

After the prayers for Sergeant Cox, the Captain stood up to say some niceties and say, "We still have a war to fight, everyone. We haven't got time to cry about this. It's over with. It's done with. Forget it: especially since we are going to Pinkville tomorrow." Pinkville: that was our company's name for Mylai One. On maps it was colored pink, and as soon as Medina mentioned it the troops sat up. Or *woke* up. Medina went on, "We're going after the 48th battalion. And they outnumber us two to one. At *least*, and there will be heavy casualties tomorrow."

I thought, *Hell. He didn't have to say it. Everyone knew it:* Alpha and Bravo companies had been there before. And men had their heads blown off: I mean literally, or were vegetables now at Walter Reed*, in Washington. As soon as you're close to Pinkville you're in a wall-to-wall minefield. And you're being fired on from front and behind: from the "civilians" in Mylai Six. . . And if they're with you as POW's, they're pulling pins out of your damn grenades. And you're saying, "God! They're everywhere," and you're running in every which way. And you're dying like flies: it happened to Alpha, it happened to Bravo, it would happen to Charlie tomorrow.

To me. I knew now, *It's a lottery here. It's a man taking names from a ballot box.* A good guy, or bad guy, or just anyone could get it. By being just at the wrong place at the wrong time: that's all. And what could be wronger than to be in Vietnam in March, 1968: in Tet? It was stupid, it was idiotic to use a company against a battalion tomorrow. It was against the Manual. Of course, if I'm told, "Go to China tomorrow alone. And annihilate it," I have to go. With gusto! Or go to Pinkville without asking, "Why?" A second lieutenant is not anyone to ask it. . .

We had a Plan, Medina was telling everyone now. And went to a Jeep: and taking a shovel out, he drew in the sand beneath him a map of our operation area. From left to right, this was Mylai Four, Mylai Five, Mylai Six, and Mylai One: or Pinkville, on the China sea. Pinkville now was the VC basecamp, Medina said, but we didn't want to get fired on from behind and we would start at Mylai Four. And continue to Mylai Five, Mylai Six, and Mylai One. "We mustn't let anyone get behind us," Medina said, as I remember it. "Alpha and Bravo got messed up because they let the VC get behind them. And took heavy casualties and lost their momentum, and it was their downfall. Our job," Medina said, "is to go in rapidly and to neutralize everything. To kill everything."

"Captain Medina? Do you mean women and children, too?"

"I mean everything."

. . . I worry sometimes now. I lie awake, and I think of Mylai and say, *My god. Whatever inspired me to do it?* But truthfully: there was no other way. America's motto there was "Win in Vietnam," and in Mylai there was no other way to do it. No wonder an Army officer is so aggravated today. He has trained hard to forget, *To kill a man's wrong.* He psychs himself up, and someone tells him, "Okay! Get your people up! Get ready!" . . . He gets ready, and the Man says, "Stop! You aren't ready." *Damn, I haven't tried yet.* So the second time: so the same routine. "Stop! We aren't doing it." *Frustration,* and the final time he gets ready, he has that mission and he accomplishes it. "No no no! We didn't want you to kill anyone! We wanted to win their hearts and minds!"

My god. You shouldn't teach us killing then.

*Walter Reed: Army hospital in Washington, D.C.



... On the choppers: there the adrenalin started. We felt as automobile racers do: *A split second, and I might hit the very edge of disaster. Or pass it.* We had about twenty thousand rounds for our M-16s with us: four hundred for every man. And fifteen thousand for our machine guns, and four hundred grenades for our M-79 launchers, and a dozen shells for our 81-millimeter mortar. The choppers around us had fire behind them: the M-5 grenade launchers, the rocket launchers, and the miniguns were on Mylai already. A minigun: a super machine gun, in a minute it can have holes in every square foot of a football field. It was just devastating fire!

... I thought, *Well, here we go*, I got up, I jumped—I didn't move. I tried, I just forced myself, I jumped a few meters into the paddies under me. The troops jumped out of the chopper behind me. Ahead of us: Mylai Four.

I'm going to die sometime: I had always known it. Ignored it: and knocked on the door of death today, and I couldn't ignore it. The fear now: I was saturated with it. *I felt it*, I kept running but it took extra effort to. A bullet: a pretty good way to go, I knew. No fuss. No muss, I wouldn't even know it was hitting me. A mine: that's worse, to wake up and think, *Now, what did I lose?* *My legs:* *I still have my arms, though*, I would try to think positively. Of the great guys who run around, jump out of planes, hop up a mountainside with an artificial leg. I would think, *I'm out, I don't have to worry anymore.* . . .

The fear: nearly everyone had it. And everyone had to destroy it: Mylai, the source of it. And everyone moved into Mylai firing automatic. And went rapidly, and the GIs shot people rapidly. Or grenaded them. Or just bayoneted them: to stab, to throw

someone aside, to go on. Supposedly, the GIs said, "Chalk one up," "Hey, I got another one." . . . I didn't hear it: I just heard Medina telling me, "Keep going," and I said, "Keep going! Keep going! Keep—"

. . . Medina says now, "You have to use common sense." Well, I wasn't taught at OCS to use common sense: I was taught, "Do this! Do this like this!" In combat, if Medina had really told me, "Use common sense," I'd have said, "Sure, I'm going back to Hawaii." To use saturation fire: to use rifles, rockets, cannons, mortars, miniguns, and machine guns on a little guerilla—hell, to go to Vietnam to fight him, is that common sense? It is America's strategy, though. To keep putting the "stuff" out: to kill everyone in Mylai before someone gets an AK rifle out. . .

I didn't say, "Kill babies," but I simply knew, *It will happen*. I knew if I was in Mylai with twenty thousand rounds, if I didn't shoot at paper targets there would be men, women, children, and babies hurt. It's chaos in combat, and I couldn't tell the GIs that day, "Be careful now."

. . . I can't answer those who say, "Man, how can you kill someone?"

"I don't know," I say. "Use a rifle, I guess. Or stab him. Or burn him. Or some other way. And you?"

"I couldn't kill anyone."

"Even if they would kill *you*?"

"I couldn't kill anyone."

"Well, you'll be a poor soldier then."



Team of investigators from the United States and South Vietnam search for evidence at Mylai

"I couldn't live with it."

A silly statement, I think. Most of America's males were in Korea or World War II or I. They killed, and they aren't all going crazy. They simply escaped it. The human mind: I think it has more defense mechanisms than it has smarts. As for me, killing those men in Mylai didn't haunt me. I didn't—I couldn't kill for the pleasure of it. We weren't in Mylai to kill human beings, really. We were there to kill *ideology* that is carried by—I don't know. Pawns. Blobs. Pieces of flesh, and I wasn't in Mylai to destroy intelligent men. I was there to destroy an intangible idea.

To destroy communism. Now, I hate to say it, but most people know a lot more about communism than I do. In school. I never thought about it. I just dismissed it: I looked at communism as a Southerner looks at a Negro, supposedly, *It's evil, It's bad*. I went to school in the 1950's, remember, and it was drilled into us from grammar school on, *Ain't is bad, aren't is good, communism's bad, democracy's good*. *One and one's two*, etcetera: until when we were at Edison High, we just didn't think about it.

... Those people are monsters, and they have no qualms, no hang-ups, no holding-backs to the extremes they'll go to. I mean butcherings: that is what communism does, and we were there in Mylai to destroy it. Personally, I didn't kill any Vietnamese that day: I mean personally. I represented the United States of America. My country.

... I had come here to stop communism: to show these people that the American way is a better one. I had believed it: I had been briefed for twenty-five years how America is the greatest there is. Just look at American cars! American houses, and in just eighty years they are paid for! American

swimming pools—gosh! A year in Vietnam had just bolstered me. I had just thought, *It's filthy here. It's unsanitary here. The people live in grass houses here—I never thought, I can learn something here. Or why weren't they in America helping us.* . . .

I once heard a colonel say, "Face it. To win here, we've got to tear away their whole way of life." A life in Asia might not be important: there are a billion there. But their heritage, there's only one. I didn't think that in Vietnam it's death before dishonor, and I had dishonored them. . . .

Once, I had looked at a Vietnamese map. And I couldn't recognize it. I had thought, *Where in the hell is America?* The center was Asia, and we were on the outer edges. We had to be put together again. We had been split. I had thought, *Oh, the Vietnamese have a screwy map: I didn't think, I'm not that great after all.*

... Americans like to think that war is John Wayne. To get a grenade and a VC's throat, to shove the grenade right down it. Americans sit at television sets and say, "One hundred bodies. Boy!" And they think, *Great*, and they think that I'm the ugly one. I tell you, a hundred bodies still are a hundred people, and if they're dead their guts are just hanging out. And that's pretty horrible: I had once thought, *Oh, war is hell*. And then I saw war, and I could only sit and cry. And ask, *Why did I do it?* Why didn't I stand on a corner and say, "It's wrong." Why didn't I burn my draft card, and I wouldn't have had to go?

I didn't know. I was just an American who was put together with a philosophy: democracy's right. And there was no gray and white, no beige and white, no other colors: there was just black or white, and I was to kill someone if his philosophy's wrong.

... I'm different now. I said a long while ago, if Americans tell me, "Go massacre one thousand communists," I will massacre one thousand communists. No longer: today if Americans said, "Go to Mylai. Kill everyone there," I would refuse to. I'd really say, "It's illegal, and I can't be a part of it." Of course, to kill everyone in Mylai isn't the only illegal thing we do.

To evacuate them is illegal too: is against the Geneva convention*, I've learned. Is kidnapping them. To burn their houses is very illegal, and I don't know why the Judge didn't say, "A reasonable man would realize it: *One shouldn't burn a Vietnamese village.* It is against the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Article CIX." It doesn't carry death, but it does carry five years at Leavenworth. Hell, to just *be* in Mylai with an M-16 and some ammunition is illegal too. . . I now think, to go to Vietnam is illegal too.

To go to war anywhere. As for me, I went to Vietnam believing, *I will stop communism. And there will be no one ever to hurt us. And there will be No More War.* I think every man in Vietnam—in history thought, *I'll go and there will be No More War.*

... Ironic: I had an audience now, I now could talk and be listened to. Some people said, "He shouldn't be tried: simply hanged." And some people said, "No, he should be tried. As long as he is

*Geneva convention: An international conference of the nations involved in World War II at which rules for warfare were agreed upon. Article 49 prohibits the forcible transfer and deportation of people from occupied territory unless it is imperative for military reasons or for the safety of the people. As soon as the hostilities are over, the people must be transferred back to their homes. The occupying power is responsible for providing healthy, safe conditions and keeping members of the same family together.

Article 5 prohibits the destruction of property except where it is absolutely necessary for military reasons.

hanged afterwards." And some people went the whole other way too. I didn't care: I knew, *They'll listen to me.* I had visions then: I'll get out, I'll talk everywhere in America, and I'll tell it I'm one little finger of a Frankenstein monster. A probe that it sent to Vietnam that is home now to tell it, "No More War."

I have those visions still: for I am still here on Arrowhead road* and it still isn't in, the jury. The actual jury: the President, and the American people. . . I wish the American people would say, "We aren't Almighty God." And would look at the blacks and the Jews and the yellow race and the Buddhists and say, "And what do I have that is any better?" As for me, I like Christianity. A man could tell me, "It isn't true. It's really a spoof and—" I wouldn't care. I still enjoy it: I know, *I'm happy with it.* A man with a little paddy says, "I like something else, and I'm happy too." I ask would communism hurt him? It wouldn't hurt him a damned bit! Compared to a war, communism would be a godsend.

No war anymore: I'm optimistic about it. America is a brave nation. And we'll say, "All right. We believe this. If you don't, fine. We will live happily." I see it so vividly! I think of our fifty thousand dead, I think of their million dead: I think of the bodies in Mylai Four. All rotting, and I think, *Can there be any good from it?* Maybe there can. The horrors of war came together at Mylai on March 16, 1968. And maybe someday the GIs who went there will say, *Now the world knows what war is. And now the world really hates it. And now there is No More War.*

*Calley was confined to his apartment ("house arrest").

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the ways in which Lt. Calley's training in the Army affected his attitude toward Vietnamese civilians? His behavior at Mylai? Give examples.

2. What is Calley's definition of the responsibilities of an American citizen? Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

3. If you were a lawyer for the defense in Calley's trial, what arguments would you use? If you were a lawyer for the prosecution, what arguments would you use?

You may want to use the following information: The Nuremberg trial of 29 Nazi officers after World War II adopted the principle that "a higher law sometimes requires men to give their allegiance to humanity rather than the state."

The accused pleaded "state orders," but the legal tribunal rejected the argument, hanged the ten war criminals and put one other in prison.

This principal was incorporated in international law as contained in a UN report: "The fact that a person acted pursuant to the orders of government or superior does not relieve him of responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was, in fact, possible for him."

4. You are a member of the military jury that was trying Calley. Which do you think is the basic issue of the trial?

- a) Calley was or was not acting under orders from his superiors.
- b) Calley did or did not actually kill civilians.
- c) Calley did or did not believe everyone in the village was the enemy and therefore had to be destroyed.
- d) There was or was not active encouragement or

implied approval by his superiors for this kind of action.

5. Can you think of other situations in which you might be ordered by your parents, a teacher, an employer or the government to do something that you considered wrong?

6. If you were in Lt. Calley's position, how would you define "the enemy"? Do you personally agree or disagree with this definition?

7. William Calley said, "I'll carry America's orders out... If the people say, 'Go wipe out South America,' the Army will do it. Majority rules..." Do you agree with Calley that the American people decide foreign policy?

- a) What methods are open to American citizens to express their views about American foreign policy? What input does your family have? you and others in your school? What groups or individuals have more input into American foreign policy than the average citizen?
- b) Which government and military bodies are involved in deciding American foreign policy?
- c) Which of these bodies is responsive to the opinions of voters?
- d) Discuss: What role does majority rule play in determining American foreign policy?

The following survey was given in May and June of 1971, weeks after the conviction of Lt. Calley to nearly one thousand people across the country. Before studying the responses given by those who took the poll, answer the question at the top and choose the reason or reasons that are closest to your own. Compare your response and the responses of your class as a whole with the percentages listed on the survey. Discuss.

