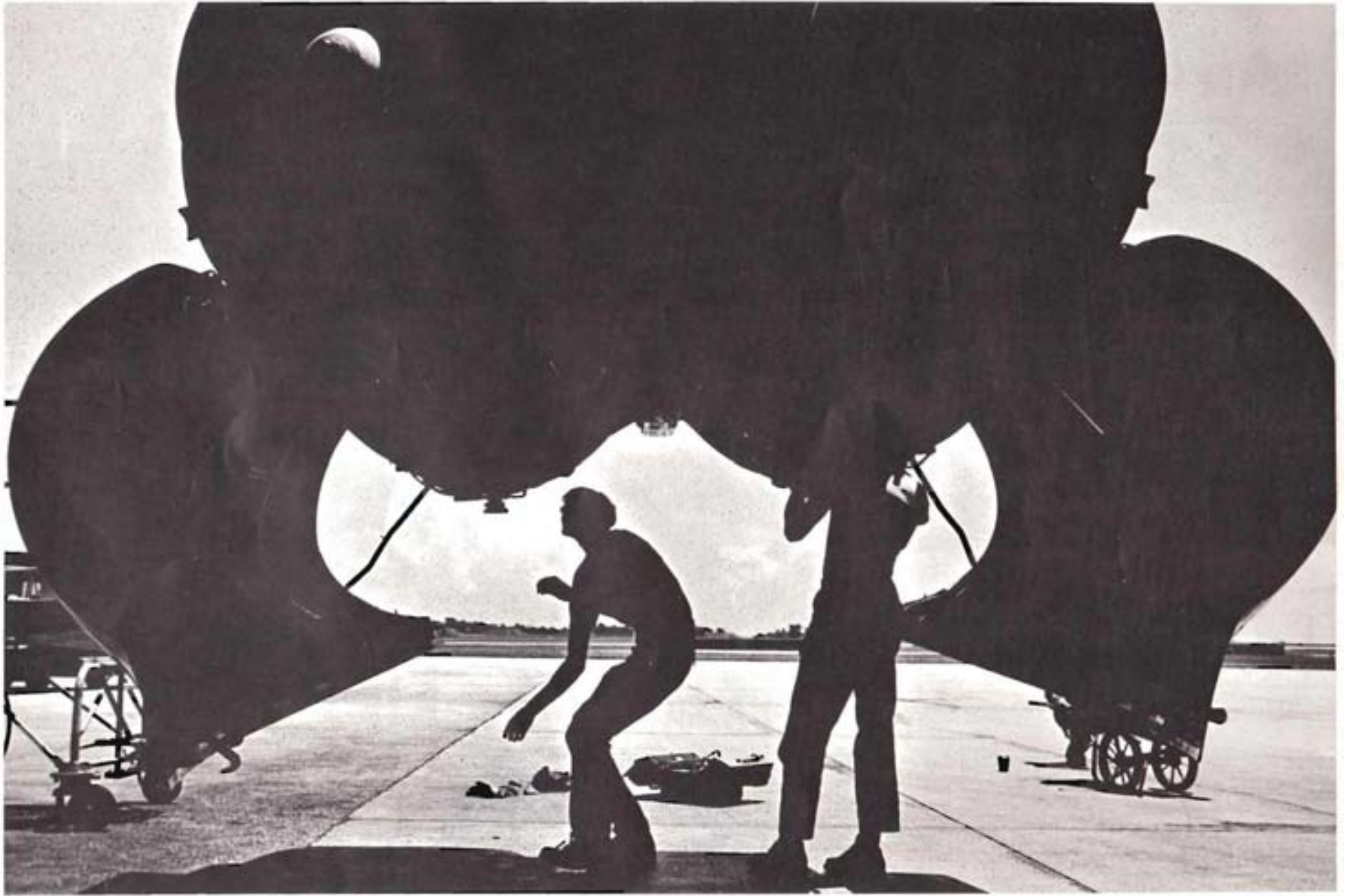


*There's always another to be worked on...*



*And after that, still others.*





*B-52 jet engine mechanics labor under a sweltering tropic sun to ready their giant bird for a mission.*

# Airlift – Lifeline to Survival

Air Force tactical airlift in Vietnam comprises a logistics operation unparalleled in military history. The massive weight airlifted (more than 4-million tons since the airlift began) has already surpassed the combined totals airlifted



*Paratroops descend to a landing zone.*



*A C-130 flares out from a combat descent.*

during such noteworthy operations as the Berlin airlift, the "Hump" airlift over the Himalyas during World War II, and tactical airlift during the Korean War.

To accomplish today's Vietnam airlift, every 35 seconds a C-130 Hercules, C-123 Provider or C-7A Caribou lands or takes off somewhere in the country, transporting an average of 6,000 pounds every minute around the clock. More than 4-million passengers and troops, the equivalent of the combined populations of Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Omaha and Honolulu, are airlifted annually.

Approximately 225 transport planes are cast in the airlift scenario: C-7A Caribous from the 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing, landing at isolated Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) camps where short, dirt air strips, carved out of the jungle, are the only place to land; the C-123 Providers from the 315th Special Operations Wing, mainstay of the Vietnam airlift since 1962; and C-130 Hercules, on rotational duty in Vietnam from air bases in the western Pacific, the workhorse of the entire operation, able to get big payloads in when and where needed. All important support on the ground – cargo handlers and combat controllers from 2nd Aerial Port Group – provide a common denominator for all airlift operations. The entire operation is under the direction of the 834th Air Division, single manager of tactical airlift in Vietnam. The planes fly a network of air lifelines, weaving a latticework of routes across the face of Vietnam, terminating at some 150 air strips, where airlift aircraft deliver precious cargo, shuttle troops and evacuate wounded.

But the sheer magnitude of planes and cargo and people, though impressive, is but a tiny segment of the total airlift picture. Indeed, tactical airlift in combat is geared first to respond rapidly to the needs of soldiers engaged in combat who need ammunition, weapons and supplies delivered immediately.

The airlift task thus becomes vitally important to the

ground commander. There are no fronts in Vietnam. Battle lines are not drawn. Ground routes are often impassable and always in danger from enemy fire. Such conditions, coupled with a fluid ground tactical situation and troops and supplies continually on the move from one part of the country to another, make airlift, in fact, an extension of combat engagement, not divorced in any way from the realities of success or failure on the battlefield.

