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MOB keeps Khe Sanh rolling

The Vietnam AIRLIFTER



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834TH AIR DIVISION

APRIL 1971

KHE SANH COMBAT SUPPORT BASE -- While none of these freight specialists will be nominated for the best dressed list, they are among probably the hardest working men in the Air Force. These men keep the supplies moving in one of the hottest spots in the Republic, Khe Sanh. You can read their story on pages four and five.

Gen. Herring receives

Second star

TAN SON NHUT AB -- Maj. Gen. John H. Herring, Jr., commander of the division, was presented his second star recently by Dr. John L. McLucas during the Under Secretary of the Air Force's recent visit.

Although many airmen in the 834th know their commander because of his frequent trips to the many division operating locations, few know that he has been involved with airlift since taking his oath of enlistment.

After receiving his wings in 1942, General Herring flew as a transport pilot in the European Theatre and participated in the North African and Sicilian invasion operations. During the Korean War, he played an important role in planning airborne and airdrop resupply operations for the Allied effort in that country.

After a short assignment as commander of the 438th MAC Wing at McGuire AFB, N.J. He assumed command of the 834th in June of 1969. In May, the recently promoted commander of one of the largest and most active operational units in the Air Force will celebrate his 51st birthday.

Straight talk

KHE SANH COMBAT SUPPORT BASE -- SSgt. Gerald Bickford, a freight specialist at this forward base, recently found himself surrounded by a news team from one of the television networks in Vietnam.

"How long have you been in Vietnam?" the correspondent asked Bickford who is something of a legend "for being where the action is."

"Forty-eight months," came the crisp reply.

The startled newsman asked what the men who unload the aircraft in the unprotected areas did when the shells began coming in.

"We run like hell," Bickford replied.

"I beg your pardon," remarked the correspondent.

"We run back to the bunkers."

Then the professional newsman asked why he hadn't seen the freight crew running when some enemy shells hit the base a few minutes before.

Sergeant Bickford, replied, "We have to get the aircraft unloaded before we take off."

The Staff Sergeant later commented, "I hope he understood that without supplies we wouldn't be winning this war."



RUNFELDT

834th news briefs



THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS...

by Col. Kenneth T. Blood, Jr.
Commander, 315th TAW



Considering a vacation in a remote country? Why not ask Lt. Col. James Ray about Bolivia. The Operations Officer of the 310th TAS was recently presented the Joint Service Commendation Medal for serving as an advisor with the Bolivian Air Force for two years. . . Congratulations to Sgt. Michael Burns and A1C Stephen Gagnon. Sgt. Burns, an admin type with the Command and Control Center was named the 834th's Airman of the Month. Airman Gagnon took the AOM honors for Det. 1 for February. As an hydraulics repairman, he cut brake changes in half. . . Sgt. Norman LaFountain, who works in the 834th headquarters, recently reenlisted and collected \$3700. Even more important than the money is the American citizenship the French-Canadian from Montreal hopes to receive in about a year. . . Det. 1 and the 8th APS were recently honored for their safety efforts. For moving over two million passengers and several hundred thousand tons of acrgo without a serious accident during the last half of 1970, both units were presented with safety awards. . . Don't forget that safety does count. . . The *Airlifter* would like to welcome Col. Rodney Newbold who is the new commander of the 483rd TAW at Cam Ranh Bay. He takes over from Col. Abbott C. Greenleaf who has been selected to wear his first star. Colonel Greenleaf is returning to the States where he will receive word of his next assignment. . . As usual, the latest airlift figures are impressive. The 14th APS at Cam Ranh Bay handled 87,925 passengers and 10,688 tons of cargo during the month of January. Det. 2 also at Cam Ranh Bay, flew 3,486 sorties delivering 48,089 passengers and about 12,000 tons of cargo during February. C-130s under the control of Det. 1 at Tan Son Nhut carried 68,859 passengers and 9,693 tons of cargo during February.

How often have we heard the expression -- "The truth of the matter is..."? It normally precedes a confession or admission that something wasn't done properly. It might be a deviation from a tech order, the padding of facts or figures, or an outright fabrication. It usually spells trouble.