TABLE 1
ATTITUDE TOWARD TRIAL OF LT. CALLEY

"There has been a good deal of discussion about whether or not Lt. Calley should have been brought to trial in the first place. Considering what you have seen, heard or read, do you approve or disapprove of Lt. Calley having been brought to trial?"

	Approve 34% (N=301)	Disapprove 58% (N=521)	Don't know 8% (N=69)
Reasons	Agree with	Most important	
Among respondents approving of trial:			
a. <i>Even a soldier in a combat situation has no right to kill defenseless civilians and anyone who violates this rule must be brought to trial</i>	53%	27%	
b. <i>The trial helps to make clear the immorality and cruelty of the Vietnam war and of the way we are fighting it</i>	45	20	
c. <i>To preserve its honor, the Army has to bring to trial anyone accused of breaking its rules of warfare</i>	45	14	
d. <i>The trial helps to put across the important idea that every man must bear responsibility for his own actions</i>	48	18	
e. <i>Many other U.S. soldiers have been tried for crimes in Vietnam; it would be unfair to let Lt. Calley off without a trial</i>	40	8	
f. <i>None of these or don't know</i>	14	14	
Among respondents disapproving of trial:			
a. <i>It is unfair to send a man to fight in Vietnam and then put him on trial for doing his duty</i>	83	45	
b. <i>The trial keeps us from facing the real issue; what's wrong is the war and the way it is being fought, not just the actions of an individual soldier</i>	43	9	
c. <i>The trial is an insult to our fighting men and weakens the morale of the U.S. army</i>	64	11	
d. <i>The trial used Lt. Calley as a scapegoat: one young lieutenant shouldn't be blamed for the failures of his superiors</i>	67	15	
e. <i>Many other U.S. soldiers have done the same kinds of things as Lt. Calley; it is unfair to single out one man and put him on trial</i>	69	15	
f. <i>None of these or don't know</i>	3	5	

Both these tables come from a paper by Herbert C. Kelman and Lee H. Lawrence of Harvard University, entitled "Assignment of Responsibility in the Case of Lt. Calley: Preliminary Report on a National Survey." Reprinted from the *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 28., No. 1, 1972.

TABLE 3
RESPONSES ON ITEMS ASSESSING ATTITUDES
TOWARD CALLEY'S ACTION

Item	N =	Total sample
A. What would most people do if ordered to shoot all inhabitants of a Vietnamese village suspected of aiding the enemy, including old men, women and children:		
Follow orders and shoot		67%
Refuse to shoot them		19
B. What would you do in this situation:		
Follow orders and shoot		51
Refuse to shoot		33
C. Assuming it is true that Calley received orders to shoot, what should he have done:		
Carry out		61
Refuse to carry out		29
D. Overall opinion of Calley's action:		
Right—what any good soldier would do under the circumstances		29
Wrong—but hard for him to know right or wrong in this situation		39
Wrong—clear violation of military code		6
Wrong—violation of morality regardless of military code		17
E. Calley's actions justified if people he shot were Communists:		
Agree		37
Disagree		51
F. Calley's actions justified because better to kill some S. Vietnamese civilians than risk lives of American soldiers:		
Agree		47
Disagree		39
G. In World War II it would have been better to kill some German civilians than risk lives of American soldiers:		
Agree		53
Disagree		29
H. In terms of rights and wrongs, how do Calley's actions compare with bombing raids that also kill Vietnamese civilians:		
Similar		56
Different		32

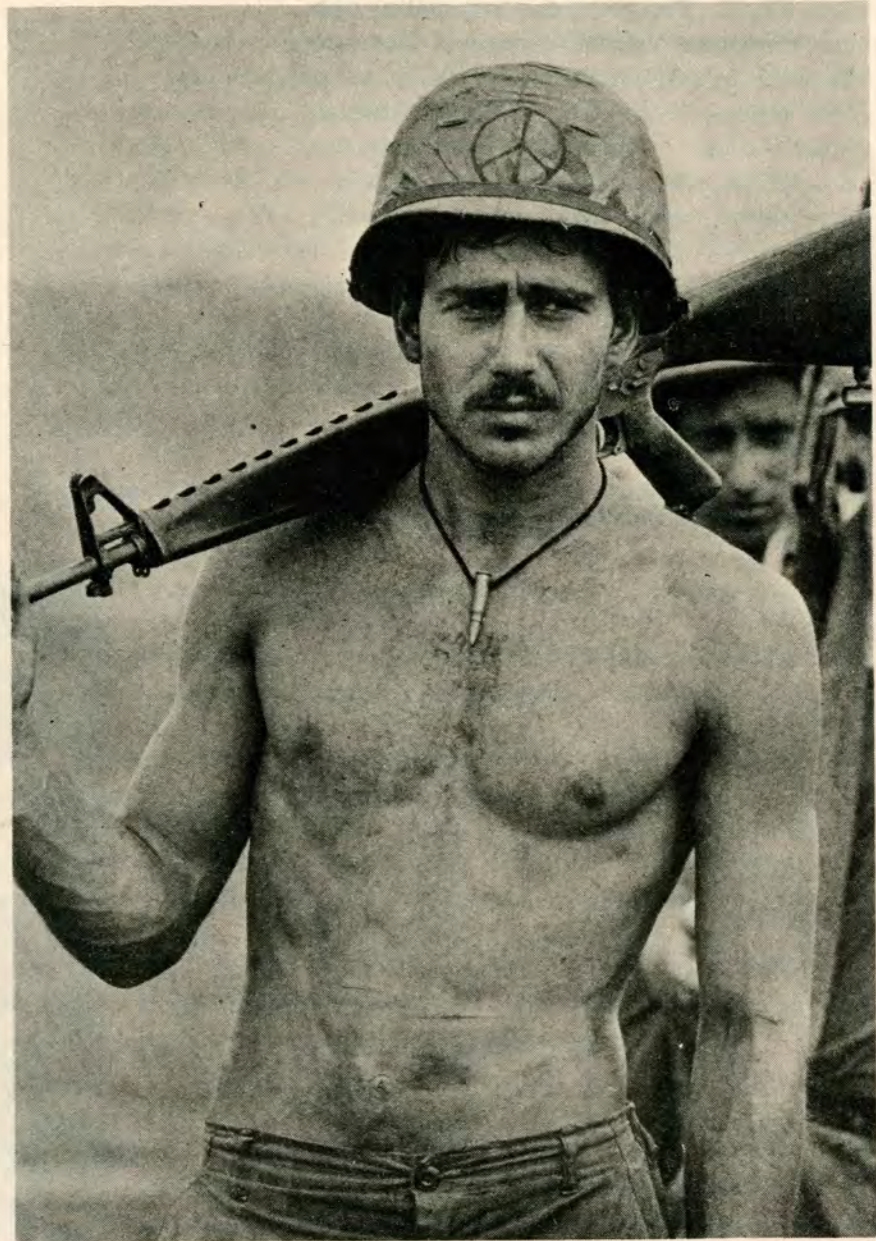
Hunting

Sighting down the long black barrel,
I wait till front and rear sights
Form a perfect line on his body,
Then slowly squeeze the trigger.

The thought occurs
That I have never hunted anything in my whole life
Except other men.

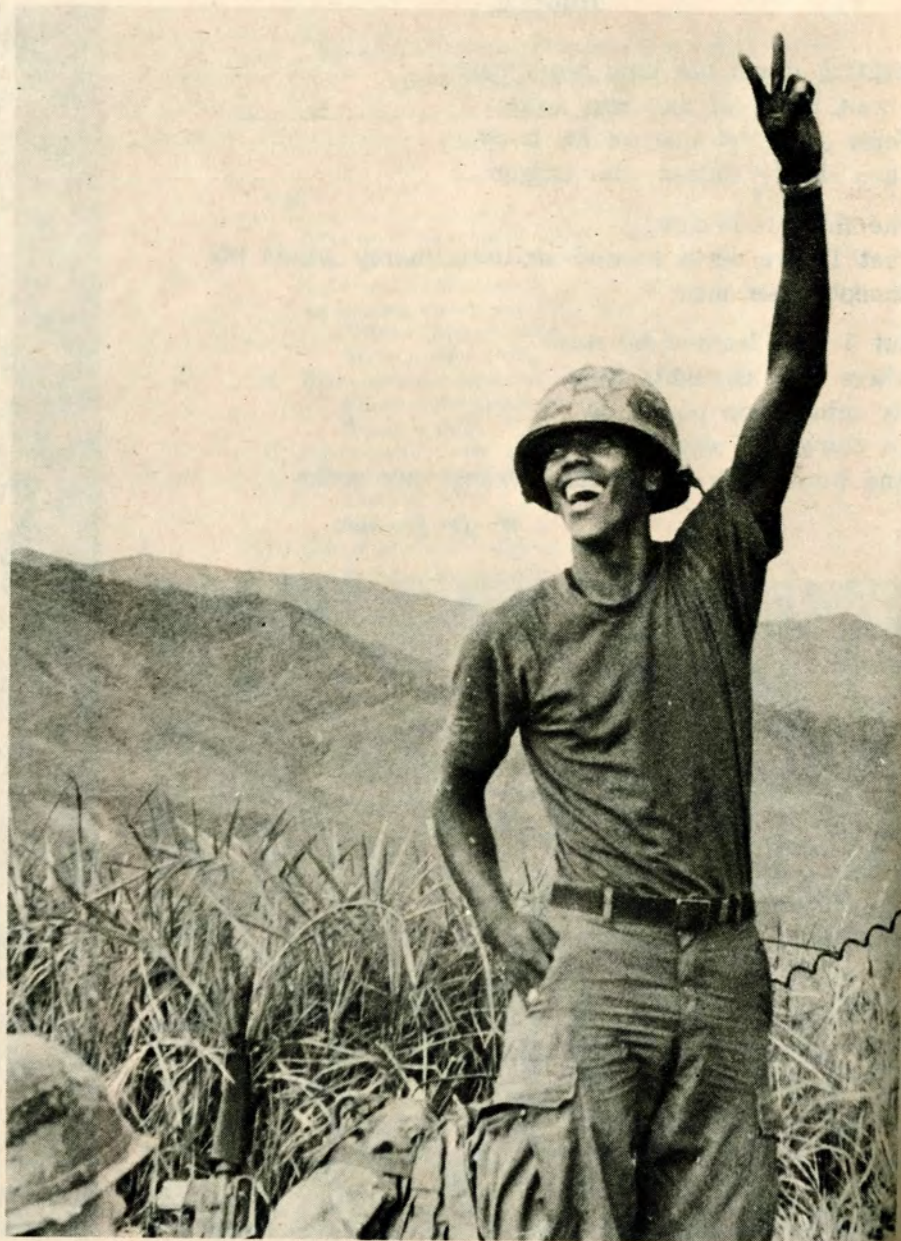
But I have learned by now
Where such thoughts lead.
My mind soon passes on
To chow and sleep
And how much longer till I change my socks.

--W. D. Ehrhart



The GIs at Firebase Pace are among the last remaining combat troops in Vietnam. Ordered by their officers to go on a "suicide mission," the GIs of Bravo Company refuse to go. Under what circumstances, if any, do soldiers have the right to refuse direct orders from their superiors?

The Grunts of Firebase Pace



The following selection was written by Richard Boyle, a journalist covering the Vietnam war from 1965 to 1971. Although not a soldier, Boyle sided with the men at Firebase Pace and did his best to make their situation known to the outside world.

THE GRUNTS OF FIREBASE PACE

From the air, Firebase Pace looked like an ugly square brown scar carved out of the thick green forest.

It sat astride Route 22, a muddy unpaved road, and was surrounded by several sections of barbed wire, rocket screens, and an outer trench system three sandbags deep. Even with this protection, the one hundred artillerymen manning the two eight-inch and two 175-mm guns had suffered nearly 35 percent casualties in the first two weeks of the North Vietnamese offensive.

There were also indications that relations between South Vietnamese [ARVN] and Americans at Pace were none too friendly. A heavy layer of barbed wire plus sandbagged defenses separated the two compounds.

When I arrived at the base I introduced myself at the tactical operations center to the first sergeant. Then I met Capt. Robert Cronin, who commanded the company of ground troops sent to protect the artillery

at Pace (although, according to MACV*, there weren't any American ground troops there). We had a friendly discussion and he briefed me on the military situation at the base.

Cronin was facing a tactical, possibly a political, dilemma. The North Vietnamese had built an extensive underground bunker complex inside the treeline along the Cambodian border, on Pace's northeastern side. From these bunkers, NVA gunners would quickly set up a mortar tube or rocket launcher, fire, and duck back into their tunnels. Within seconds the Americans would pour out machine-gun fire, followed by artillery and even air strikes; but by then the gunner would have jumped into his gopher hole and scurried through an underground tunnel, emerging about fifty meters away.

All the artillery and air fire the Americans poured on the North Vietnamese seemed useless. The battlefield technology developed by the Americans, representing billions of dollars—electronically controlled B-52s, Spooky gunships which pour out enough machine-gun bullets in a few seconds to fill up a football field, and all the other gadgets—seemed useless against a few men with a mortar who could pop up at will, drop in a few rounds, and duck back into the safety of their tunnel with virtual impunity. The electronic battlefield, the pride of the American military establishment, was being thwarted by troops using the same kinds of mortars used in the First World War. Cronin knew it, his superiors knew it, and his troops knew it.

Somebody had to go out and get those North Vietnamese bunkers, or within a day, maybe two, the enemy mortar and rocket positions would multiply faster than the rats who were also fighting the Amer-

from Richard Boyle, *Flower of the Dragon: The Breakdown of the United States Army in Vietnam*. Ramparts Press, 1973.

*MACV: Military Assistance Command—Vietnam. MACV ran all United States military operations in Vietnam.

icans for domination of Firebase Pace. When the North Vietnamese had enough fire-power to knock out the camp's big guns, they would rain a deadly barrage of fire on the Americans, covering a sapper attack.* And that would be it.