The real story of airlift is written in chapters marked "Khe Sanh," where, for 77 days, airlift braved the hazards of enemy fire, rugged terrain and dense fog and cloud cover to keep the Marine "cupboard" stocked with ammunition, food and fuel; "A Shau Valley," where airlift parachuted supplies to the 1st Air Cavalry Division in some of the most withering ground fire of the war; and "Kham Duc," where, in four of the longest hours on record, airlift swooped daringly down into a CIDG Camp – completely surrounded by enemy troops and gun emplacements – to evacuate more than 500 Vietnamese and Americans.

One segment of airlift operations in Vietnam, dubbed "Scatback," and primarily involved with transporting military personnel and some limited quantities of high priority cargo, is operated by the 6250th Support Squadron at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. "Scatback" uses T-39 Sabreliners, C-118 Liftmasters and U-3A "Blue Canoes" to accomplish its missions of scheduled airlift transport throughout southeast Asia.

The true meaning of Vietnam's continuing logistics drama is found in the aftermath of the Khe Sanhs, the A Shau Valleys and the Kham Ducs, when, after cargo or troops have been airlifted and the dust settles in the wake of an airlift plane's turbulent departure, a combat commander stands relieved that once again tactical airlift has responded quickly and efficiently, to his request.

It is to this end that the entire tactical airlift system in Vietnam is dedicated.

*Opposite:*

*Soldiers, anxious to be airlifted*

*from Khe Sanh, scramble to board a U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules.*









*C-7A Carabou: Qld Reliable*



*C-123 Provider: A Workhorse*



*C-130 Hercules: The Heavyweight (Photo taken at Khe Sanh)*





*One of the primary missions of the C-141 Starlifter in Vietnam is the medical evacuation, out of country, of wounded U.S. military personnel.*



*Lifeline to Safety: A HH-3E Jolly Green Giant rescues a downed F-4 pilot.*



*Safe inside: A rescued pilot struggles to get out of his wet survival gear.*



# Rescue

Responsible for the search and rescue support of all Seventh Air Force and other Free World forces in Southeast Asia, the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, headquartered at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, holds the motto "That Others May Live". Its area of responsibility encompasses over 1.1 million square miles, including the hostile territories of North Vietnam as well as South Vietnam.

The 3rd ARRGP has completed over 2,900 successful rescues since the war began, using fixed-wing HC-130P and HU-16B Albatross (now retired from combat rescue operations), as well as HH-43 "Pedro", HH-3 and HH-53 "Jolly Green Giant" helicopters. The HC-130P used by the Group is an airborne command post known as "Crown". It also is used for aerial refueling of the HH-3 and the HH-53 helicopters in flight. The Group's smaller HH-43 helicopters are used for local base rescue missions and for the recovery of downed aircrews; they operate from 14 locations throughout Southeast Asia.

The Seventh Air Force Joint Search and Rescue Center controls and coordinates all rescue missions in Southeast Asia. Search and rescue controllers obtain tactical mission plans, and, after careful analysis, pre-position rescue forces of the 3rd Group accordingly. Constant communication insures up-to-date information during missions. Personnel of the Joint Search and Rescue Center present briefings on rescue procedures in Southeast Asia to flying units of all allied and Republic of Vietnam forces. Personnel locator beacons and small survival radios carried by all pilots speed search operations in situations where, due to dense foliage, downed aircraft or parachutes are not visible. If a downed aircrew member has been injured, a pararescueman is lowered to the ground to search for and aid the survivor.

The 1,200-man Rescue Group has twice been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for outstanding operations in Southeast Asia, and is the most decorated unit in the United States Air Force.



*A Seventh Air Force pilot slips into the sling of a hovering HH-43 Pedro rescue helicopter.*



# Communications

"Providing the reins of command" for U.S. Air Force units in the Republic of Vietnam is the mission of the Air Force Communications Service's 1964th Communications Group.

There are ten AFCS squadrons in South Vietnam that report to the Group commander at Tan Son Nhut AB. The squadrons, located at each of the ten air bases, have detachments and operating locations located throughout the Republic, from the Mekong Delta to within six miles of the DMZ.

The Group's major divisions include programs, telecommunications, flight facilities, and maintenance. They manage and execute Air Force communications responsibilities and provide additional service to the Free World forces in Vietnam.

Telecommunications include the base telephone exchanges, several different types of communications centers handling thousands of messages a day, and MARS stations for unofficial radio communications to the U.S. and elsewhere.

Navigational aids, radar approach control equipment and tower facilities are flight facilities components.

*Communications are necessary for control tower operations.*



*Communications facilities can be found at every installation.*



*Mobile combat control teams direct almost all air drops in Vietnam.*



# Munitions

The Air Force uses a vast array of weapons to accomplish its total air mission in Vietnam, ranging from the 7.62 minigun bullet used in AC-47 Dragonships to the 10,000-pound bomb, currently used as a rapid-clearing device to make helicopter landing pads in the middle of the jungle.

On this page are some photographs of Seventh Air Force munitions maintenance specialists, who deftly handle the munitions, rockets and guns with comparative ease, and making U.S. Air Force aircraft the enemy's most formidable opponent.



*Fisheye lens view of bombs' business ends.*



*Readying a Phantom's rocket.*



*Final check on a 20mm cannon.*





# Security

A complex Security Police network is maintained at each U.S. Air Force installation in South Vietnam; captured prisoners have related that, because of the high price they would have to pay to break through some heavily-guarded base perimeters, they were forced to seek more vulnerable targets.