In such cases, the shortcomings will eventually be discovered. The discovery may be made by an eventual malfunction of equipment -- very serious if the equipment happens to be an aircraft in flight -- or perhaps by a shop or section suddenly realizing it is unable to function properly. Imagine the embarrassment of a commander who has to explain a problem when he was unaware a problem existed in that area. That is never accepted as a legitimate excuse. It is a commander's responsibility to know at all times what is happening in his command. How much easier it is for a commander if his people level with him all the time. (He'll eventually eliminate those who don't.)

To paraphrase an old maxim -- "To err is human - to admit is admirable." This is especially true in the military where we are dealing with human lives.

I will cite an example. A pilot takes great pride in his flying ability. If he makes a hard landing, it hurts that pride. Every pilot wants every landing he makes to be "grease job," that is, to be a smooth, feather-light landing. This displays his expertise. But, I know, having been a pilot for many years, this isn't always the case. At some time during his career, due to weather, misjudgement, or other factors, a pilot will probably make a hard landing. His first inclination is to hope that nobody witnessed it, but the professional pilot will not do that. Whether anyone witnessed it or not, the professional will write it up in the aircraft AFTO Form 781. Why? To prevent a possible future accident. By writing it up, maintenance personnel will thoroughly check the aircraft for possible structural damage. This can prevent an accident later should structural damage go undetected.

In short, the conscientious, professional pilot will admit his error and "tell on himself" to prevent a possible future tragedy.

This same philosophy must apply to all if us in the military. Whether we are in a maintenance shop, flying an airplane, or punching a typewriter -- we must be honest with ourselves, our supervisors and commanders.

If we have caused, or detect, a flaw in the system, it's time to tell it like it is. Bring it to the attention of the proper people -- all the way up the line. Then correct it! If proper correction needs assistance from higher up the assistance will be forthcoming. If the supervisor or commander doesn't know about the problem, he'll be hard pressed to correct it!

In essence, I'm not asking you to tattle on yourself or others -- but just display honesty in all phases of your work. Keep the commander informed, honestly, on all aspects of his command. Much better he hear it from you than from some outside source.

By following these principles, you will never have to stand before a commander and admit, "Well sir, the truth of the matter is..."

WANTED...STRETCH YOUR IMAGINATION and submit your "outlandish" ideas for RECON to Lt. Col. Hepler, 834ADIV, APO, In Country, 96307. He just might reward your originality and imagination with a certificate...or something! REMEMBER BUCK ROGERS!

The VIETNAM AIRLIFTER is an informal newsletter for the personnel of the 834th Air Division. It is published monthly at the Pacific Stars and Stripes, Tokyo. Those wishing to contribute items should submit them by the 15th of the month to 7AF-OIP, ATTN: VIETNAM AIRLIFTER, APO 96307 (In country). Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense.

Information Officer Maj. Verna S. Kellogg
Editor SSgt. John H. Gundersdoorf

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C-141s fly in-country missions

Another first

CAM RANH BAY AB -- For the first time in the Vietnam War, C-141s and crews of the Military Airlift Command (MAC) have been used for ferrying cargo and passengers within the Republic of Vietnam.

As many in-country travellers were aware, C-130s of the 834th had been diverted from normal passenger runs to a massive airlift into Khe Sanh. Khe Sanh was recently busy with C-130s landing at rates which were sometimes as high as one every eight minutes, bringing mission essential cargo into the base.

With regular cargo and passenger runs postponed for the airlift, material began piling up elsewhere.

MAC stepped in and took up the slack. C-141s were used for the first time in the Vietnam conflict to transport supplies from Cam Ranh Bay to other bases in the country.

Nearly a million pounds of cargo were moved in a 36-hour period, with C-141 flights going to Phu Cat, Pleiku, Da Nang and Tan Son Nhut with essential support equipment, aircraft parts and engines, ammunition and other supplies.

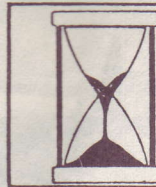
Seventeen missions were flown in all by MAC crews, with three crews "staging" at Cam Ranh Bay, the first time this has been done in the war. Staging a crew means that it is given a rest after a day of flying.