Lt. Col. Robert J. McAfee was the operations officer for Firebase Pace, the honcho. He was very military. He stood proud and erect. McAfee didn't stay in Pace at night; he commuted daily in his own chopper.

"Hi, Colonel," I said. "Can you give me your appraisal of the situation here?"

He said we were "clobbering them, and clobbering them good. We got fifteen hundred bodies."

"That's interesting, Colonel," I said. "How do you know?"

*sapper attack: attack by soldiers specially trained in blowing up bridges and military targets.



He said patrols were sent out to count the bodies. I didn't tell him that during the three days I spent with the ARVN in Cambodia I didn't see anybody going out to count bodies.

"Thank you, Colonel," I said.

From Pace we could see the endless parade of ARVN wounded limping back up Route 22. There was a relief convoy trying to fight its way north on 22, but it was still a long way away. The North Vietnamese had the base surrounded.

None of this was ever reported at the five o'clock follies*, and the press was telling the American people that the battle was over, a victory for the Allies.

MACV didn't even admit that Cronin and his men existed, at least not at Pace. To knock out the North Vietnamese positions which were blasting the base from the Cambodian side of the border, Cronin would have needed at least four companies. But politically, America couldn't afford another Hamburger Hill.† If four companies that didn't even exist were suddenly wiped out, the flak raised in Congress would be horrendous. The brass would also be hard pressed to explain how four companies got zapped in a battle that had already been won. Once again the military had to compromise between political and military necessities.

To do nothing would be to invite military and political disaster. Unhindered, the North Vietnamese would obliterate Pace, and America in the fall of 1971

*five o'clock follies: news reporters' skeptical name for the news briefings given by the military.

†Hamburger Hill: an area that was captured at the cost of many lives and then abandoned. This incident, which was highly publicized, caused outrage among many Americans.

could not stand a Dien Bien Phu,* no matter how small. Without Pace, Tay Ninh would be vulnerable; if Tay Ninh fell, Saigon would be next.

That afternoon Cronin got the word from McAfee. Fifteen men were to go out. Fifteen men against the North Vietnamese 208th Regiment.

I walked over to the grunts [foot soldiers] sitting on the sandbags.

"What are you, man—CID [Central Intelligence Division]?"

"No, I'm a reporter."

We sat on the sandbags, looking out across no-man's land, toward that ominous treeline. We knew the NVA were watching us too, but you can't spend all the time in the bunkers with the rats, you've got to come up for air sometimes.

The first round hit about thirty feet away.

"Incoming!" one of them shouted as we scrambled for machine-gun bunker five.

"Man, that was close."

"Too close."

It was a very personal war there at bunker five. Only a short distance separated us from them; after awhile we felt we knew each other.

"Incoming!"

We dropped to the floor, crouching next to the safety of the bunker wall. That round hit closer than the last.

Nobody saw Hooker get it. He didn't say anything. The blood pumped out of his temple in quick spurts and then flowed down his face, dripping on his shirt. It's amazing how much blood a man has in him.

Hooker slowly touched his temple with a jerky movement and looked at the blood on his fingers.

Then he looked at us. "I'm only twenty-one days short. I don't want to die."

At first no one moved. We just watched the blood squirting out of Hooker's temple. It was like a bad dream in which something is happening but you can't move.

"You're not going to die, Hook," one of them said as he gently laid Hooker down. Then some medics carried him to the medical bunker.

We dove into a safer underground bunker as more shells hit around us. A candle flickered as about eight of us stretched out on air mattresses, hoping the bunker wouldn't take a direct hit from a rocket. Three sandbags may stop a mortar round, but a rocket can cut through a bunker with ease.

We all hoped Hooker would live, but nobody talked about it. We didn't even know how badly he was wounded. Hooker had talked about going home.

"Whooooeee, I'm just twenty-one days short today," he had said. Hooker, like all the other grunts, counted off each day left in Nam. Some carved notches on the bunker, others wrote it on their helmets; every man knew how many days short he was. The grunts are scared most when they first arrive and when they're short. The shorter they get the worse it is. They see too many of their buddies get it just before going home. "Charley ain't lettin' you go, man," they'd say.

After about an hour they got bad news; they couldn't get a Medevac* for Hooker because the ceiling was too low for a chopper to land.

"They've picked up mass movements of dinks on the radar," said the sergeant. "Maybe up to four thousand, who knows."

*Dien Bien Phu: battle during 1954 in which Vietnamese Independence Forces (Viet Minh) defeated the French army.

*Medevac: helicopter used to evacuate wounded soldiers.

"Whaddya think they're goin' to do?" one of the grunts asked.

"Who knows, but it don't look good."

Then they got the worst news. "Cronin's sending fifteen men from the Third out at 2100 on a night ambush."

"You gotta be kiddin' me, man," said one of the men to the sergeant.

"They're getting ready now."

After the sergeant left, the men talked about the mission.

"They gotta be insane to send fifteen guys out beyond the burr [perimeter]. Fifteen guys against a whole regiment of dinks."

"If they get hit there'll be no Medevac."

"You can bet the ARVN won't try to help them."

"Most of them guys are newbies, man, they won't know what to do if they're hit."

Al Grana, one of the grunts, didn't say a word the whole time. Then he turned to me.

"Do you really think anybody gives a damn about us?"

"I don't know," I said. "The politicians say they do, but I don't know."

Grana looked at me again. "This is insanity. The whole thing is just insane."

None of the others spoke. Grana continued, speaking softly. "Do you think, if anyone back in the world really knew what was going on here, they'd let this madness continue?"

"I don't know, Al," I said. "I don't think they want to know, not really. It's better for their conscience."

We talked for about an hour. I told Grana and the others that I had become too cynical to believe anything could be done.

"First Hook got it. Next it'll be those fifteen guys from the Third Platoon. Tomorrow it'll probably be us. How many more will it take?" Grana asked me. I couldn't answer.

He looked at me again. "Somebody's got to do something to stop this."

Later in the evening when the shelling stopped we crawled out of the bunker and walked over to machine-gun bunker five. One grunt's mother had sent him a jar of pickled pigs' feet and he was passing them around.

"Somebody oughta give Cronin a pickled pig's foot."



Everybody laughed.

The sergeant who had spoken to us before came over to our bunker in a hurry.

"They ain't goin'," he said.

"What?" asked Al.

"When Schuler was giving instructions, Chris said, 'Go do it yourself; I ain't going.'"

"What did Schuler do?" asked another.

"What could he do?" said the sergeant. "Then five of the other guys said pretty much the same thing."

"Whooooee!" shouted one of the grunts, giving the clenched-fist salute. Some of them slapped skin palm to palm.

"What do you think they're going to do to them?" one of the men asked the sergeant.

"I dunno. Probably a court-martial."

That night the men of Hooker's platoon decided to hold a meeting in the morning and keep in contact with the other platoons. "We got to stick together," one of them said. "They can't court-martial us all."

Next morning we heard in the chow line that Cronin was drawing up court-martial papers for each of the six men who had refused to go on the night ambush. Refusal of a direct order usually got a grunt five years at Leavenworth [a military prison], and the men of Hooker's platoon were talking about it.

Hooker still hadn't been evacuated, although everybody now knew he would be all right. He came over to say good-bye after breakfast.

Later in the morning Grana and I walked over to the Third Platoon's bunkers.

The six that had refused were scared. From the day a GI takes the oath until he is discharged, he is a

cog in the green machine. The lifers* run his life, and they keep power by letting the GI know that no matter what he does the Army will always have the last word.

The lifers knew they couldn't have an army in which the men decided when and if they wanted to fight. The only way they could keep discipline—and the six men knew it—was to come down hard and make an example of offenders. In the Army's book of crimes, refusing to go into combat is one of the worst. If the brass let the grunts get away with refusing to fight, the entire system would face collapse. As soon as other units learned what had happened at Pace, they too would refuse orders.

Chris was scared the most.

"Cronin said he wants to see me," he said.

"Good luck," I told him.

About thirty grunts were standing around talking when I got back to bunker five. Something about them was different. They were the same men I had seen the day before, but somehow they were different.

"Hi, Al, what's up?"

"We just had a meeting with some of the guys in other platoons. We ain't goin' to let the lifers do it to Chris and the others."

"What are you going to do?"

"First of all, we ain't going to go out beyond the burr. We were ordered to go out on a patrol by Cronin, but nobody's going. And we had a vote. We ain't lettin' the lifers mess over those guys."

"Right on," said a couple of other grunts.

"Remember when we talked last night?" Grana said. "Do you think we could get just one senator back in the world to really listen to us?"

What, he said, if the men of Bravo wrote a petition to a top U.S. senator telling him what was really

*lifer: career soldier.



Sp4 Chris Panoutreleos (one of the original six who refused to move out) being questioned by the company commander and an artillery major. Chris has his back to the camera.

happening at Pace? Would it do any good? Would anybody listen?

There was a lot I didn't have the heart to tell them. Every senator has a huge staff of aides, as many as forty, some of whom do nothing but screen mail. The odds of a powerful senator ever even seeing their petition would be one in a thousand.

The men of Bravo had another problem. Officially they didn't exist. They weren't even allowed to send out mail: if the American people knew U.S. troops were being ordered into the Cambodian border area, the brass could face a storm of protest both

from Congress and the people. So the grunts could be overrun by the North Vietnamese or court-martialed before their petition even got out.

"Who are you going to write it to?" I asked Grana.

"We talked about that, too. Do you think Ted Kennedy would listen to us?"

"Yeah, I think so." I couldn't say no. "You know, man"—I hesitated for a second, because I knew Grana was thinking the same thing—"the lifers will never let that petition out of here. Rebellious grunts, facing death, sending a petition to Ted Kennedy—that's a scenario the Army brass wouldn't like to see. They're going to come down on you real hard."

"I know," he said. "It was just an idea."

There was only one way to be sure Kennedy would get the grunts' petition, and that was for someone to take it to him in person. I was the only one at Pace who could do it, and we both knew it.

But I didn't want to. Once the lifers knew I had the petition, they would probably try to keep me at Pace until they decided what to do. They had all the helicopters; it would be a long walk to Tay Ninh. Even if I did get through, I could be picked up on the way to Saigon. My press card had run out and I was now in the country illegally. They could arrest me and there was nothing anybody could do about it.

"The chances of you guys pulling this off aren't very good," I finally said.

"I know. But somebody's got to try," he said, looking at me.

"Anyway, my chances of ever getting your petition to Kennedy are slim. The Army may try to cover up the story, the press will call me an ego-tripper, and I doubt if I'll ever get past Kennedy's palace guards."

Grana said nothing.

"Okay," I said, "I'll try it."

I'll never forget their look of hope when the men of Grana's platoon started passing the petition. It passed quickly to other platoons.

There was now a sense of comradery in Bravo Company. They were all in it together and felt a growing solidarity. Maybe two years before they would have fragged* McAfee; now they didn't have to. They didn't even hate him. "I just feel sorry for the lifers," one of the grunts said. "They just don't know where it's at."

As the hours passed and the men got more signatures on their petition, McAfee and the other lifers were losing more control of the unit.

*fragged: refers to attacks on officers by their own men, using a fragmentation grenade.



Men in bunker five sign the petition.

They had to regain that control, and soon. McAfee sent Cronin to bunker five. When Cronin entered the bunker, the men turned away, ignoring him. "I want you all to get shaves and clean up," he demanded in a military voice. Still the men ignored him. Then he grabbed a rifle and opened the bolt. "This thing is filthy," he said.

"Who needs this," said one of the grunts, and walked out. The rest gradually left, one by one, until Cronin was alone with one man, trying to inspect his rifle.

After Cronin left, the men returned. "We ought to do something about him," one said.

"He's not worth it," said another. "We've got more important things to worry about."

"Yeah—like what about the dinks?"

From bunker five we could see out over the tops of the bunkers across the several hundred meters of no-man's-land to the forbidding treeline where they were waiting. They hadn't fired all morning, but every man knew they were watching.

"I wish we could let them know we have nothing against them," one of the grunts remarked, looking out over his M-60 machine gun. "We just want to get out of here."

"Hey, maybe they know what's going on. They haven't fired today."

"Bull," said another grunt. "How could they know?"

"I don't know. But they can see us and they can see we ain't doing anything to them. Maybe they'll lay off."

"Yeah," said another. "If we lay off them, maybe they'll lay off us."

The men agreed, and passed the word to the other platoons: nobody fires unless fired upon. As of about 1100 hours on October 10, 1971, the men of Bravo

Company, 1/12, First Cav Division, declared their own private ceasefire with the North Vietnamese. For the first time since they got to Pace, it was all quiet on the Cambodian front.

Now there were no longer two sides at Pace, there were four—the lifers; the South Vietnamese, who seemed almost to be spectators; the North Vietnamese, possibly massing for a final attack; and the grunts, who, like the ARVN, were opting out. To the grunts, it wasn't the North Vietnamese who were the enemy, it was the lifers.

Grana came back from the meeting with the other platoons and reported that they now had over 50 percent of the company. They were bordering on open mutiny. The only thing that could save them now was public opinion.

"What if they try to cover this up, say it never happened?" Grana asked me.

"It's very likely," I said.

"They'll simply say it never happened. How can you have a revolt in a unit that doesn't exist? They'll say I'm crazy, or that I made the whole story up. When it comes down to it, who do you think they'll believe," I asked, "—me, or the U.S. Army?"

"But we've gone too far. There must be a way to let the people back in the world know the truth about what's really happening here."

"Hey, man, wait a minute," said one of Al's buddies. He came back with a portable tape recorder.

"Now they can't say it didn't happen," said Al.

This is Richard Boyle on October 10, 1971, at Firebase Pace about two kilometers from the Cambodian border sitting in a bunker with about a dozen grunts of the First Cav Division. Last night they

were ordered to go into night ambush... several of the men refused to go and none of the fifteen in the patrol wanted to go. This morning several of the men were told they would be court-martialed for... what is that for, Chris? What did they tell you you'd be court-martialed for?

For refusing a direct order.

For refusing a direct order. The other platoons, the Second and First, were angered at the fact that the Army picked out a few men to punish. And now several of the men from the Second and Third platoons are in this bunker. What happened?