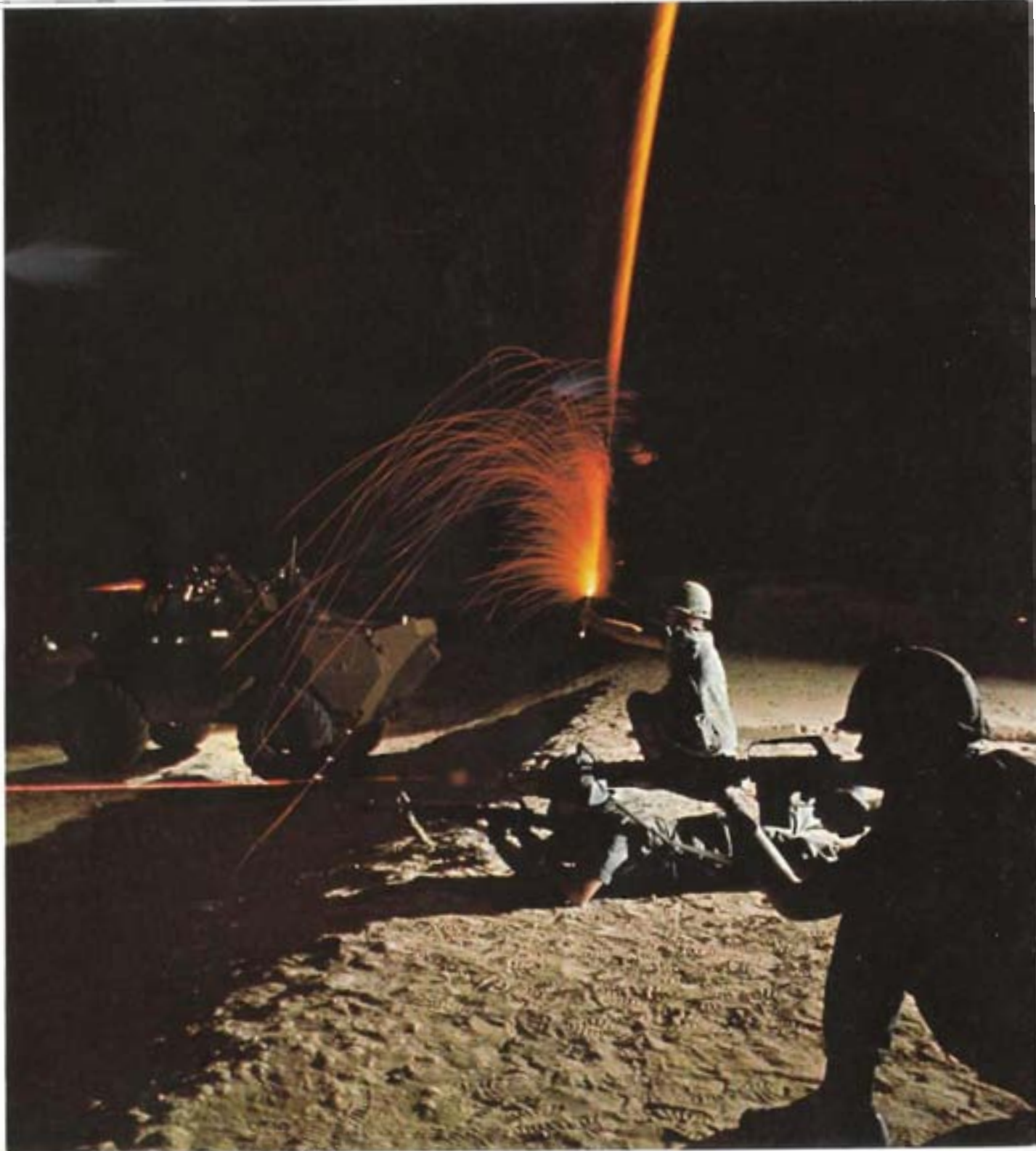
In addition to constant security patrols on foot, by vehicle and by dog-accompanied sentries, U. S. Air Force Security Police also furnish base support in numerous other ways, including pass and identification, traffic control, and both criminal and accident investigation.

Since the 1968 communist Tet offensive, many Seventh Air Force Security Policemen have found themselves, on occasion, performing in a role usually reserved to an army's infantry – that of a defensive rifleman, holding off an opposing force until reinforcements and tactical air support could be brought in to deal a knockout blow to the enemy.

---

◀ *Opposite: A sentry and his dog make their nightly rounds in dark silence.*

*Right: Normally indiscernible, a Security Police perimeter patrol force are illuminated by both their own tracers, slap flare and the photographer's strobe light as they fire at a target.* ▶



# Reconnaissance



*Loading an RF-4 reconnaissance jet with film.*



*Photo Interpretation: Finding the Enemy.*

A standard military axiom states that victory is made easier for the commander with the most current and accurate intelligence. The U. S. Air Force, using a variety of supersonic tactical reconnaissance jets, including the RF-101 Voodoo and the RF-4 Phantom, provides photographic reconnaissance service to all Free World Forces commanders in South Vietnam — sometimes in a matter of less than an hour.

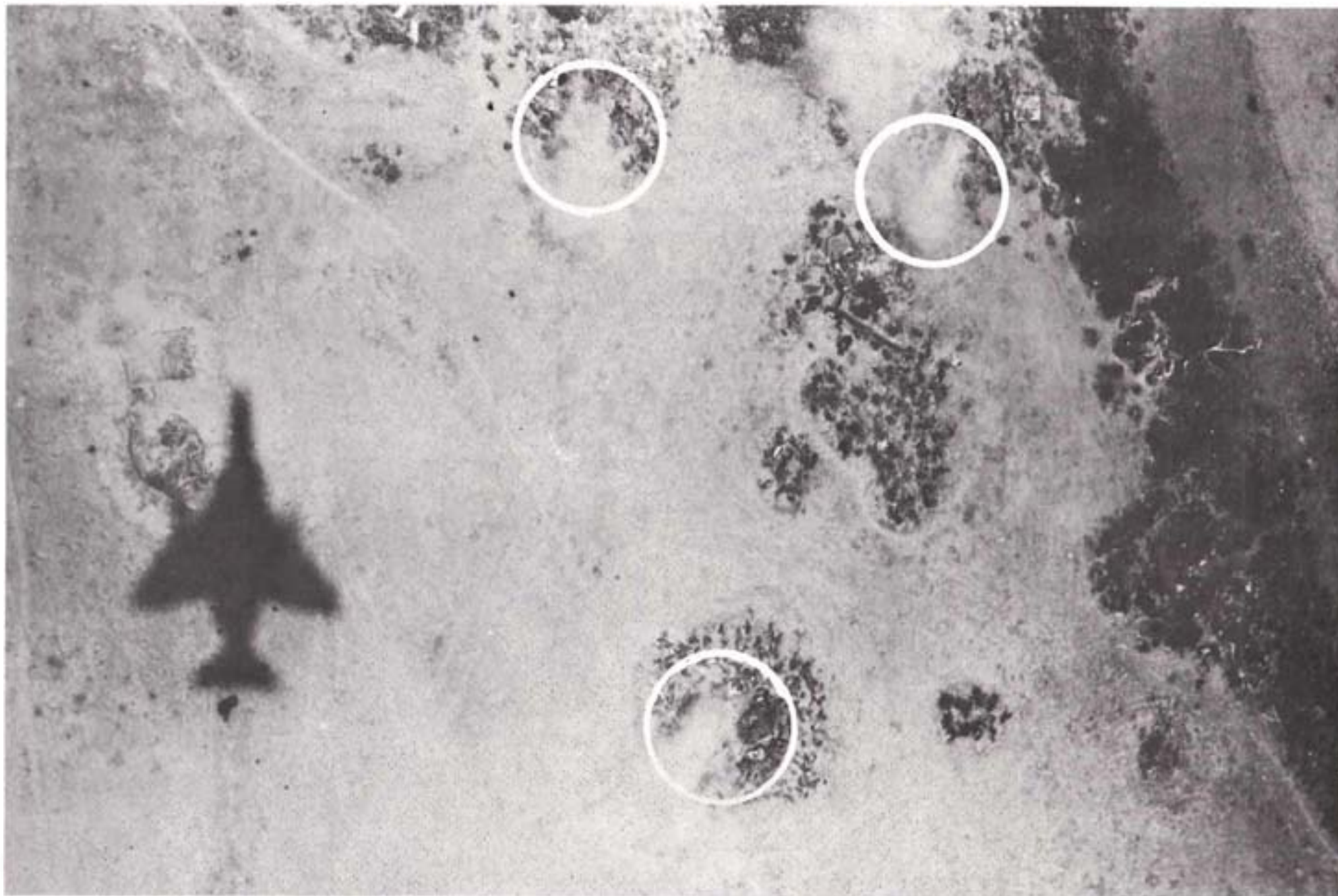
Using a variety of modern, complex and sophisticated photographic equipment, enemy movements and activities are bared and preserved by the rapid lens of aerial cameras for close and careful study. Infra-red films betray the enemy's camou-