Maj. Gary A. Denzer, a duty controller at the MAC Post of the 608th MASS Squadron here, said "Everyone did an outstanding job, pitched in and really worked hard, a magnificent job. It went smoothly and really showed that many long years of hard training have paid off."

Major Denzer handled crew briefings, scheduling and rest arrangements among his other duties. He had nothing but praise for the crews that flew these first C-141 in-country missions of the war. To sum it up he said, "All of our MAC crewmembers performed in an extremely professional manner."



The first C-141 crew ever to "stage" in the Republic of Vietnam checks into rest quarters at Cam Ranh Bay. From left to right are: 1st Lt. Roger Schultz, Capt. Charles Houston and Capt. Harvey Bauer. Signing them in is Maj. Gary Denzer, the duty controller.



TAKE TIME FOR SAFETY

DISCIPLINE -- KEY TO SAFETY

The following article is republished from the 483rd TAW weekly flying safety summary. It was aimed primarily at fliers, but its implications could fit any situation, job or individual. Take a few moments and see if the idea presented here is applicable to you and your job. Take time for safety.

As specialists in air power, we seek the reasons for each mishap. And, from the complicated array presented by our investigations, we try to eliminate those factors which are within our power. But, suppose we look at each mishap from the standpoint of "is it preventable?"

Almost without exception the answer will be yes. That is an indictment of leadership, which tells us we need to improve both leadership and discipline.

The ultimate responsibility for safe aircraft operation rests squarely on the shoulders of the aircraft commander.

There is no other way to phrase it. It is he who must not only be aware of the published obstacles and hazards, but must also be alert to unforeseen dangers, lurking as pitfalls to the unwary.

He must exercise his authority to insure that each member of his crew has been thoroughly indoctrinated as to their responsibilities and obligations. Not only must he insist on upmost vigilance when transiting strange airfields, but he must prevent complacency when operating on familiar air bases with vast expanses of uncluttered space.

The myriad of regulations and articles published for guidance to safe operations are useless unless the aircraft commander and crew have disciplined themselves to the point where compliance is automatic. When a taxi accident does occur, it is an undeniable manifestation of failure on the part of one or more individuals. At the root of each preventable taxi accident is lack of discipline, and the antecedent to discipline do we have success.

One of the differences between "just a pilot" and a "professional" is the deliberate mental anticipation on the unexpected - not only for the present but for the next phase of the flight.



Do you know?

Like most units in the United States military, the 834th has an emblem that represents the goals of the Division. Do you know what it stands for?

The emblem is symbolic of both the division and its mission. It features a rampant griffin, traditional animal of vigilance, valor and strength, holding the sword of tactical airpower above a chessboard-like band alluding to the air theatre of combat.

Supporting the mission are the Division's subordinate units, symbolized by the two fleurs-de-lis at the base of the shield. Each has a central element of faith, guarded on the sides by wisdom and chivalry.

Emblazoned on the scroll at the top is the Division's motto, "All The Way," indicative of the spirit with which the Division's personnel now accomplish the airlift mission in the Republic of Vietnam.



"One hell

Another C-130 roars into Khe Sanh past a damaged fork lift. Parts from the damaged vehicle were used to keep the other lifts running smoothly.

They're all volunteers.

The work is hard and dangerous.

Yet, without them the airlift into

Khe Sanh wouldn't work.

KHE SANH COMBAT SUPPORT BASE - They're a rough crew, dressed in whatever will keep them warm and dry. Often, mud that is four and five days old will cover their fatigues. And, according to their first sergeant they're doing "one helluva fine job."

What MSgt. Donald Haselrig, First Sergeant of the 8th Aerial Port Squadron was referring to was the performance of the 16-man mobility team that is handling the freight at this forward supply base.

"I've seen them at work and at play," he said, "and, I can guarantee you they do both just as hard."

Even as the C-130s taxi toward the off-load area, the cargo crew moves in with fork lifts to unload the huge aircraft.

All the men who hustle the freight at Khe Sanh are volunteers. Besides the long tiring hours, the work is dangerous. In recent days, enemy rockets and artillery shells have fallen on the base. The airmen who work along the exposed section of the runway

make tempting targets for the Communist gunners.