When we first came here they told us our mission and that was to be on a defensive; but night ambush is an offensive role. And it's plain suicide going out there in the middle of the night.

It's plain fact that the NVA have been mortaring us every... you know, every day. And they hit us with... one guy got... in John's squad there, one guy got wounded in the shoulder and in the head yesterday by a rocket.

Right in this bunker.

A lot of the people are kind of wondering if anyone back in the world knows that we're out here, you know. Like they say that only two batteries artillery are supposed to be here but no grunts are here. We don't even exist. We're just meat.

I heard that your platoon may go out tonight.

Right. The Second Platoon is supposed to go on night ambush.

Are you going?

No.

The Second Platoon is not moving from their bunker.

Fact is, they might lay off, they haven't shot any today.



"They say . . . no grunts are here. We don't even exist. We're just meat."

Do you think you'd be alive if you went out last night?

No, man.

If you go out there at night, say you take thirty or forty men, they'll never find you no more. That'll be the last they see of you, once you walk off this firebase. 'Cause if they can't go out there to get those dudes out of that chopper that crashed about four days ago, they ain't going to go out there looking for you in the jungle, man.

What'd they tell you this morning, the captain and the lieutenant?

Well, he says not to talk to the press.

He called us in one at a time, man, trying to—

He said not to talk to the press. He said the strike wasn't called off 'cause we refused to go; he said it was because ARVN was out there. He said we was goin' out today.

Are you going out today?

That's what he said.

I'm not going out today.

I know they told you not to talk to the press, but did they tell you they were going to court-martial you?

He told me he'd give me time to think about it. I told him, man, I've thought about it all the way over here. I wasn't goin' to jeopardize my life. Nine times out of ten I got a good chance of not coming back.

I just been in the country three weeks. They try to say the old guys influenced me. When I been here for three days I saw what's goin' on for myself. It's suicide going out there. ARVN comes back all messed up, no arms, no legs. And they want us to go out there.

Sixteen men go out there at night. We don't know what's out there, could be booby traps, could be anything. We don't know.

Let's face it: if B-52 bombers can't knock 'em out, and napalm can't knock 'em out, what are we going to do?

What can fifteen men do?

They could see us, but we can't see them. They could see us leave and just wait. Once we get outside they can come in behind us, cut us off, then get us from the front and back. You can't call for air support, 'cause it won't come in here.

We're not mad just because of this, though; we're generally mad.

Back home the people don't know what the hell's going on, either. They're just deceiving the people.

You think the people don't know the truth of what's going on here?

People that go home on leave [say] everybody says, How's things back in the barracks over in Vietnam? What barracks? We sleep out on the ground.

We're not supposed to be fighting this war anyway. We're supposed to be turning it over to them.

You can tell they don't have their hearts in it, man. They're being pushed out there and they come running right back.

Do any of the people back in the world know that [Defense Secretary] Melvin Laird said something to the effect that our combat role had ended? And the fact was we were still in the bush, man, when he said that.

Seven people got hurt one day in an ambush and that was the day it [Laird's statement] was in the newspaper.

Yesterday when Hooker got it in this very same bunker it didn't seem like combat was over.

He [Cronin] was talking about the reputation of the company. He said that if we talked to the news media and told what was going on, the news media would distort it and twist it up, and would destroy our company reputation.

Our company reputation don't mean anything.

They told me last night they were bringing in a battalion of ARVN some time today. They was supposed to be operating in this area. Okay, if we refused our mission last night, then why can't the ARVN go out on that patrol today? Why is it necessary to send the platoon out there?

'Cause the lifers want to get the body count. They don't give a damn if it's GI bodies.

Well, look here. Why are you over here?

Everybody over here don't know why they're over here. It's not accomplishing anything. I mean, you see what you do. Have you ever accomplished anything out in the bush? You go out there and you make contact, but do you accomplish anything really? Every time you go out, the same—

We aren't rebelling just against going out on night ambush. We're rebelling against the whole situation, being stuck out here.

Do you think you're fighting for democracy here?

How can it be a democracy with a one-man election?

Yeah, what kind of democracy is that?

Everybody knew what it was about. Everybody knew that election was phony.

It's always the higher highers, man, *they* don't have to go out there. They just send *us* out there. They get to sit back here and talk.

It's easy to tell someone to do somethin', but it's a different story when you have to go out there yourself.

Just playing games out there.

Playing with human lives.

Another thing, man. I brought some peace shirts back to the guys, and the NCO [noncommissioned officer] won't even let us wear them just 'cause he's against peace.

He calls us hypocrites 'cause we wear peace signs. Like we *wanted* to come over here and fight. Like we can't believe in peace 'cause we're carrying an M-16; that's utterly ridiculous.

I always did believe in protecting my own country if it came to that.

Yeah, if it came down to that, but—

But see, I'm over here fighting a war for a cause that means nothing to me. It means nothin' but my life, and life's a very dear thing to me, man. I have a hell of a lot to go back to.

How do you feel about picking out six guys for court-martial?

It's rotten. They're trying to separate us, trying to keep it from being unified. They know if we're unified they can't do anything.

Just isn't six people that don't want to go out there, they're just trying to blame it on six people.

There's no way you can court-martial the whole company and keep it out of the papers and out of national attention. You can do it with six guys, and no one'll ever hear of it 'cept the *Stars and Stripes*.^{*} But if you court-martial the whole company it's bound to get out.

Now we got the petition.

Somebody want to read that, man?

Here, John, read it.

Read it for the tape.

Okay, this is the letter we're sending to Senator [Edward] Kennedy:

We the undersigned of Bravo Company, First Battalion, Twelfth Cav, First Cav Division, feel compelled to write you because of your influence on public opinion and on decisions made in the Senate.

We're in the peculiar position of being the last remaining ground troops that the U.S. has in a combat role and we suffer from problems that are peculiar only to us. We are ground troops who are supposedly in a defensive role (according to the Nixon administration) but who constantly find ourselves faced with the same combat role we were in ten months ago. At this writing we are under siege on Firebase Pace near the city of Tay Ninh. We are surrounded on three sides by Cambodia and on all sides by NVA. We are faced daily with the decision of whether to take a court-martial or participate in an offensive role. We have already had six persons refuse to go on a night ambush (which is suicidal as well as offensive), and may be court-martialed. With

morale as low as it is there will be more before this siege of Pace is over.

Our concern in writing you is not only to bring your full weight of influence in the Senate, but also to enlighten public opinion on the fact that we ground troops still exist. In the event of mass prosecution of our unit, our only hope would be public opinion and your voice.

[Signed by Sp4 Albert Grana and 64 other men—listed in Boyle's book.]

After we finished the tape, Al Grana handed me the petition with the sixty-five signatures. It was two-thirds of the company, more than anyone had suspected. Time was running out. If I was ever to get out of Pace, it had to be now.

Grana shook my hand the way grunts shake hands, clasping the thumb.

"I hope you can make them listen," he said.

"I'll try."

"Good luck."

I shook hands with each of the other men in the bunker the same way.

With the petition and tape on him, Richard Boyle grabbed a ride on a Medevac helicopter and made his way to Saigon. He turned his story over to a reporter for Agence France Presse rather than to an American news agency so that it would not be suppressed. Soon the mutiny was world-wide news, although many U.S. newspapers refused to mention it.

Once the story broke, Boyle was in danger of being arrested by Thieu's [the head of the South Vietnamese government] police. Fortunately other newsmen were able to quickly pull some strings and get him on a plane for

^{*}Star and Stripes: the United States Army—sponsored newspaper for American servicemen in Asia.

the United States. When he got to San Francisco, Boyle learned that the story had gotten bigger than ever. As he summarized it:

"Senator Kennedy had publicly called for an investigation of the incident at Pace. The Army then pulled out all the men of Bravo Company, sending in Delta Company to replace them. The men of Bravo were sent to Firebase Timbuktu, to the rear, and were now out of danger. None of the men would be court-martialed. The Army had backed down.

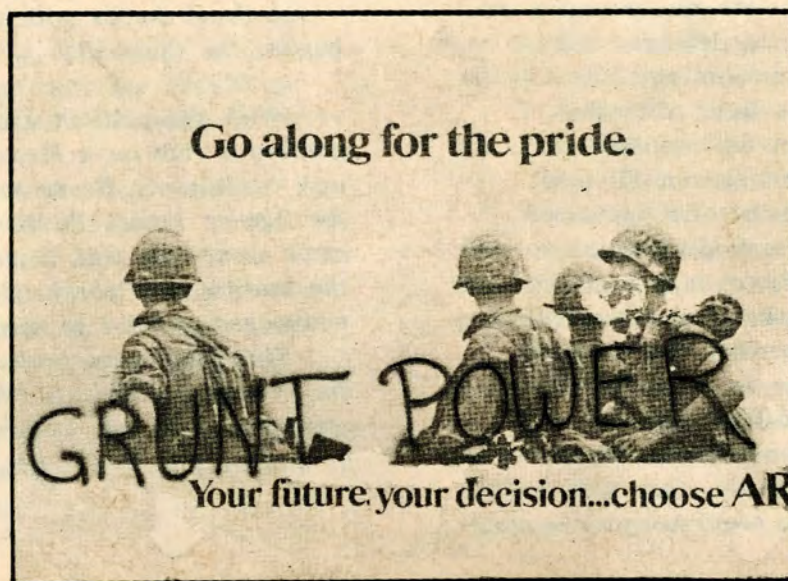
"A few days later, the men of Delta Company heard about the refusal of Bravo Company. When a Delta patrol was ordered out, twenty men refused to go.

"Then the Army pulled out Delta Company, along with the entire company of artillery supporting the South Vietnamese in Cambodia. The monster guns which fired shells as big as tree trunks over a distance of thirty miles were left at Firebase Pace, spiked so that they would be of no use to the NVA.

"The U.S. Army was in retreat. The grunts had won."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were the particular circumstances at Firebase Pace that led to the mutiny of Bravo Company?
2. Why was their rebellion successful?
3. How does their action compare with Rick Springman's refusal to fight?
4. What was the press told about the situation at Firebase Pace?
5. Explain why you would or would not support press censorship of this story if you were:
 - A lifer at Firebase Pace
 - A grunt in Bravo Company
 - A general in the U.S. Army
 - A U.S. congresswoman or man
6. Did the men of Bravo Company have the right to disobey their officers in your opinion? Explain.



A Sunday Afternoon Pickup Game

A Sunday afternoon
pickup game,
just ten guys
taking a break from the war

Nobody seemed to mind
the crooked, homemade hoop,
the thick dust,
or the volleyball

Overtime! A tie game,
and in the excitement
of trying for another bucket
killing was forgotten

But before we could
finish the game
a lone mortar round
wiped out half the players

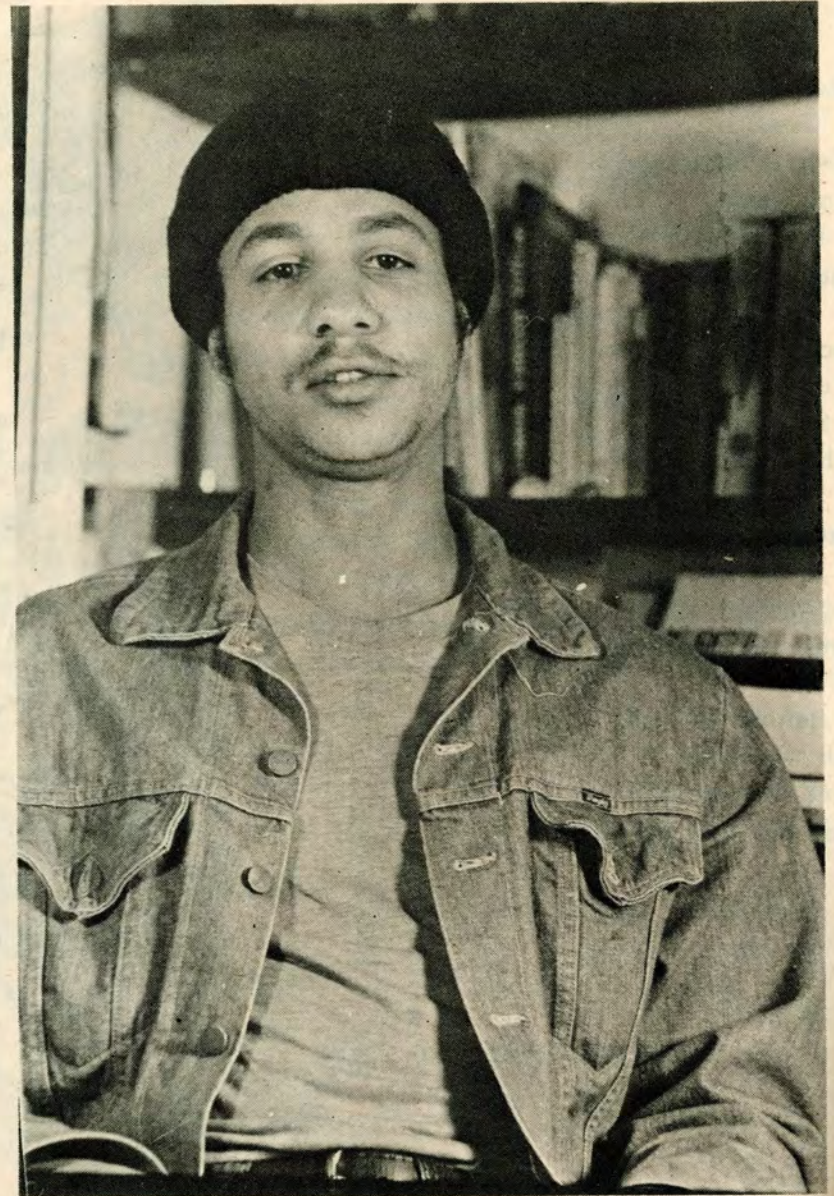
The final score
for the day:
The VC -- 5
The U.S. -- 0.

—Larry Rottmann



This essay from Vietnam and Black America was written during the 1960's when demands for civil rights and Black Power were sweeping the United States. Gerald (Snead) Bayete raises the question: what does it mean to be a Black man serving with the Army in Vietnam?