flaged locations, oftentimes invisible to even the most discerning eye of a visual observer.

After the bombing halt of North Vietnam, periodic flights by Air Force reconnaissance jets continued to provide a photographic record of troop concentrations, fortification construction and re-construction, and expansion of defensive installations in the North.

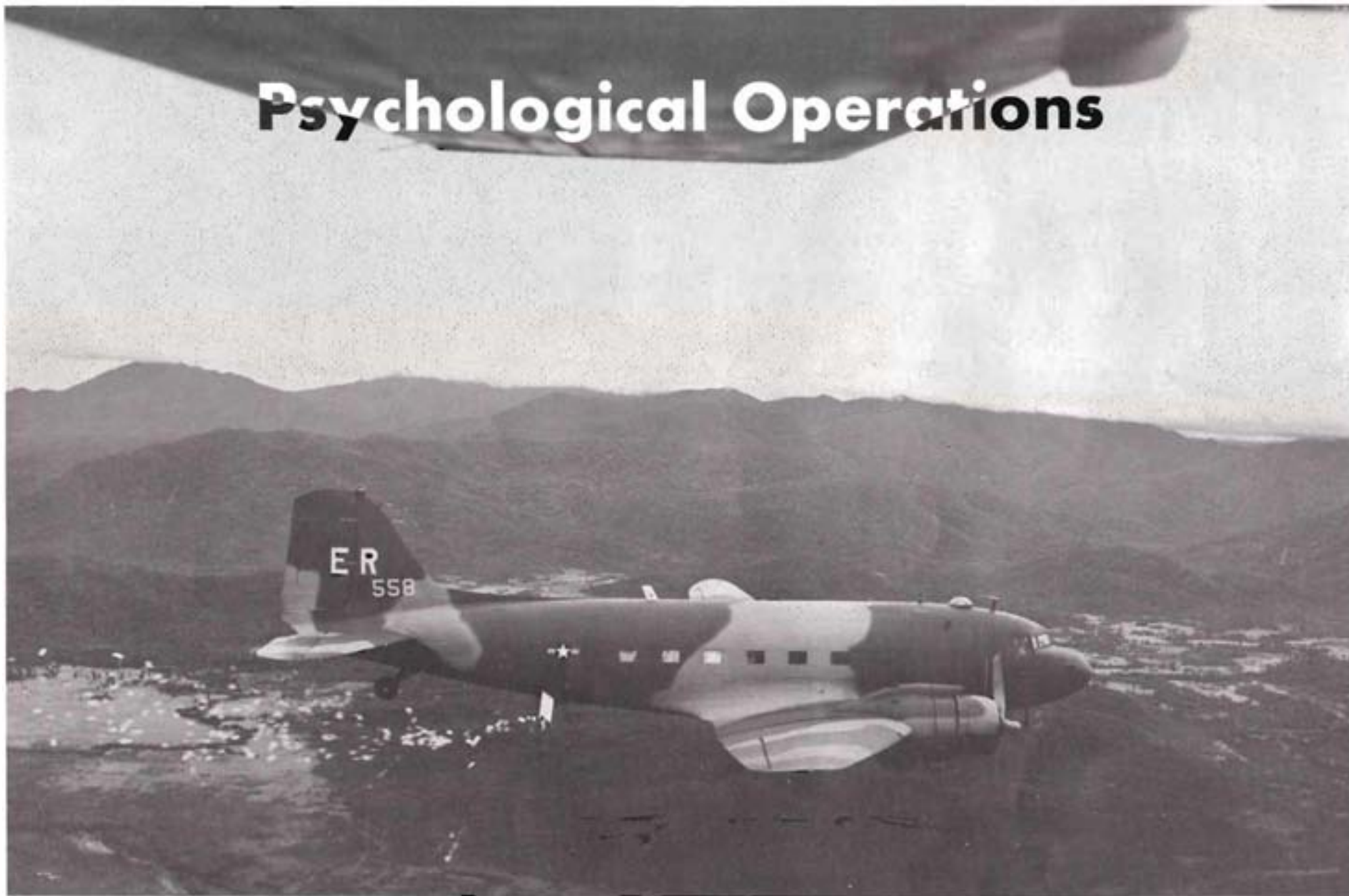
The enemy is skilled in hiding, but sooner or later he must move, and when he does, his movements most likely will end up being analyzed by an Air Force photographic intelligence interpreter. Thus has aerial photographic reconnaissance earned the title of "the eye of intelligence."