However, A1C Arlos Anundson said, "This really doesn't bother us. We're too busy to think much about it."

Usually the members of the team spend about two weeks at Khe Sanh and then return to Tan Son Nhut for a short rest.

MSgt. Walter Moore, in charge of the Squadron's detachments, explained that after a short time at the forward base the men become exhausted. "We try to give them as much of a break as possible," he said.

Lt. Col. James Rock, who is in charge of the Air Force ground effort at Khe Sanh, praised the work of the freight specialists. He noted that an aircraft was rarely on the ground for more than ten minutes and it isn't unusual for a plane to be turned around in less than five minutes.

This means that if the weather holds, the Air Force has been able to bring in 500 tons of badly needed supplies a day. The record for one day here has been 1,000 tons of cargo.

SSgt. Bickford finds some cold water a refreshing break from the hard work. The water containers lid sufficed as a cup for the thirsty men.



...va fine job!"

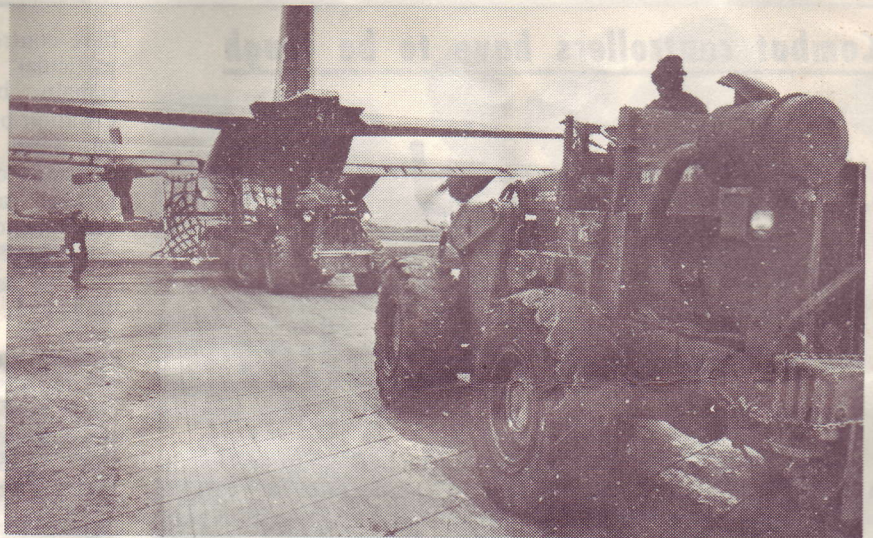
Photos by Sgt. Bill Diebold

Living and working at Khe Sanh are three maintenance men who are at Khe Sanh to perform emergency repairs on aircraft that have problems. Fortunately, these are few and far between.