Gerald Snead Bayete



Gerald (Snead) Bayete

GERALD (SNEAD) BAYETE

Before going home on leave, all of us destined for the Nam had to go to indoctrination classes every day. Since my MOS* was that of a clerk, I was not forced to go through a lot of the rigorous combat training that soldiers in the infantry and artillery had to endure, so, basically, all that was required of me was to know how to shoot a gun, throw a grenade, and take orders unquestioningly. However, these indoctrination classes were supposed to inform us about why the United States was in Vietnam and a little bit about the Vietnamese culture, along with some information about what we were up against. We were told that the United States was there to stop the threat of Communist aggression and that if we pulled out, all of Indochina would fall to the Reds. Film clips were shown of dismembered bodies and burnt-out villages, and, of course, these acts had been committed by the North Vietnamese. Then we were told how sometimes

the Vietcong (VC) strap bombs to kids who work on the military bases so they can walk into the area and blow up American soldiers. We were warned not to trust anyone with slanted eyes, because "the gooks are very sneaky." It seemed to me I had heard a similar phrase before—somewhere. The lectures on their culture were very informative; it wasn't safe to eat their food, and Buddhist monks were maniacs who worked with the VC and burnt themselves in public.

We had to listen to this stuff over and over in different forms for a period of about two weeks. It did leave me with a slightly paranoid feeling. Not that I believed everything they told me; that didn't matter too much. The Army doesn't expect you to actually believe everything that is said; all they want you to do is acknowledge any element of truth among those lies, the fact that these things do exist. There are burnt-out villages, dismembered bodies, and kids blown up carrying bombs. Who commits these acts doesn't matter, because in a war, atrocities are committed on both sides. The point I'm trying to make is that after repeatedly being shown these pictures of atrocities, which represented the element of truth, then surrounding that truth with "white" lies, you begin to associate the two; when thinking of one, you think of the other, very much like a TV commercial. You watch the commercial and the element of truth is the product they're trying to sell; it does exist. They then surround the product with ridiculous words, catch phrases, and actions that usually have nothing to do with the quality of the product. Most of the time, we know that it's nothing but bull, but after seeing it time and time again, we begin to remember the product by the commercial. The two exist as one, so upon entering a store, we are more likely to pick up something familiar, not realizing that the familiarity was brought

Gerald Snead, "Vietnam: A Brother's Account," from Vietnam and Black America, Clyde Taylor, editor. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1973.

*MOS: Military Occupational Skill; the job you have been trained in.

about by the commercial. We then pick the product off the shelf. It's all related and very effective. After these lectures ended, I left for my 30-day leave. A month later, I left Oakland bound for Southeast Asia.

Our plane landed at the airport in Bien Hoa amidst blistering heat. The temperature seemed to be over a hundred degrees. We were loaded on buses that would take us on a five-minute ride to Long Binh, which was the replacement station.* From there, we would be sent to our assigned units.

The first thing that caught my attention while waiting for my bags at the airport was the Vietnamese. They were the ones unloading the plane, carrying the bags to where we were waiting. All during which, the American soldiers who were supervising (of course) ordered them to hurry up while making derogatory remarks about Asians in general. I thought about the airports and train stations in the States, where menial jobs such as baggage carrying are handled by the brothers, who must take the same devil's abuse in order to provide for their families. It disgusted me.

I remained in Long Binh for a couple of days and was then sent to Saigon for duty. Arriving in Saigon with the help of a brother who fixed up my orders, I was assigned to a maintenance detachment of the First Logistical Command. The detachment's work location was one of the many warehouses that lined Saigon Harbor. I became the company clerk, which consisted of maintaining the personnel and work-order records for the detachment while handling all the

*Replacement station: military station where incoming and outgoing personnel are processed.

typing duties, making sure that our headquarters company in Cam Ranh Bay was contacted daily to give our status. Jobwise, I couldn't have gotten anything better. There were so few men in the detachment (about twenty-five), that the administrative load was next to nothing. So I spent most of the workday doing crossword puzzles, reading the paper, and looking busy when the situation called for it.

The white soldiers in the detachment resented the fact that I was the company clerk; they didn't like the idea of a niggah handling all their records. After working as a clerk in the States, I learned to sense these things. They didn't give me any trouble, since I was in the position to foul up their paper work, which could delay them in getting a promotion or a transfer, or leaving the country on time. This was the prime reason they didn't like Black company clerks. The officer in charge didn't give me any hassles, I used to cover for him when he was supposed to be in the office and wasn't.

Despite my Army-induced paranoia about the Vietnamese, I was determined to overcome it. After all, why should I be scared of the people just because the United States feared them? America's fear stemmed from her own guilt of knowing that she had wronged every dark country she came in contact with. Why should I share their guilt? Was I equally guilty? I was here in uniform representing them. If my throat was cut one night by a Vietnamese, wouldn't it be totally justified? Wasn't I their enemy, too? But couldn't they understand that I really didn't want to be here, that I had only enlisted in the Army because I didn't know what to do with myself and that Vietnam was an alternative for me? Alternative? What alternative did they have? These peasants-soil people/earth people/yellow people—Black people (?), who for

the past hundred years had watched country after country invade their land and slaughter men, women, and children for their own selfish gains while telling them that they hadn't developed enough to choose their own form of government. Yeah, what alternative did they have? All these thoughts were going through my mind, and although I tried to rationalize my position, deep down inside I knew it was wrong for me to be there. What it boiled down to was the cold fact that I had chosen to assist Uncle Sam in carrying out his devilish deeds instead of going to jail. All that lay ahead of me was survival; I was determined to survive.

I began talking to the Vietnamese at every available opportunity, with the purpose of learning all that was possible about their country, their life, and their feelings about all that was happening there and abroad. After getting off work, I would either walk, or catch a local taxi and ride, all over the city, familiarizing myself with the country and the people. I learned that the Vietnamese, on the whole, respected the Black soldiers more than the white ones. They understood how our plights were related. After all, we did have a common enemy.

The white soldiers were apt to get charged higher prices than brothers when buying something from the Vietnamese. If they wanted to sell something to the Vietnamese, they were more likely to be given less than a brother could get. This is not to say that the Vietnamese wouldn't hustle brothers and vice versa, just as it would be false to say that brothers don't hustle brothers. It's just that when they ran a game on one of those country white boys, it was like running a game on a fool; after all, what can a backwoods redneck know about the street life? There were even parts of the city where we could go and they couldn't without fear of being robbed or murdered.



A lot of times, the Army would retaliate by making these places off limits to all GIs. These off-limits areas served a double purpose; they protected the white GIs and gave the MPs a legitimate reason to bust brothers, since we went there whether we were supposed to or not. In fact, at one time they made a whole beach off limits. It just happened to be the place where all the brothers used to hang out. The reason given was too much dope in the area.

There were some brothers who tried to identify with the red, white, and blue. They felt that they were in Nam to protect democracy, and therefore despised the Vietnamese with the same fervor as the white man despised us. They were catching it from all sides, getting hustled not only by the Vietnamese and the white soldiers but by the Black soldiers as well . . .

Since our company clerk had not seen much of anything all his life, he posed no threat to the NCOs [noncommissioned officers]. This in turn made them feel comfortable to talk freely with him. They played on his naivete to boost their egos, telling him of battles they had fought and foreign women they had conquered. After a few beers or a bottle, they would begin to talk about the "niggers" in the detachment—which ones they could tolerate and which ones they couldn't, which ones they were going to try and pin something on, and which ones they could possibly use to find out things about the others. What they didn't know was that the clerk didn't like lifers either. Maybe because of their paternalistic attitude, their reminding him of why he left home to join the Army, or maybe he had discovered some of the bigotry and hatred in his people's culture. Whatever his reasons, he'd tell me parts of their conversations that wouldn't embarrass him too much. At the same time, other brothers in the detachment would be picking up information here and there, and whenever we got together we would compare notes and see what was valid and what was not. All this was necessary, because we knew that they would prefer not to have any Black men in the company.

One brother was sent back to headquarters because he got into a fight in a bar. He was considered detrimental to the company. Another brother and myself were given Articles* for refusing to let a sergeant sit in the front seat of a truck. It was during the off-duty hours, and we were getting ready to go downtown. We were sitting in the front seat with the driver. The sergeant, who was not in uniform, demanded that we get out and let him sit with the driver. We refused

and consequently were given fines along with two weeks' restriction and extra duty. The other man was supposed to be going home, but they made him stay in Nam a little longer to serve out his extra duty. Promotions were given to brothers only up to a certain pay grade, on some technicality that usually didn't apply to white soldiers in the detachment. Two or three other brothers were sent to one of our units near Da Nang along with a few uncooperative white men (niggah sympathizers) in the company. There was a lot of combat action in Da Nang.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

1. Gerald (Snead) Bayete says, "I had only enlisted in the Army because I didn't know what to do with myself... Vietnam was an alternative for me." Discuss some of the reasons why someone might have enlisted to fight in the Vietnam war. Why someone would enlist in the volunteer army today.

*Articles: Article 15, form of disciplinary action where you were usually given two weeks' restriction and extra duty along with a fine, and maybe a reduction in rank.



In this essay, also from Vietnam and Black America, David Parks joins Gerald (Snead) Bayete in raising a crucial issue: both authors question whether they as Black men should be fighting “to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they hadn’t found in Southwest Georgia or East Harlem.”*

David Parks

*from Martin Luther King in a speech called “Beyond Vietnam” in 1967.



DAVID PARKS

January 16, 1967. Uncle Sam sends Care packages every day, with candy, smokes and other little goodies. In that way, we are well supplied. At times, during the lulls, it doesn't seem like we are fighting a war—more like we're just on a long, hot vacation. Charlie doesn't fool around with our tracks when we're out on missions. Too, he's a bad shot, even worse than me.

This is a real poor country. Everywhere you go people are on their knees begging. Some of the Whiteys dig this sort of thing and make a game of it. We're riding along and there's a group of hungry kids. Someone throws a piece of bread on the road. The kids go for it like a pack of wolves. Often one of them gets hit by a track or several get hurt in the scramble. It's a bad scene. You never see a soul do anything like that.

The South Viet people call the Negro soldiers "souls," by the way.

January 31, 1967. The FO's [Forward Observer] job is one of the hairiest in a mortar platoon. He's on more patrols because an FO is required to be with the patrolling squad at all times, and there are only three

FOs to cover sixteen squads. The odds are against him. Sgt. Paulson hand-picks the men for this job. So far he's fingered only Negroes and Puerto Ricans. I think he's trying to tell us something. I do know he gives me a sour look every time he sees me at the FDC [Fire Direction Control] controls. Every time he comes around I get a feeling that I should have been born white. If only the souls and Puerto Ricans could tell the world what really happens to them in this man's army.

February 2, 1967. Paulson's always telling me that Negroes are lazy and won't help themselves, etc.

Somehow I thought it would be different this time. Especially over here, where survival is the thing. But that seems to cut no ice with Mister Pale. All the souls in the platoon are beginning to gripe, but not enough as far as I'm concerned. Lt. Alden, the platoon leader, usually calls us Negroes "you people." Zerman, a cat from New York, is hip to what is happening, but he's got his own problems. Sgt. Golas changes with the weather. Sometimes he's human. At other times he treats us souls like we are dirt. What the hell. Maybe it's the pressure.

Ten more months of this. These guys bug me more than Charlie. I'm learning one hell of a lesson in here.

February 9, 1967. Just got kicked out of my beautiful FDC job. The good Sgt. Paulson strikes again. He gave me the news with a smile. I am now Forward Observer Parks, attached to the First Platoon command track. On mission our platoon has to dismount and go after Charlie on foot. And I'm carrying that damn telephone with the antenna, which makes a beautiful target. It's a sergeant's job, but Paulson's not going to promote me.

May 15, 1967. Lot of thinking lately—the people I love, war, sex and what have you. Frankly I'm mixed up. The Stateside news bugs me. On the one hand you have Stokely Carmichael saying Negroes shouldn't be fighting for this country. On the other hand some Negro leaders think just the opposite. I doubt that most of them have ever been to war. One thing's for sure: I have been, and I'm fed up with it. This war is pointing up a lot of my mistakes. It's like the old man kept on telling me, "Champ, it looks like you're going to have to learn the hard way." If I get out of here in one piece, I'm going to be a different man.

Hope to be back with the fellows tomorrow.

May 25, 1967. Rain has brought everything to a standstill, and Bravo is under about ten feet of water. Sometimes I would prefer action to sitting around listening to these officers beat their gums. At times they act like children the way they demand attention. And you'd better jump if you don't want to be out on that firing line. The only way to keep cool with them is to lie quiet. Show the slightest sign of intelligence and you've had it. Especially if you're a Negro. Pratt and Gurney are pretty bright souls. But every time you see them they are pulling a lousy detail while the white cats lie in their bunks enjoying life. A couple of the white guys got so ashamed that they came to the old man today and complained about Pratt and Gurney getting all that harassment. I hope it does some good, but I doubt it.

Sgt. Paulson is detail boss. Capt. Thomas is a good officer and most of the time he treats me OK. But sometimes he forgets himself. I made the mistake of showing him a clipping Deedee sent about Martin Luther King's denouncing the war. "Who the hell

does he think he is? Just because he got a Nobel Prize he thinks he can run the world." He went on, ripping King apart. I said that I thought Dr. King was a man who believed in justice for all people. Then I shut my big mouth. I wasn't in the mood for a night patrol.

August 1, 1967. On Operation Lansing to clear Highway 4 from the Delta to the capital.

Charlie woke us up at 2 A.M. a couple of mornings ago and we have been catching hell ever since. We were to go out on operation against him in a few hours, but he caught us off guard. He threw rocket and mortar fire at us and everything else he had in his arsenal. We scrambled around in the darkness grabbing things we needed to survive or kill with. We finally got onto our tracks and were moving out of base camp when I suddenly realized that this was my last operation. I thought about Harris, Gurney and all the other short-timers. And I began praying I'd make it. I kept praying as we headed for the battle zone where the VC had fired from. And I kept counting the operations and missions I had been on over and over, trying like hell to keep my cool.