*A Seventh Air Force RF-101 Voodoo reconnaissance jet takes a photograph of its own shadow and three enemy gun positions (circles) as it makes a low-level, high-speed run across an enemy-infiltrated area. All three gunsites are firing at the aircraft.*

# Psychological Operations



*Thousands of leaflets, urging the enemy to come over to the side of the South Vietnamese government, spray from a Seventh Air Force C-47 Skytrain.*



One of the unusual, but effective means of dealing with the enemy in the Vietnam War is Psychological Operations, a modern term for convincing the enemy that he should lay down his arms and turn himself in to the side of the government, that further struggle would be useless.

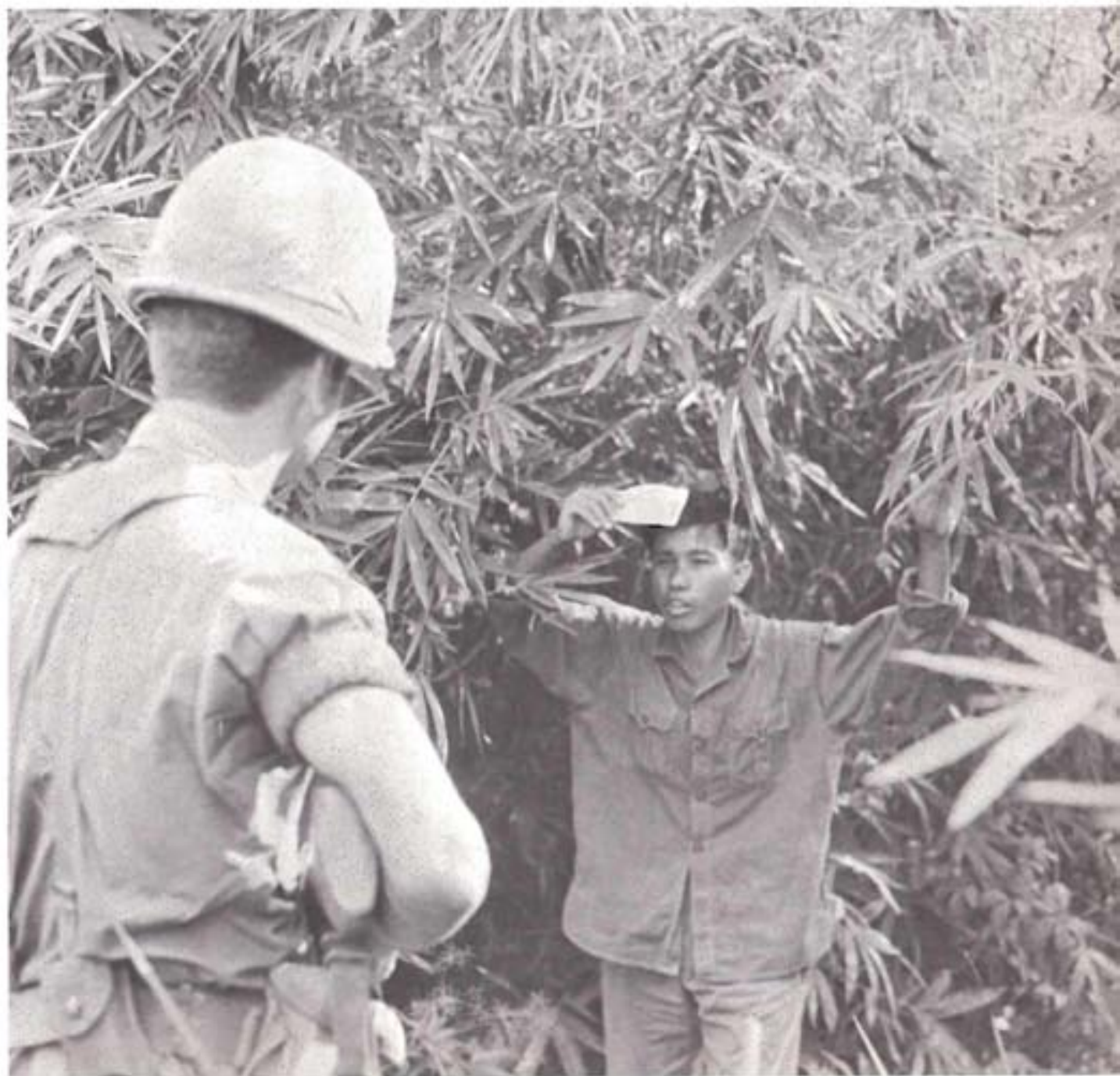
Literally billions of leaflets have been spread among enemy forces throughout Vietnam. Most relate the advantages of the South Vietnamese Government's "Chieu Hoi" program that promises good food and care, medical attention if required, and the promise of a bright future as a citizen of a stable country, as well as vocational training and the like, along with eventual amnesty.

Likewise, thousands upon thousands of hours of recorded tape messages have been broadcast, since the beginning of psyops in Vietnam, helping convince many of the enemy to surrender. Most of the broadcasts are made from giant airborne loudspeakers with a range of several miles.

The overall effectiveness of the program may never be fully known. It is known, however that tens of thousands of enemy forces, disgruntled and disheartened by the hardships of their wilderness existence, are turning themselves in for the advantages that the Chieu Hoi program offers. Over 100,000 of former Viet Cong have made the changeover, and many have completed rapid courses in training and have since been released to take their place as rightful members of South Vietnamese society, earning their own way and accepted by their neighbors.

---

*The result: An enemy soldier, persuaded that further resistance would be futile, emerges from the thick jungle undergrowth displaying a "Chieu Hoi" safe-conduct propaganda pamphlet above his head.*





# Defoliation

Chemical defoliants are used, tactically, to deprive the enemy of his greatest ally — the jungle, in which he persistently seeks cover.

The defoliants are herbicides, not insecticides, available and used extensively in agriculture in the U.S. Defoliation makes it difficult for the enemy to hide, and easier for Free World Forces to find him.

Customary targets for defoliation include Viet Cong communication lines, ambush sites, tax collection points and base camps. No area is sprayed without the express request from the local district chief. The request is also confirmed by the U.S. district advisor in the area, and then is processed through an intricate series of Vietnamese and U.S. agencies, who exercise rigid control.

Defoliation usually lasts about nine months, but has no effect on soil where crops are grown.

Defoliation missions are flown very low at a time — usually in the morning — when the spray will settle and will not rise. The defoliation program, flown by C-123 Provider aircraft of the 12th Special Operations Squadron, began in 1962.