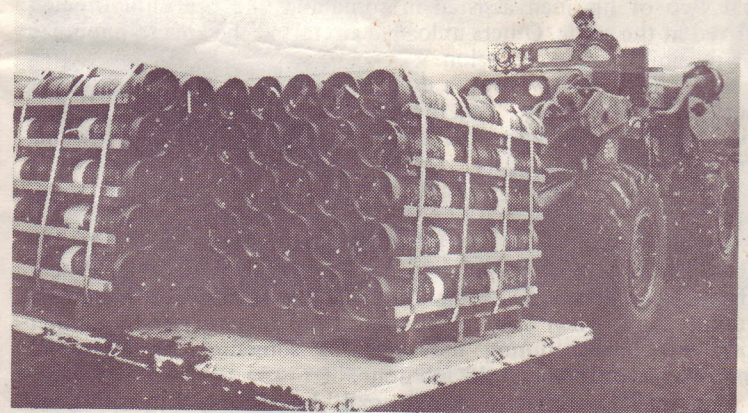
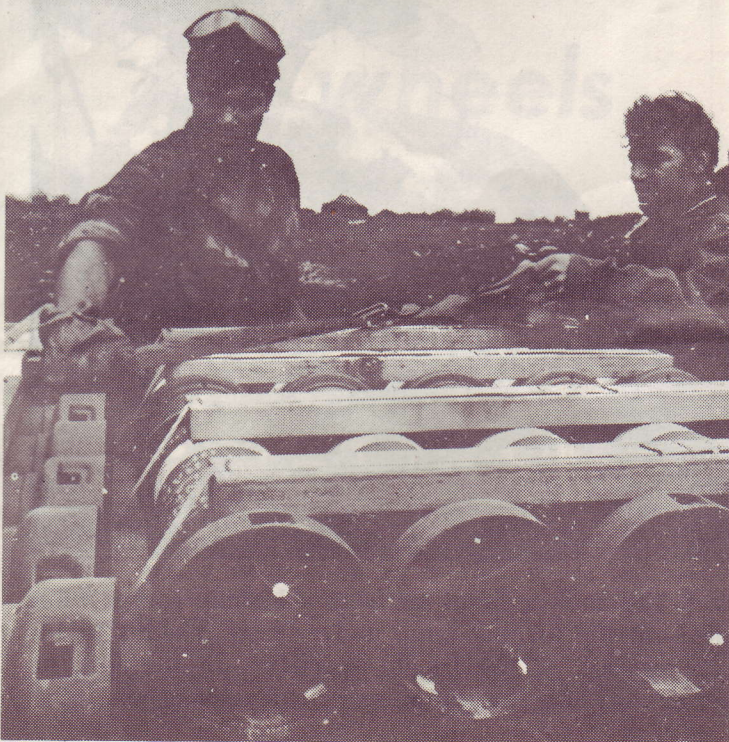
Sgt. Michael Marabelle explained that he and the other two maintenance men spend most of their time helping to move cargo. "Everyone helps out here," he remarked. "That's important."

The men of the mobility team seem to thrive on the hard work. Sgt James Dausch explained, "I volunteered for mobility to be where the action is. I really enjoy it. I wouldn't to do anything else."

A1C Thomas Arndt and SSgt. Gerald Bickford remove straps from a pallet of artillery shells.



As one forklift hauls cargo off the C-130, another prepares to move in. Teamwork like this means that planes spend only a few minutes on the ground.



A1C Eddie Koller rolls in with another load of artillery shells.

Combat controllers have to be tough

Rugged individualist

KHE SANH COMBAT SUPPORT BASE -- "Any man who works for me had better be an individualist and hardheaded to boot if he wants to be a success as a combat controller," asserts Capt. Donald R. Howie, OIC of the Combat Control Team (CCT).

After nine months as chief of the 834th's CCT, the captain should know what it takes to be a winner. He's seen action all over Vietnam and was operating near the Laotian border at Khe Sanh.

A combat controller is the first man into a forward location. Equipped with a radio jeep and a supply of gasoline, he sets up shop as soon as he arrives and proceeds to guide aircraft into the field. He has complete responsibility for contacting each aircraft by radio, giving them landing instructions and talking them "around" any hostile fire in the area.

He must be able to make decisions based on what he knows and, once made, he must stick to this decision. "Sometimes a two-striper will

have control of all aircraft at a particular airfield," added the captain, between bites of a C-Ration breakfast. "In this case he must be able to make decisions on what he has been taught and overrule the recommendations of senior men not in his career field."

"Me? I love my job," he explained. "This is the only place in the world where a combat controller can perform as he was taught. I'd like to come back for another tour, but since there is only one officer slot in Southeast Asia, I'm pretty sure I won't be able to."

"Since there are no other officers with my specialty over here, I have a free hand how I deploy my troops. We're allowed to operate pretty much the way we want to as long as the job gets done. It's more meaningful than some other jobs because you are in on both the planning and executing stages."

Finishing the C-Ration ham and eggs he tossed the can into the fire and strolled back to the radio jeep and a session of reminiscing about the past nine

months.

"It's a fairly exciting life over here. I've never been in a firefight or had anyone shooting directly at me, but I've had my share of rocket and mortar attacks."

"There was the time at one base when enemy mortars blew up a fuel bladder not 100 yards from our jeep. Exciting wouldn't be the word. I guess scared would come pretty close to how I felt."