We had already called the choppers in when the landing zone unit called saying they were being hit. Thomas gave the word, and we dismounted and moved over to help them. Then bullets started coming from every direction, even from friendly positions. We crawled as we fired, to keep out of the way of our own support. And I was awful thankful for all that crawling they put us through back at Riley. By now the landing zone unit was in bad trouble and Thomas took us on a short cut through the swamp. Muck was waist-deep, but we kept firing as we went.

Then suddenly I was stuck, sinking in. Each

time I tried to pull out I went in deeper. The other guys were leaving me behind, going ahead blasting into the wood line. It was useless to yell for help. No one could have heard me in the noise. The VC were still pouring it into us. Suddenly I felt tired, so tired I wasn't scared any more. I suppose I was giving up. Short-time had caught up with me. Then someone came splashing past. It was that devil Sgt. Paulson. Now he looked like an angel as he extended his rifle, butt first, and hauled me out of that hole. We both kept on moving forward.

By dawn we had the VC surrounded, but they wouldn't give in. There are over two thousand of them in the area and they fought all day. They tried to break through by pounding Charlie Company that evening. A Med Evac chopper had been shot down in the Charlie Company area and ten guys died trying to secure it. The VC knew that this was the weak spot to try to get through, but our artillery

wouldn't let them. We listened to the artillery rounds pounding the VC escape route all last night.

Charlie broke through at one point, but he couldn't escape. We're still on his tail. But he knows this country well, and there are plenty of places for him to hide. Right now things have quieted down. The army's set up showers in a little town nearby and all the guys have gone. I'm on radio watch in the track.

August 11, 1967. Got a letter from Deedee today. She's great and I love her. Always writing, sending things to read, food and sweet thoughts. Can't wait to meet her. Read about the riots back in the States in some clippings she sent. They leave me confused, the police brutality and all. It makes me wonder whether we're fighting the right war.

September 9, 1967. I take off for home day after



tomorrow. Yowie!

Just got back from Bravo. The guys were out on the wood line patrolling, so I didn't see them. Several guys got it while I was on R and R [Rest and Rehabilitation]. Don't know exactly who they are. Did see Passmore, who is being transferred to headquarters company. I never liked that guy, but when he walked me to the chopper that was taking me out, I couldn't help feeling some kinship with him. We've been through a lot together. I wished him the best and meant it. He said he hoped he'd see me on the other side and didn't mean it. I could do without that anyway.

The chopper ride back to Zulu is probably the last one I take in Nam. Looking down over the rice paddies I knew so well made me wonder if I had a right to be there. When I came into the army I had no questions, but I am leaving with some. Back in basic they told us over and over again that these people needed help, that they were poor and don't know how to solve their own problems. That we promised them our help, and that we couldn't go back on them. Well, there were times when it seemed we were doing them more harm than good.

I never felt that I was fighting for any particular cause. I fought to stay alive, and I killed to keep from being killed. Now that it's all over there is a funny feeling running through my stomach, when I think of what could have happened to me. When you're in the middle of the fighting, you become strong and do things you didn't think possible. You only think about it afterward. It's hard for me to believe I'm all here and in one piece. Somebody up there is with me after all.

September 13, 1967. Homeward bound. Went across on the thirteenth and going home on the thirteenth.

Must be my lucky number. The white guy who sold me my ticket at the airport gave me some really dirty looks. He pitched my ticket at me like I was dirt. There is nothing like the army to make you conscious of such things. The ticket seller reminded me of how some of my white officers treated me. Well, I'm a Negro and I'm back home where color makes the difference. I was feeling good on that plane from Nashville. Thought I'd left all my problems behind. Hell, the new ones will just have to wait. I'm going to enjoy myself for a few days—just knowing Charlie won't be around to wake me up in the morning.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In 1968, Black Americans accounted for 6% of the undergraduate college population. In the same year, Black soldiers made up 11% of the United States Army in Southeast Asia and 13% of the deaths. What factors do you think contributed to this disproportion? What were some of the legal ways Americans were able to avoid being drafted?

2. What was going on in Black communities in the U.S. during the late 1960's when these people were writing? Who were Stokely Carmichael and Martin Luther King, and why were they against the war? Why do you think some Black leaders encouraged Black men to fight in the war?



As a pilot flying bombing missions over Vietnam, Frank Elkins can choose to separate himself from the effects of his bombs. But despite his belief in what he is doing, his journal is full of questions about the morality of his actions and the tremendous emotional costs to himself. How does his position compare to that of combat soldiers like Bruce Anello and Lt. Calley?

Frank Elkins



Frank and Marilyn Elkins

[The following introduction was written by Marilyn Elkins, his wife.]

I had known that my husband was keeping a diary of his experiences as a pilot in Vietnam; he planned to write a novel after he returned and felt that a record of his own immediate reactions to the war would serve as valuable source material. I was not, however, prepared for the large volume which arrived shortly after October 12, 1966, when his name was entered on the list of men missing in action, eight months after our marriage.

My husband was officially neither dead nor alive, and for almost six years I clung to the hope that he would return and use his diary as the basis of a novel.

I have been living in Paris for almost two years, and my frequent visits to the North Vietnamese delegation here have convinced me Frank is dead. I feel that his diary is too valuable to remain unpublished.

Unlike the ground troops who were forced to choose between tangling with the Vietnamese or with the American military, naval pilots were free to turn in their wings at any time and thus eliminate their active participation in the war without fear of stockades, prisons, or court-martials. As a result, each pilot was forced to make almost daily decisions regarding his involvement in the war.

Why then did these men continue to fly? Did their physical separation from their victims separate them from their own humanity? My husband's diary

offers at least part of the complex answer. It would be valuable simply for its detailed account of wartime life aboard an aircraft carrier, but it seems to offer much more—a personal look at a man's struggle with the conflicting doubts and pressures of aerial warfare.

Now that the war is over, there will be many retrospective looks at its costs. Journalists will write highly statistical accounts of the price of our involvement, but they will find it more difficult to portray the cost and agony on a personal level. This diary is the recounting of a personal loss.



FRANK ELKINS

June 14, 1966, Yokosuka, Japan. I'm daydreaming and thinking too much. A memory of a movie I once saw keeps coming back. It concerned a member of the elite fighting squadrons in the Japanese Air Force who was in on the bombing at Pearl Harbor and fought throughout the war. The thing that hit me was the way he looked at everything when the going was really good in the early stages of the war. Just like me, I mean; itching to get into things, absorbed in ribbons, medals, and glory, unlike old pros and unlike himself as he was later after involvement in the horror of losing.

It's not really like killing, somehow. You just roll in and drop bombs and see material things destroyed, but you don't hear the screams or see the splattering of blood and brains on walls and foliage or smoking metal. I imagine I'll have more to write and dream about that subject after I've actually seen some action. Yet I think it's something that I've always worried about.

June 23, 100 miles northwest of Okinawa. And today we're really off to war. I feel as unprepared as I have ever been. Four days from now we'll be dropping bombs on people; that's difficult to believe. I don't know how I'll feel about it; I hate to even wonder because taking someone's life and then wondering how you feel about it is harsh, to say the least.

We'll be flying close air support for ground operations for about a week. This is quite safe, actually, since South Vietnam has no great anti-aircraft system of guns. It's sort of a transition phase, leading up to the more dangerous North Vietnam work. I'm glad, since I'm still not used to the idea.

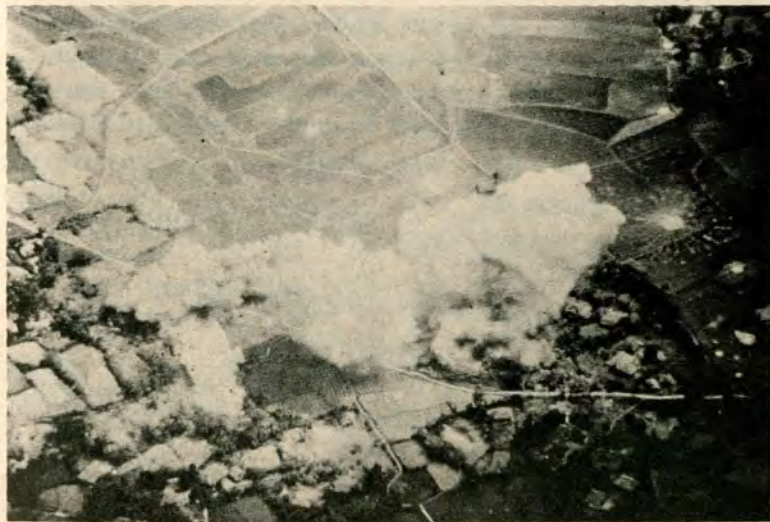
June 30, 1966, Dixie Station. South Vietnam is beautiful. From the air it looks a lot like Florida, all green and swampy. It's as easy for me to imagine that I'll soon be seeing Gainesville, Florida, as it is for me to picture the dying which must be occurring on that beautiful countryside. There is a redness of the soil that shows even through the foliage, and from the air, this red soil is the only striking difference from Florida.

One of our mission flights will be to set the VC rice fields on fire (we hear that they are short on food for the first time). These operations are appropriately called "Rice Krispie" missions. Cute, eh?

I've been reading too many war novels. I deeply believe in what's happening here, and I don't for a moment think it's not necessary. Still war is legal murder, and dropping bombs is a convenient impersonal way to be engaged. The war on the ground presents additional problems. Men are maimed and hardened and wounded merely by the sight of their own destructive powers, and although I know I'm doing something necessary and striking a blow for the things I'm pledged to defend, I don't like to think what really happens when the bombs land, or worse, what the area looks like after we drop our bombs and leave; I don't want to think that we are committing a modernizing form of carnage and ruthless slaughter, covering the ground with bloody bodies and misshapen men.

July 1, 1966, Dixie Station. One of the most impressive things about the area where we rendezvoused was the mile-after-mile area of solid lines of craters, undisputedly the work of the Air Force B-52s. You would see a crater, then a space about twice the width of a crater, then another crater, and the line would continue in that pattern for miles. Parallel to that line and close by, there was another line—like rows of corn, or trees in an orchard. They really must have done some careful planning, for friendly villages were fairly close at hand. We had been warned that we must be particularly accurate today, for we were operating very close to a friendly village.

It never occurs to you while you're flying that there are people down there. Barry and I talked about this tonight. The area we hit yesterday was walked through afterward by the cavalry units, and the body count of VC was up around six hundred.



United States Air Force bombs explode on Vietnam's countryside.

Both Barry and I admitted that we feel ashamed that the bombing and shooting doesn't really affect us deeply. The real shame that I feel is my own lack of emotional reaction. I keep reacting as though I were simply watching a movie of the whole thing. I still don't feel that I have personally killed anyone. Somehow the whole experience remains unreal. Have I become so insensitive that I have to see the torn limbs, the bloody ground, the stinking holes and guts in the mud, before I feel ashamed that I have destroyed numbers of my own kind? The bombing is right, I think, but who am I? Humans have always decided what is right, and these same humans have sometimes decided later that they may have been wrong. I only hope and pray that I don't change my mind about what I am doing here. I will lose my mind if I do.

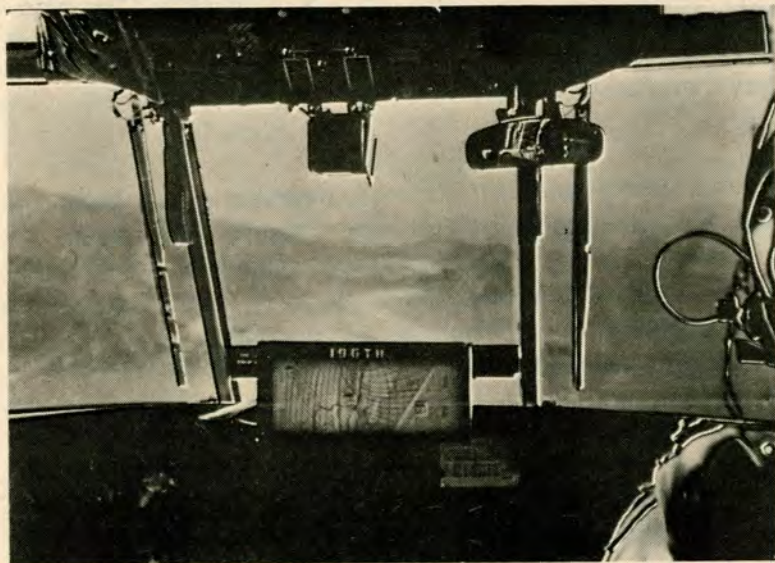
Another letter from Marilyn today. She does write good letters. I couldn't have chosen a better life's companion, not anywhere, no better complementary personality, no more outspoken conscience for me.

July 2, Dixie Station. I'm still worrying about those "six hundred dead." Possibly the count is an exaggeration. I won't feel bad, I don't think, as long as I can think of the target as a group of buildings or a supply dump, or a petrol storage area—as long as I can avoid seeing the whites of their eyes, and more important, as long as I can believe that those I do kill, I kill quickly and, to that extent, painlessly.

July 3, Dixie Station. Everyone seems to consider me the pilot that I feel I am. I've raised pure hell in almost every flight I've flown and impressed most of the people with whom I've flown. If there were a who-is-the-best-pilot-in-the-squadron contest, I think

that I would win. I have to continue to prove myself to myself, but as long as I succeed, I guess I'm okay.

I'm mighty undecided about leaving in September. I want to see Marilyn and do all the things we could do, but I would also like to get all the air medals, etc., and more particularly I feel that I need the combat experience. Of course, I am speaking without having flown against enemy fighters, enemy AAAs [anti-aircraft artillery], and enemy SAMs [surface-to-air missiles]. As George Johnson used to say, "Those who want to go are those who ain't been." Now I fall into that group. Still. . . I am undecided. The real advantage I'd like to gain is that extra year of seniority that I would have on my contemporaries by "dragging my feet" and getting an extra year of sea duty.



A flight over central Vietnam.

Independence Day, Dixie Station.