---

*C-123 Providers from the 12th Special Operations Squadron at Bien Hoa Air Base begin a defoliation spray run over an enemy-infested jungle in South Vietnam.*



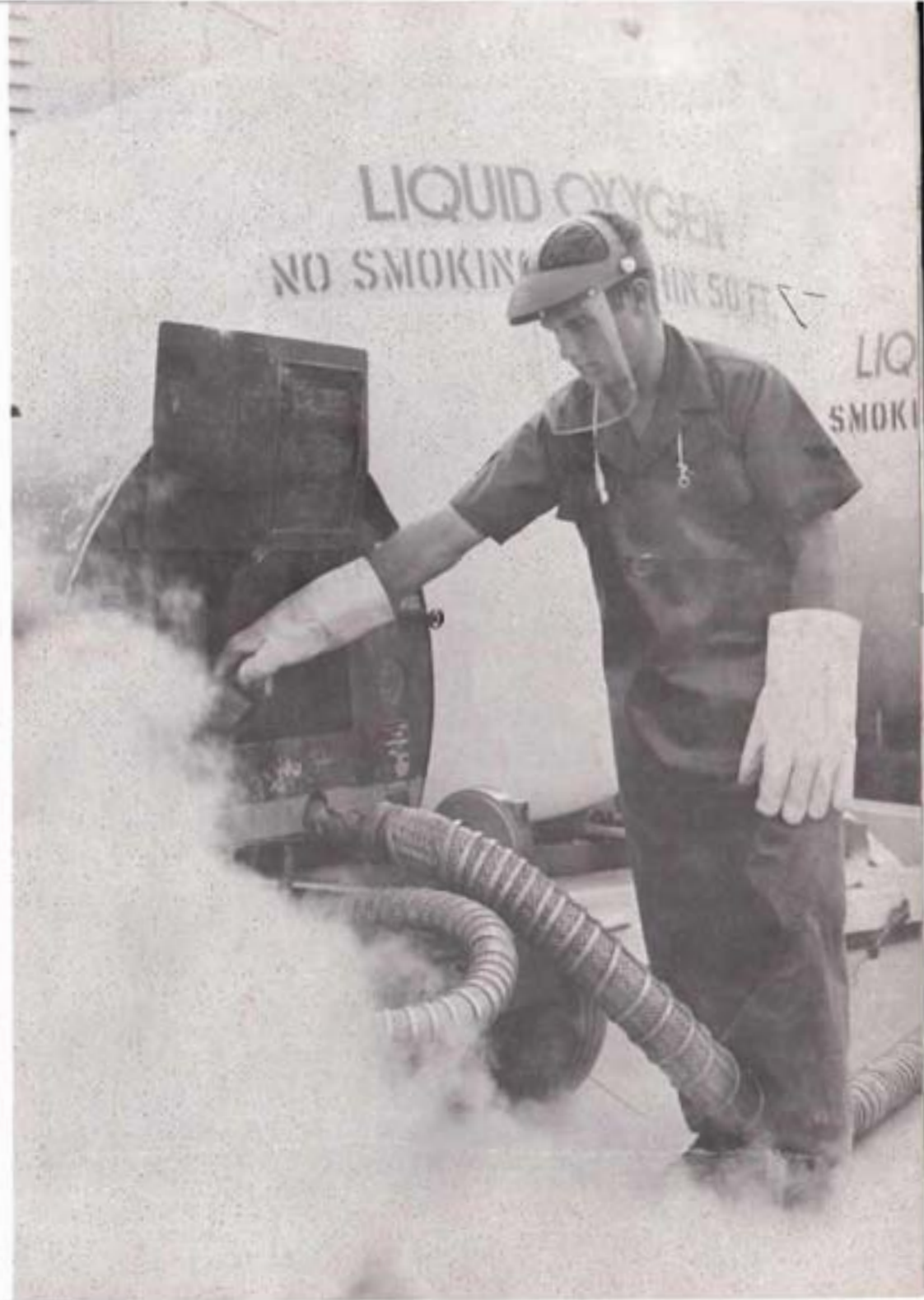
# Other Support

It takes far more than planes and pilots to conduct the air war in Vietnam. In addition to the necessary aircraft operations, maintenance and supply personnel, there are literally thousands of other kinds of jobs — some such as the Red Cross, not even part of the Air Force — required to maintain the overall allied aerial posture in Southeast Asia.

Herewith, then, on this and the next four pages that follow, a representative pictorial sampling of a few of the support occupations that are essential to the success of total air.



*Above: U.S. Air Force chaplains, pressed to the point of expediency, sometimes must celebrate Mass in the nearest convenient outdoor area. Right: Surrounded by billowing clouds of condensation, a liquid oxygen technician manufactures the frosty substance, used in most U.S. Air Force aircraft operating in Vietnam.*





*Also included in support are firefighters and crash rescue units...*



*All sorts of transportation specialists...*



*Varied construction engineer technicians...*





*People to provide a competitive baseball game...*



*And other athletic activities...*





*Supporting Seventh Air Force involves Personnel facilities...*



*Postal units...*



*Some of the best food to be found anywhere...*



*And seemingly endless hours of administrative paperwork.*





*Support also requires heavy equipment operators...*



*American Red Cross workers...*



*And Combat News radio interviews.*

# The Enemy— And His Tactics

The Viet Cong is perhaps one of the most vicious foes ever faced by American servicemen. His talent for cruel terrorism is well-documented. On the other hand, the enemy is oftentimes surprisingly meek and submissive when captured.

Nevertheless, in spite of his two-faced approach, his relentless and indiscriminate bombing and rocketing of innocent civilians continues; his cleverness and ingenuity is never underestimated.

Here is the enemy that would try to destroy South Vietnam. Here also are examples of some of his so-called “national liberation.”



*This wounded child cannot understand...*



*Nor can these women, as they watch their Cholon homes burn during the 1968 communist May offensive.*





*Parentless.*



*Vietnamese refugees flee the enemy.*



*Communist prisoners, their aggression suppressed.*

# Civic Action



*Civic Action is fun and games...*

Even while the Republic of Vietnam is engaged in a struggle for existence against the communist threat, it is simultaneously conducting a less-publicized, yet inspiring, war for those engaged in it – transforming South Vietnam into a unified, democratic and viable nation. This other war is the Government of Vietnam's Revolutionary Development Program (RDP), a nation-building process. It is a program in which the government helps the people help themselves to greater security and a better way of life.