During one operation, he was controlling airlift operations into an isolated airfield on the border when the strip came under attack. "They were shooting helicopters off the end of the runway," he related. "You feel pretty lucky to get out of a situation like that without losing any aircraft."

"The aircrews put a lot of faith and trust in the controllers when they are coming into a field," he continued, scanning the skies with an unconcerned habit. "Anytime a field I'm working comes under attack and I can get the aircraft off safely, I feel like I've done my job."

Quick action saves C-130s

DA NANG AFLD -- During a recent rocket attack on this base, the quick actions of a freight specialist from the 15th APS helped to save several C-130s.

There were 11 planes on the loading ramp, most of them loaded with ammunition bound for Khe Sanh, when a Communist 122mm rocket slammed into one of them.

MSgt. Wallace Jenkins, who is in charge of line loading, explained that two of his men assisted in containing the fire until firemen arrived at the scene. Others unloaded aircraft in the area to minimize the possibility of an explosion.

When the C-130 was hit, a dolly train carrying ammo was about halfway to the aircraft. "Had the rocket come in ten minutes later, it would have landed when the crew was loading," Sergeant Jenkins emphasized.

Five other aircraft in the area sustained minor shrapnel damage, but were able to be flown the next day.

The men of the 15th APS have been hopping since the airlift into Khe Sanh began. Sergeant Jenkins, a 17-year Air Force veteran said, "They have to keep moving to stay up with the steady flow of aircraft. And, when you are jumping from one aircraft to another with few breaks during the day, it's sometimes necessary to improvise in order to get the job done."

"I never know what to expect next," he added. "But, with these men behind it, I know that it will be a professional job."



This C-130 took a direct hit from a 122mm rocket while parked on the loading ramp at Da Nang. Thanks to the quick reaction of the freight specialists in the area, no other aircraft near this one were seriously damaged.

Youthful instructor

SOC TRANG AB -- While he works, waving and gesturing with his hands, Sgt. Wayne Garden resembles a Saigon traffic cop trying to add some order to the madness of the traffic.

But, the young sergeant is 75 miles south of Saigon at the Republic of Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) base at Soc Trang. The hand gestures are his way of talking to his VNAF counterparts.

Although only 20 years old, Sergeant Garden has been given the responsible job of serving as a one-man aerial port detachment. His main responsibility is to train a small group of VNAF enlisted men and officers in the fine points of handling freight and cargo.

"They wanted a higher ranking enlisted man to do the job," said MSgt. Walter Moore, his supervisor. "But he knows how to get along well with the Vietnamese. And he's got that sign language of his."

Sergeant Garden explained that he is teaching 11 enlisted men and two officers all he knows about moving freight. "This includes how to load and offload freight from C-7s and C-130s, and other freight concepts including how to build pallets."

He said that only two VNAF speak any English. So he has developed a system of signs and waves of the hand to tell the trainees what has to be done.

The American freight specialist takes quite a bit of pride in the VNAF airmen. "I've had complaints from every loadmaster that flies in here," Sergeant Garden related. "I'm hoping that they will make some of these troops instructors. They really know their job."

He also feels that it's been a mutual learning experience. "I've learned a lot from the Vietnamese. Somehow they've become accustomed to my ways. I know that I've learned a lot about theirs."

Big wheels

CAM RANH BAY AB -- Every unit, at one time or another, has been visited by VIPs. Recently, Det. 2 was honored with the presence of 30 "Generals" who went straight to maintenance.

The "Generals" accompanied by Firestones and Goodyears were wheel and tire assemblies for the C-130s, and Very Important Parts, indeed.

When A C-130 is called upon to land at a short, unimproved airstrip surrounded by high mountains and enemy soldiers, these VIPs have to perform. When over 78 tons of aircraft and cargo drop in on one of these airstrips, the tires must be there all the way. Det. 2 makes sure they are.

During 1970, the Det. 2 wheel and tire shop tore down, inspected, cleaned, replaced and built up nearly 3,500 wheels and tires. Not one of the 400-pound assemblies failed. All this work was accomplished without accident or injury to shop personnel.