For me flying is just pure fun—danger or not—and I can see how some people consider Navy pilots as members of a refined motorcycle club. Damn, though, I love to fly. I zoomed up a vertical cloud today and in my heart the words of Gillespie's "High Flight" came welling, "Oh I have slipped the surly bonds of earth/and danced the sky on laughter silvered wings."

July 8, 1966. One of the things the Air Force does occasionally is to spray wide stretches of jungle with defoliates which kill the leaves and vines and rob the Viet Cong of their hiding places. When we were flying in the south, we flew over one of these areas and dropped fire bombs on it to set it on fire and maybe smoke out some of the VC. Well, the air is so wet and volatile that when the heat from the fire started rising above the fire, it caused a small thunderstorm right over itself and put the fire out within fifteen minutes. At first we didn't know what was happening, but when we tried it again the next day, it happened again; the heat caused the air to rise and form rain clouds. That's the best example I know of how wet and humid it is in this country.

It was our first day to fly over the north, and I was handed a tanker hop* so I still don't know what the big action is like. Don and Richard went out on the same launch as my tanker and destroyed nine river barges they happened to find.

The staff captain in the War Room explained how the North Vietnamese continue to supply their troops in the south. Three main routes the NVA use are all

*tanker hop: a flight to get fuel from another airplane.

almost directly parallel and within twenty-five miles of each other and run practically the length of North Vietnam. These routes are the railroad, the main highway itself (the one we call "Highway 1-A"), and the coast-line waterway. Supply troops carry something by bicycle for a distance, then transfer it to the railroad and run it perhaps thirty miles by rail, then transport it to the road if a railroad bridge is out, or put it on a barge. You can't blow up rivers, and we sink barge after barge and still they come. All this river traffic; junks, barges, flatboats, etc., are cheaply made, so there's no real problem to replace them. To that extent it's a game of patience; who'll get tired of the war first, a test of endurance.

July 10, 1966.

I hope the professional nature of the war yields results along the lines of steady nerves. For, as Barry says, there's rarely been a war such as this when men could say, "I've had enough," and be sent home the next day. For those of us in the Naval air war in Vietnam, it's a volunteer war. And to that extent, it's a professional war. At the same time, it would be extremely difficult to turn in your wings and quit, even if you were afraid for your life, in the company of those with whom you've never been a quitter before.

Back to the action at hand. The skipper's flight just returned. All bombs were delivered with good results on the railroad yard, and the other flight knocked out the pile driver on the construction site, a bridge, and scored a direct hit on a flak site with secondary explosions galore. Everybody's happy!



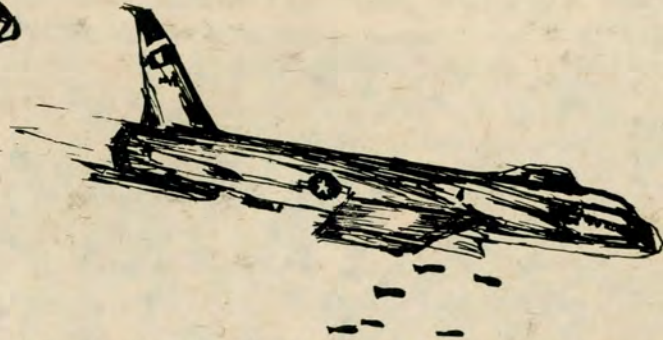
Area in Vietnam before and after defoliation.

July 11, 1966.

Tonight I blew a bridge out on one of the main highways and destroyed about six barges; at least I'm convinced they were barges. I could work myself into an emotional problem if I let my mind wander into the possibility that they might have been family fishing junks. But they were flat and covered with canvas and out on one of the main canals and appeared to be hauling freight. I'm glad that most people I talk to feel the same as I do about that, any but military targets are taboo. Cdr. White didn't feel that way; I don't think he minded just lofting a bomb into a village any more than he minded dropping a practice

bomb on a fake target. I'm sure that we can all mind too much for our emotional health, but I ache when I think of love stories of peasant people, stories of old men and women who but for time and luck would have no part in the dispute for power, when I think of my own life and its twists and turns—and the interruption, sudden and final, that I may be making to make some hapless mistake—a barge? A legitimate military target, hauling aid and supplies to the enemies of what we believe? Or a poor family's home and means of livelihood? I can say again and again that those were military targets, but down deep inside I have to pray that I did right.





July 15, 1966. This morning I was cool and calm when Bob and I struck the bridge at Qui Vinh, and that was worst of all. It was the first time since the Alpha strike on the oil depot near Hanoi/Haiphong that I had flown a daylight hop, and both my big AGM 126 bullpup missiles went wild as hell and hit off in the middle of nowhere. I was completely cool and calm, and the missiles went crazy. I felt that this was the most futile attempt of all. My hits on the Alpha strike were long and landed in the water. I might as well have stayed home. I seem to get through my strikes at night on pure guts, sweat, tears, and raw chance, and I don't think I've even scared a soul but myself yet. I'm sure rationally that I have, but I can't make myself feel I've been good enough.

Feeling this way gets people killed too, thinking you've got to do well today to make up for lesser

hopes, pressing too hard, too low, too long, and being blown out of the sky. I'm fighting this already. I'm just damned determined to hit something useful, to bust up something that'll really hurt, and to do it tonight.

But that Alpha strike tomorrow. As Barry Jones and Jerry say, "My courage diminishes in proportion to the distance inland," and this route takes us right into the heartland where all the SAMs, MIGs [Russian-made jet fighters], flak [bursting shells from anti-aircraft guns], AAA, and population are. High chance of being hit, high chance of hitting civilians, no chance of evasion if you are shot down. And my job is to put down any resistance from the deck with bombs, which means no standoff distance. If somebody starts shooting or firing SAMs, I look down his gun barrel, run head on, and bomb him. Some excitement, eh journal?



Bombed ruins of the city of Dong Hoi in North Vietnam.

July 16, 1966. 21:00 hours. I've been up practically all the time since midnight last night when I wrote the last entry. We briefed at 02:20 this morning, and I led Bob in on a night bombing armed reconnaissance hop. It was so miserably black as we approached the coast that accurate navigation was virtually impossible. Nothing can match the tension of approaching enemy shores with a definite mission, not knowing exactly where you are and not having strict control of your flight. So far, in my own judgment, I've done an excellent job of finding the right target at the right coast-in-point and delivering flares and bombs where I had intended to strike. However, I don't realize, even while I'm flying, how much the flights drain me. I come back to this damned boat, on which comfortable rest is practically impossible in the heat, and I find that my knees are almost too weak to walk. I thought it was fear, and perhaps it was fear at first, but now I'm past giving a damn if they shoot at me. Not past reasonable fear, because I'm still quite rational about the whole thing, and I don't take unnecessary chances especially with the life and welfare of my wingman. However, I'm just becoming aware that the artillery and flak, though I know they're aiming at me and trying to kill me, personally, doesn't intimidate me, and I can fly a good bombing pass and get good hits regardless of looking down a machine-gun barrel.

It's almost impossible to tell how badly you can get to wanting to do some concrete damage which you can look at and say, "There, I did that to you." And to that purpose, night flights are so tremendously exacting as to drain you of every trick, every maneuver, every device for finding an exact position and doing what you mean to do there, without killing somebody and in an orderly fashion becoming a professional soldier. There's

just no way around being keyed up; that's too natural, and besides a man would have to be a fool, and probably soon be a dead one, to be careless and relaxed.

The big thing is this: YOU JUST CAN'T SEE A DAMNED MISERABLE THING. You can't see the coast, you can't see the hills, you can't see the bays, and you can't mark the flak sites, except by pure extrasensory perception. And that's the truth. I've dropped flares when I knew I was "there" without one damned hint to back up this "knowledge," and looked down to see that I was right.

July 18, 1966. I still haven't written Marilyn about having to stay for the whole cruise.* I'm planning to ask her to fly to Manila in early September. The ship will be in port for ten days. I'll ask for leave, and I'll be able to be with her for the period when the ship is in Hong Kong as well—a grand total of three weeks. It'll be a great trip for her, and one we may never get the chance to take again, at least, not for a while.

I almost wish for Marilyn's sake that I had never received the original orders. I'm really torn up inside. I belong here, and the fact that I don't like it and would rather be somewhere else shouldn't matter as much as it does. The skipper's right, but I had dared to hold to the idea of wrapping my arms about Marilyn in September, knowing that I wouldn't have to say good-by for years, and now I have to let that idea go. Having her over here will be expensive, but it will be worth it. Why not? Might be our only chance.

*Originally, Elkins' orders called for him to return to the United States in September; he had just learned that he would have to stay with the aircraft carrier for its entire cruise.

August 5, 1966, en route to Yankee Station. We're returning from a much needed rest. I've spent the last four days swimming, loafing, fishing, and sleeping, trying to get back in shape.

Lots of old friends were in Cubi Point. Gerald Marshall showed up, and I had dinner with him. Gerald has real doubts about our part in the war here and is having a problem deciding what to do. I told him to turn in his wings and get the devil out; he's worthless in his current state of mind. Steve Ellison is his skipper and is as right-wing as anyone can get. If Gerald tries to push for a transfer because of his belief that our involvement in Vietnam is wrong, he may wind up with a court-martial from Cdr. Ellison. His only out is to turn in his wings and that means an end to his flying. Some people who were eating with us were ready to hit Gerald. I just went to bed feeling a little uncertain myself and dejected.



August 24, 1966. One thing that's really difficult about being married to Marilyn is that my attitude is now not as good as it was when I felt that I had nothing really to lose. I enjoy living more than some, and if I'm killed, surely there are plenty who will say, "Too bad," and mean it. But I've never felt that the world would be greatly altered. I've lost that attitude, though it's the best possible frame of mind to be in when you know there's a good chance you won't make it back. It's those who have too much to live for, they're always the ones who get it. And me, I've got



too much to live for now. I have to keep my longings and daydreams in check, or I'm afraid I'll lose something that's really necessary to get me through all this.

September 30, 1966 [after visit with Marilyn]. I've had about enough. I'm ready to get back home and set up my life with Marilyn and live like home folks.

... Two months now and we'll be together and, God willing, be together for a long time...

October 11, 1966. Sign on the ready room chalkboard: "Only 30 more Bombing Days till Christmas, get yours done early!"

It seems that we never go into A1 in the morning anymore but what there's another report of a Navy pilot downed. Just every day. Just count them off.

But now, glorious day, we're off the mid-to-noon for a week.

Night before last after I wrote Marilyn, while I was lying in bed for that six hours, I lay there and hated that night hop* and hated that night hop and hated the strain of flying where you have to look in every direction at once and look out for yourself and somebody else and hated the Navy and mostly hated that doggoned night hop and the fact that I couldn't go to sleep so long that the very idea of a whole career in the Navy was so remote to me that I decided that I wanted out of all this, decided that the thing for me to do was go through three years of shore duty and then go back to North Carolina and do something; law, teach, anything, start a business, run the farm, and get out of all this. As far as that period of tossing and turning, rolling, forcing myself to lie still while I took first one hundred deep breaths

*night hop: they had been on a midnight-to-noon schedule.

in one position and one hundred deep breaths in another position in an effort to make my body go to sleep, as far as that four hours went, it was certain that the only thing for me to do was to get out. I thought of all the times when I was growing up, even in high school, that I was afraid of something and took the easy way out, of all the times I was scared and took the coward's way out, of all the times I didn't think I could look the other guys in the face and feel that I was quite the same stuff they were, fights I backed down from, loafing at football practice, loafing on the farm sometimes, or not putting everything I had into any one of a thousand things. I could think of all that, knowing that if I turned in my wings, that I'd have to live all my life in that same feeling of shame, having the medals but secretly knowing that I had given up because I didn't think I had the stuff to keep going when it got rough. And yet, it wasn't quite enough.

I had all that on the one hand, and on the other hand was that damned night hop coming up in the ink black that seems to belong exclusively to the night over here, the uncertainty that the airplane was going to make it into the air off the cat, the terror of not knowing or of having to find the exact right spot to coast in, of having to watch out not only for myself but to coordinate and control, to maintain order, to keep track of that all-important wingman, and to get back and find the ship and make sure that he got back and got aboard, and then to fly that ink-black approach and not break my neck on the ramp or fly into the water or fly into the sea or into a mountain or into the ground and see to it that my wingman didn't.

All these things can be done easily enough taken one thing at a time, but lying in bed knowing that you'll be required to do it all, it all lies on your mind

at once, and you can't sleep and every minute goes by and you know that that's one minute more of precious sleep you lost and need to be safe and get the job done safely and yet you can't sleep and you just lie there and lie there and you can't stop thinking about it all and you toss and it never quits.

Scott and I had a discussion once. We're pretty honest with each other, and the subject of his having to prove himself to himself all the time and my having to do the same thing came up. I remember his laughing once and saying something like, "Well, it's true, I don't believe in myself enough to just say, 'Now Scott, you can do as much or more than anybody else and you don't have to prove a thing,' I've got to show myself." And then he said, "But dammit I do show myself, and do prove things to me and as long as I can keep doing things other folks can't do and things I don't really believe I can do, where's the harm except in the fact that someday I'll fail to prove something—and I've done that before too—where's the hurt if I manage to successfully prove myself?" And I guess that's me over here.

I hate night hops, but almost only when they're the first hop of the day. And every time I walk up on that deck knowing what's coming up, it's like facing death. Hell, more than that, it is facing death; but I think I face it sometimes more heavy-hearted than other folks. I think I'm sometimes more cowardly about it than others, more hesitant. But dammit, I do it. So where's the hurt as long as I manage to get it done?

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

To: Mrs. Frank Callihan Elkins, Route One, Dunlap, Tennessee

I deeply regret to confirm on behalf of the United States Navy that your husband, Lt. Frank Callihan Elkins, 658100/1310, USN is missing in action. This occurred on 13 October 1966 while on a combat mission over North Vietnam. It is believed that your husband was maneuvering his aircraft to avoid hostile fire when radio contact was lost. An explosion was observed but it could not be determined whether this was hostile fire exploding or your husband's aircraft. No parachute or visual signals were observed and no emergency radio signals were received. You may be assured that every effort is being made with personnel and facilities available to locate your husband. Your great anxiety in this situation is understood and when further information is available concerning the results of the search now in progress you will be promptly notified. I join you in fervent hope for his eventual recovery alive. I wish to assure you of every possible assistance together with the heartfelt sympathy of myself and your husband's shipmates at this time of heartache and uncertainty.