The Seventh Air Force Civic Action Program supports RDP goals for the attainment of political, social and economic development in winning the support of the people for their government. Each 7AF base makes contributions to nation building through local civic action programs. In other areas of South Vietnam, the process is duplicated by other United States and Free World Military Armed Forces programs. Military Civic Action is becoming a significant factor in building a free Vietnam.

Simply stated, Civic Action helps the Vietnamese people help themselves. 7AF civic action personnel, in cooperation with Civilian Assistance Organizations and other United States Military Forces, work with the Vietnamese Air Force or other Vietnamese Armed Forces to assist district, village and hamlet officials at the "rice roots" level.

Such assistance programs are successful because of the efforts of hundreds of 7AF personnel who voluntarily use their off-duty time to make it work.



*Medical attention...*



*Dental care...*



*And sometimes a shot in the arm.*





*Civic Action is also building a new community...*



*Getting new clothes...*



*Or a better brace...*



*And sharing a wad of bubble gum with a friend.*

# Pictorial



## Land of Beauty

*A Photographic Portfolio of Some of the Country's More Scenic Aspects*



*Saigon sidewalk art shop.*



*Garden statue.*



*A convenient way to carry a child.*





*Saigon thoroughfare at night*



*A C-130 flies by a Nha Trang landmark.*



*Church at sunset*



*Ancient temple ruins at Phan Rang*





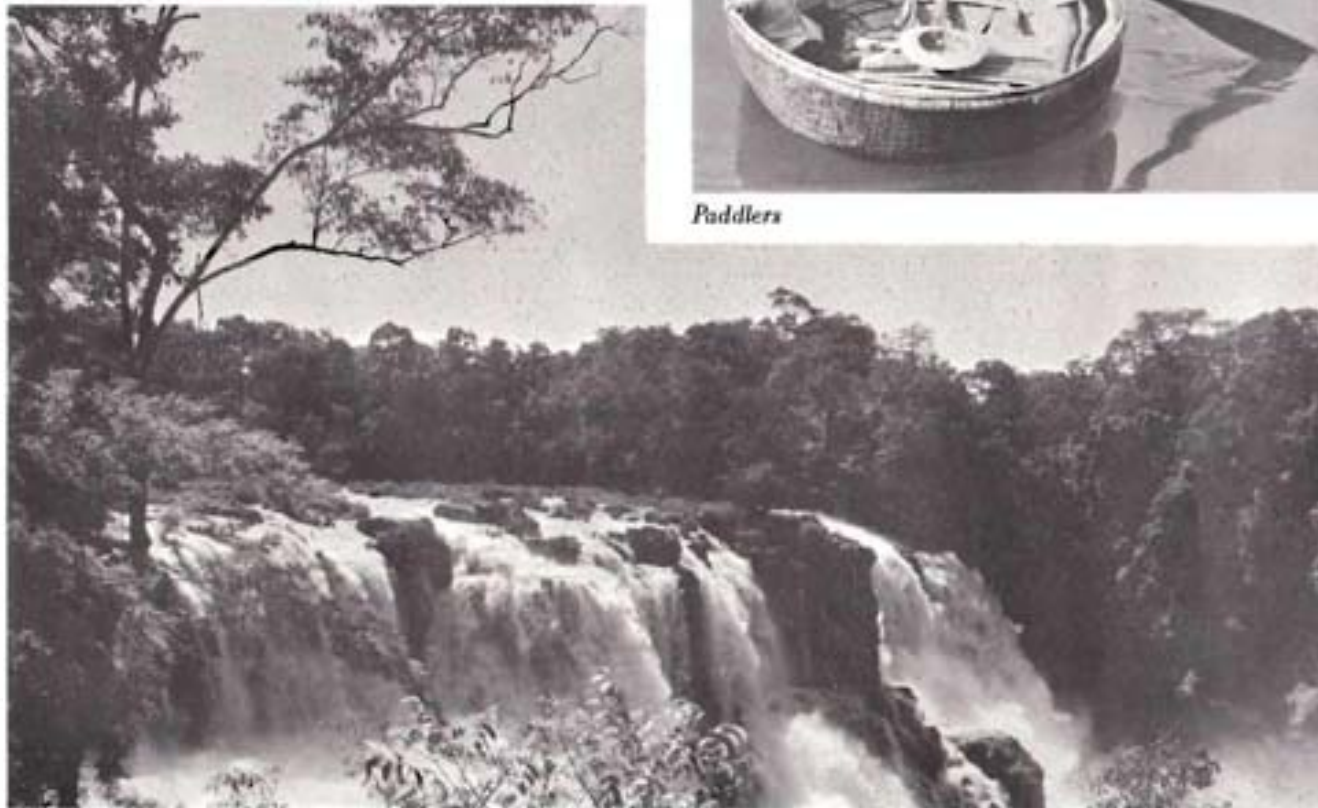
*Workday's end*



*The rice planters*



*Paddlers*



*Wilderness waterfall*

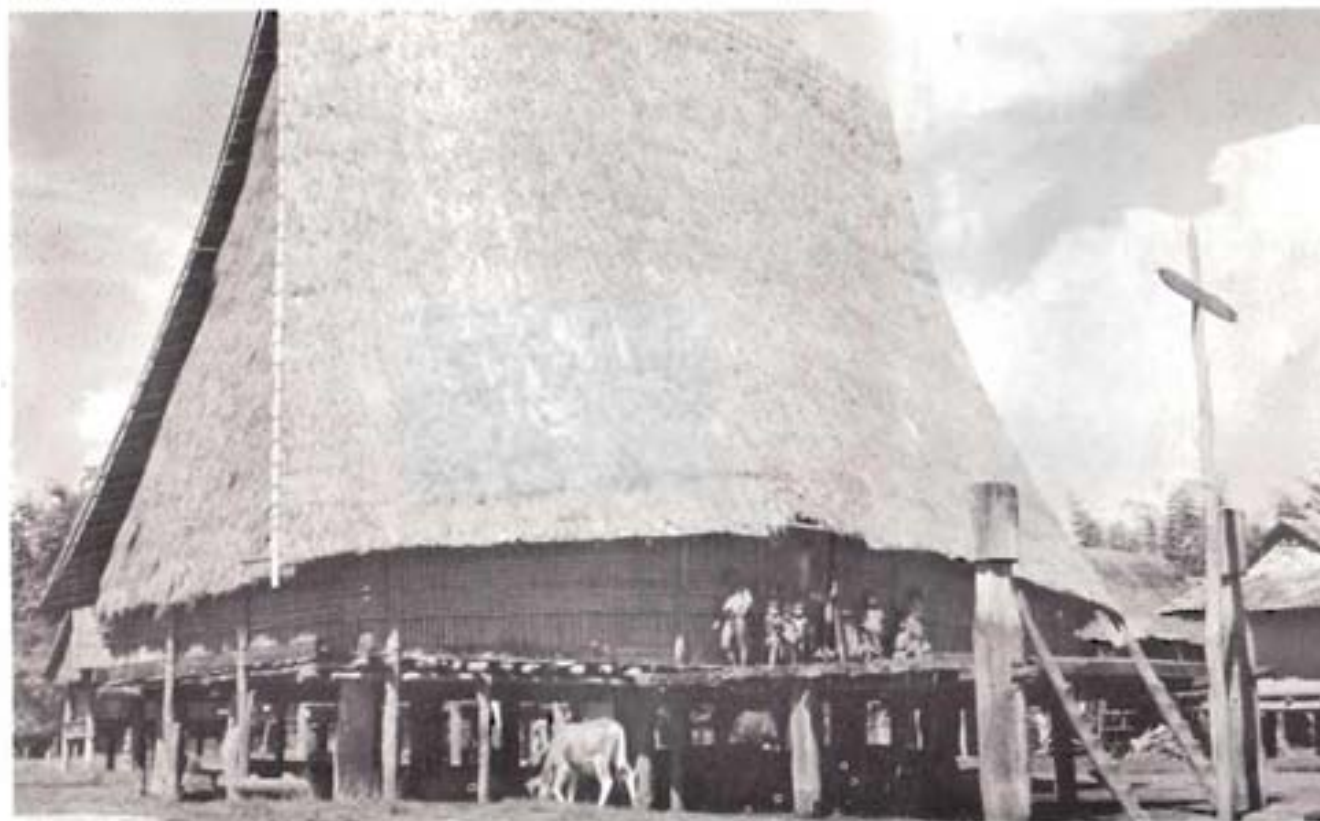