The big wheels continue to visit Det. 2 and each one is given special attention. The VIPs will be there when needed, compliments of the wheel and tire shop at Cam Ranh Bay.



Sgt. Wayne Garden shows several VNAF freight specialists the fine points of preparing a manifest. The 20-year-old sergeant is a one-man aerial port detachment at Soc Trang whose main job is teaching the VNAF all he knows about freight concepts.



Our girl Mary might be the girl next door. She's very concerned about everyone over here and wants all of you to be safety conscious. Remember, it doesn't take much effort to take time for safety.

They fly side by side

TAN SON NHUT AB -- As a culmination of an extensive training program for the VNAF, U.S. Air Force and VNAF crewmembers are flying side by side in the C-123 jet assisted assault transport with the 19th TAS.

The program is actually very simple. Qualified VNAF crewmen are mixed with the in American counterparts to form a crew. The VNAF airmen then perform as a normal crewmember during the missions for the day.

Capt. Roger Lutterman, who had just returned from a day's flying, explained that his copilot for that day was VNAF 1st Lt. Nguyen Duc Minh. "Actually, Lieutenant Minh and I switched seats during the day," he said. "He was acting aircraft commander for three legs and I was for two."

Before flying with the men of the 19th TAS, the VNAF airmen went through the same training program that U.S. fliers experience. Lt. Col. John Kilty, the 19th Operations Officer, explained that the first group of 16 pilots, seven engineers and two loadmasters went through transition training in the C-123 at Lockbourne AFB, Ohio. Then, they received their combat theatre qualification training at Phan Rang AB in the Republic of Vietnam.

Colonel Kilty also explained that many of the pilots have several thousand hours flying experience, mainly in C-119s and C-47s. The main difference is that the C-123 is a jet assisted aircraft. "I think they are more than capable of handling the situation," he said.

VNAF Capt. Hoang Nam, a pilot who has been flying since 1965, was enthusiastic about the program. "It's a nice airplane with lots of power," he said.

"We don't have any problem in the air due to the training."

In a short time Captain Nam is hoping to be awarded his instructor pilot's rating.

The men of the 19th seem to have few doubts that the VNAF will be able to take over their job. Most of the unit's missions are in Military Regions 3 and 4. About 40 per cent are bladder bird missions which carry fuel; the others carry explosives and normal cargo to the many bases in the southern half of the Republic.

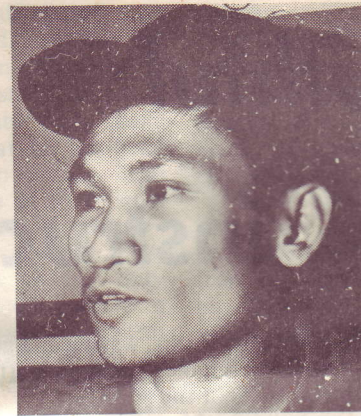
"Excellent," said Lt. Col. Anthony Cerasale, an aircraft commander. "Their aircraft commanders are excellent and their copilots are very sharp."

"They've really changed my impression of Southeast Asia," emphasized Captain Lutterman. "They've given me the realization that everyone is the same the world over. There's only one way to fly a plane, the right way."

SSgt. Isaac Fisher, a flight engineer with eight missions with the VNAF said, "For the short time they've been flying Bookies (C-123s), they're really doing well."

Perhaps Lieutenant Minh expressed it best. "At first, it was very different to me. But, day by day, I began to feel more comfortable. The first and second time, I got scared, but now I feel very comfortable flying the C-123s."

VNAF Capt. Hoang Nam, pilot, "We don't have any problem in the air due to the training. Our class was first and we have lots of experience."



VNAF 1st Lt. Nguyen Duc Minh, pilot, "At first it was different to me. The first and second time I got scared, but now I feel very comfortable."



Capt. Roger Lutterman, aircraft commander, "They've really changed my impression of Southeast Asia. They've given me the realization that everyone is the same the world over. They're interesting people to be around."



SSgt. Isaac Fisher, flight engineer, "Overall it's a good program. For the short time that they've been flying Bookies, they're doing real well. I think it will work out real nice."