*Basket vendor*

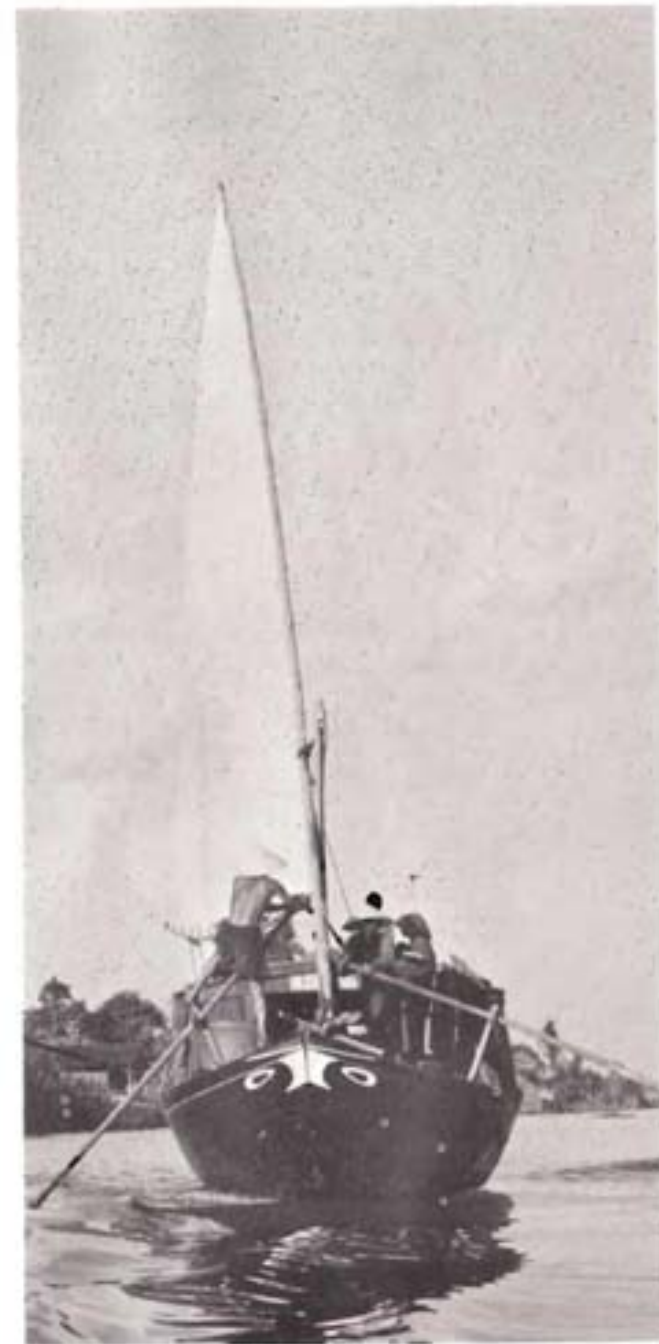




*Riverboat homes*



*Montagnard village mission*



*Mekong Delta traffic*



# EPILOGUE —

## A General Acknowledgement

It is impossible, in such a limited space as this book, to identify all the units and functions within Seventh Air Force. To the personnel in such units who are not mentioned herein, we extend our apologies and hope they are accepted in the same spirit in which they are tendered.

Additionally, space does not permit us to acknowledge the hundreds of people—many of whom are unknown to us—who, in one way or another, contributed to the making of this book. They well know who they are, and will recognize their contributions herein. To them we offer our gratitude.

Finally, to the Vietnamese people themselves, hosts to all officers, men and civilian employees in Seventh Air Force during their Southeast Asia tours, our thanks for their hospitality, kindness and friendship. To them, we re-affirm our dedication to help them in their struggle against tyranny and oppression.

THE EDITORS

*Worth waiting for: As the sun sets under the wing, a planeload of Vietnam returnees wings its way across the Pacific.*





This booklet was prepared by the Directorate of Information, Headquarters, Seventh Air Force, APO San Francisco, Calif. 96307, and printed by Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan. Photographs were furnished courtesy of the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, Seventh Air Force Combat News Division, 600th Photographic Squadron, Joint U.S. Public Affairs Organization and other sources.

*Cover photograph: A Seventh Air Force RF-4 Phantom jet takes off from Tan Son Nhut Air Base on a night mission.*