The area in which your husband became missing presents the possibility that he could be held by hostile force against his will. Accordingly, for his safety in this event, it is suggested that in replying to inquiries from sources outside your immediate family you reveal only his name, rank, file number, and date of birth.

Vice Admiral B. J. Sennes, Jr.
Chief of Naval Personnel

=====

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

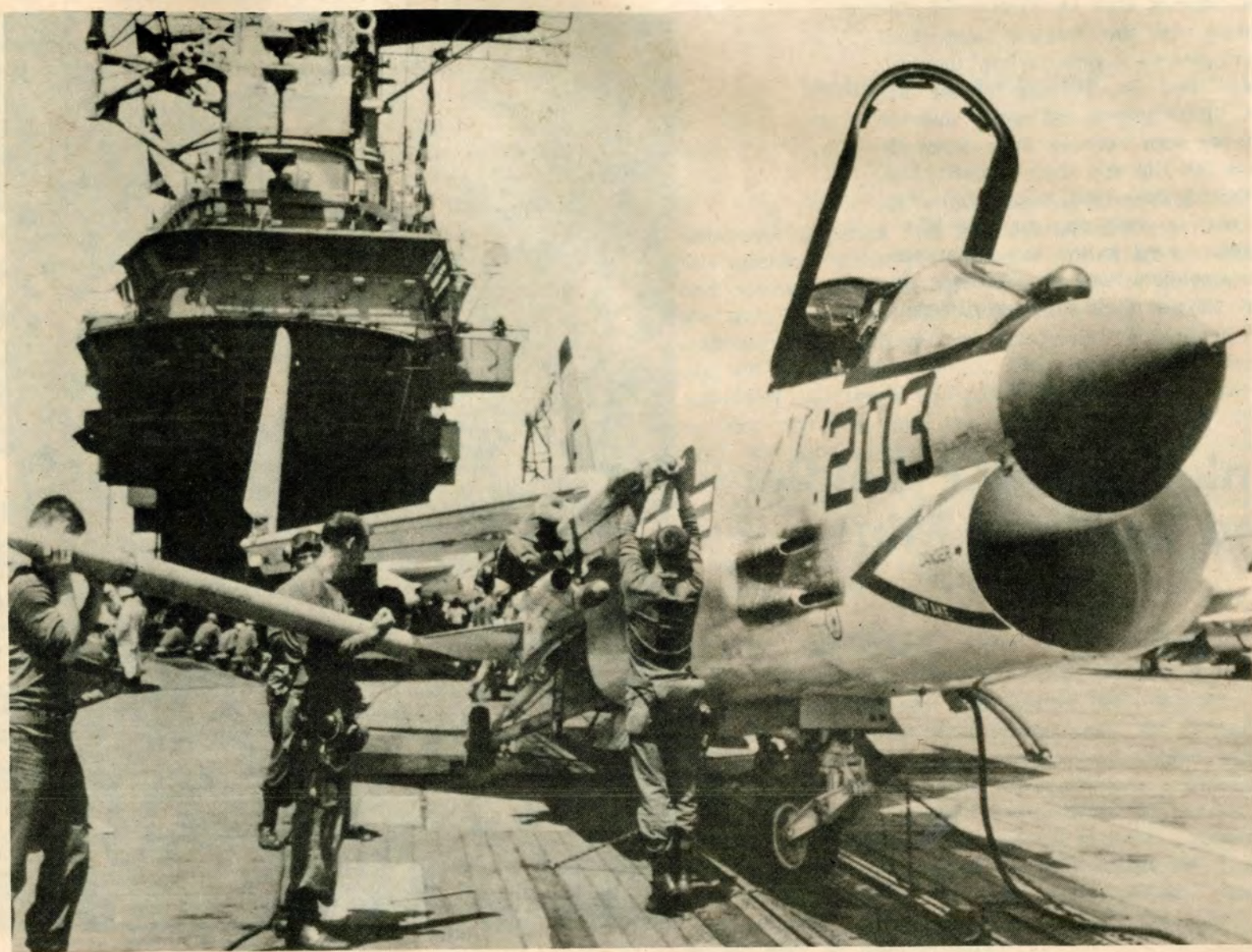
1. Marilyn Elkins in her introduction asks, "Why then did these men continue to fly?" List all the reasons you can think of to explain why Frank Elkins continued his bombing missions. Then list all the reasons that created conflict for him.

2. Reread Elkins' entry on July 11, 1966, where he wonders whether he has hit a military barge or a family fishing barge. How much mechanical control does a bomber pilot have over the targets he hits? If Elkins had hit a fishing junk operated by a family sympathetic to the NLF, would that have been a military target in his judgment? In your judgment?

(According to the Air Force Manual's definition, a military target is "Any person, thing, idea, entity or location selected for destruction, inactivation, or rendering non-usable with weapons which will reduce or destroy the will or ability of the enemy to resist." The Air Force Manual says that attacks on such threats are designed to "dispel the people's belief in the invincibility of their forces, to create unrest, to reduce the output of the labor force, to cause . . . fear, panic, hunger and passive resistance to the government . . .")

3. Frank Elkins says, "I have to continue to prove myself to myself." Compare his attitude about proving himself with the attitudes of Rick Springman, Bruce Anello and William Calley.

4. If you were in Frank Elkins' position what conflicts would you feel? Under what circumstances would you turn in your wings? (Remember that he was writing in 1966, when there was little organized opposition to the war.)



Rockets being loaded on a jet fighter on the aircraft carrier "USS Ticonderoga."

These diaries kept by Vietnamese soldiers fighting with the National Liberation Front give us a glimpse into the feelings of two men fighting for the other side. Both young and newly married, they are torn between their desire to live a full life and their commitment to defend their land, people and way of life. In what ways are the NLF soldiers caught in the same dilemmas as the soldiers they are fighting? In what ways is their situation different?

Unknown NLF Soldier and Le Van Minh



Oriana Fallaci, an Italian journalist covering the war in Vietnam, was given these diaries, which were translated by Americans working for the U.S. government. In the introduction which follows, she describes her impressions of the unknown NLF soldier.

Who was he? What did he look like? His name never appears on the pages and he gives us very few facts. It's impossible to give him a face: the only time he describes himself physically is when he says how horrified he was when he looked at himself in the mirror: so worn, so ill. It's only certain that he was a North Vietnamese who had infiltrated into the South through Laos and had joined an ordinary military unit. A Catholic, because he mentions Christmas as a holy feast and calls on Jesus Christ. A young man, certainly, because he hadn't been a soldier for long. Not a peasant though; maybe a chemist, some sort of technician or student. He mentions a research laboratory he worked in before going into the army and he talks of his books and his bookshop. He doesn't seem to be physically strong. The long marches exhaust him, the loads he carries break him, his stomach is always upset. He complains about everything; cold, heat, food, leeches. I can't help imagining him with bony shoulders, delicate hands, fragile wrists and sunken eyes. They're the eyes of a lonely man calling out to the wife he loves passionately; they are also the eyes of a dying man. He died, I think, on the outskirts of Saigon. I wonder where his body lies. In the cemetery at Chi Hoa or in some collective grave flattened out by tanks? I can't bear the thought that he's dead.

from Oriana Fallaci, *Nothing And So Be It*, translated by Isabel Quigley. New York: Doubleday, 1972.

UNKNOWN NLF SOLDIER

It is May 1st. I am writing because something very important happened that suddenly changed my life: this morning, at half-past seven, I turned up to report and comrade Lan told me: "Get ready to go into the army." I think that writing may help me to understand the feelings that seized me. A kind of joy and excitement, I admit. But, at the same time, something like terror and pain. Because I shall have to leave my wife, Can, this love that is so sacred to me. We were married only four months ago and have been together so little. In accepting this separation, I am making a great sacrifice and denial. Dying does not frighten me: if my death helps my people, then I am ready to die. But to be parted from Can makes me suffer so much. Too much.

It is May 2nd. I have decided to keep a kind of diary. I am in my laboratory. My wife has heard that I am leaving soon. She knows that we have only forty hours together. Forty, that's all. They will be the most precious hours of our lives, because after them we shall be separated perhaps forever. What a painful dilemma; a soldier's life is noble, of course, but leaving the woman you love is so hard. Time is running through my fingers: a little longer and I shall not see her again. I now count every minute. And I ask so many questions: why we come into the world, why we have to suffer...

It is May 3rd. Can and I have spent all these hours together. Sometimes we talked animatedly, sometimes we were quite silent. In silence we wondered when we would meet again and if we would meet again. We can meet only when our country is reunited, if both of us survive the struggle. I am sad, too, that I will never see my parents, brothers and sisters again. I have no time to go see them to explain myself. Will they realize the difficulties I am struggling with? Oh, war . . . death . . . How ugly war is, how ugly death is. Soon I must leave, I am crying. I am not a coward. I feel resolved; in fact I feel strong. But I am a human being and I cannot give up my feelings. So I cry. Good-bye, my dearest. What a lot of things there are still to do. I must bring you the bicycle and some books. Let's hope Chien takes me in his car so I can put the bicycle on top of the car and . . . Can, your heart is in your eyes. A broken heart. But someday there won't be a single American devil left in this country. If it were not for the Americans we would not be kissing each other good-bye.

It is May 4th. I have said good-bye to my friends now. How many evenings we have spent together drinking tea, joy and pain. It was sad to leave them too. The good days are over. Army life is beginning.

It is May 5th. My first meal as a soldier. Today I feel as if I were a year older. I haven't got my uniform yet, but I feel confident and proud of myself. Now they are coming to organize us into squads and patrols and to give us camouflage material and food and water. We are leaving for Nghia Dau tonight, where I'll stay for seven or eight days. I am looking



at Phu Quy for the last time—this green forest, these enormous fields, this land I love so much. How many years have I lived here! I am leaving it and marching along road Number 15, with a good heavy pack on my back. It is dark now and the moon has risen. It will light up the column as we march.

It is May 7th. I have had only a few hours' sleep, I am worn out and the news that we are making a stop at Nghia Thi makes me very happy. I have asked permission to stop and see my brother Bay Luan, who lives nearby, which means I can send a message to my father.

It is May 8th. Today it is my turn to do the cooking and I have to find water. But after marching for two nights on end my legs are almost broken. Every movement I make causes terrific pain; I have never been good at sports. The meal I have to cook usually consists of vegetable soup, which helps the digestion, and rice. In the evening I have to cook more rice, which is pressed together into little balls and eaten on the march the next day. Actually tonight's march has been put off. Many of us are disappointed; we are impatient to reach our unit and find out what is going on. But the American planes keep diving down above the road, throwing flares, and have made it impossible for us to move. Just as well, really. I am so tired. I have been marching now for ten days, bearing with me all the love I have for what I have left behind. And that love is weighing on me so heavily. . . I miss Can terribly. I think of nothing else and count the days we've been separated.

It is May 9th. After the first squads had left, three American planes appeared and we heard their bombs exploding on the head of the column. An hour later

we reached the point but found no dead, only a cow lying on road Number 15. It was eerie in the darkness. It was the first creature I had seen killed in war.

It is May 10th. We have no rice and cannot buy any here because there is none. All we have eaten is the little rye and we have slept on empty stomachs. We shall have no rice until tomorrow evening and only then if things go well. Hunger is an ugly thing and I have no wish to write.

It is May 26th. I have been feeling ill for sixteen days and did not want to write. The march continues in the darkness, through unknown villages, and the American planes never let up. When you least expect them, they dive down and light you up with their flares. But today we have stopped; they have grouped us in squads to cut wood. For six hours I have been cutting wood. But that is nothing compared with the leeches. The moment we set foot in the jungle and in this damp climate we met our worst enemy—leeches. Curse them. They are everywhere; they cling to the first man they see. Although we are careful to cover every part of our bodies, they still manage to attack us and every time I feel a prick I know what it is. I take off my shoe and invariably my foot is covered with blood. Disgusting.

It is May 27th. My water bottle is empty, my shoulders are swollen and painful. It is a terrible effort to move one of the baskets. My feet are covered with cuts; I cannot go on like this. Our unit is armed only with rifles, and our task is to back up the infantry. So the baskets we are carrying on our backs are full of explosives, which are destined for the American dugouts and tanks. We live with the village people and

as the days pass they are becoming fond of us. But I have no news of Can.

It is June 1st. I have been in the army for nearly a month and all we do is train: to creep forward on hands and knees, to roll into holes, even to climb trees and hide among the leaves. These exercises are hard, and harder still because of the heat; even the wind that blows from Laos is hot. But this hard life has strengthened our ability to bear it. It has actually restored my enthusiasm. In the last three days we have had lectures in politics and some of us offered to go as volunteers into South Vietnam, through Laos, and there fight the American aggressor. I am one of them. But I miss Can and my mother. Tomorrow is a day of rest and I have asked permission to visit my home; my parents live not far from here. I was allowed to because I had volunteered to go to South Vietnam and at four in the afternoon I shall be leaving with Vi. We shall go to Trang Ke, zigzagging across the mountains. It will be a long march, but what does that matter? I feel wild with happiness; I shall see my mother and the rest of my family.

It is June 2nd. I have seen my relatives but not my mother. Oh, mother, how sad. When we arrived it was half-past eleven at night and my heart was beating fast. I embraced Van and my grandmother, my aunts and uncles and cousins, and then asked: "But what about Mother? Where is she?" She was not there. She had gone to Dong Noi that morning. Dearest Mother, you will suffer so much when they tell you I came and did not find you. I suffered as well. The family prepared a big meal for me, my first proper meal since I went into the army, but I was not hungry; I was thinking of you, Mother. Perhaps I shall not

have another chance like this one... I was so disappointed. I waited for you until midday, but you did not come and I had to leave. They had fixed balls of rice for me and other food, but I didn't care for any of it. When I said good-bye I was so moved that I could not hold back the tears... I went off through the trees, and the village gradually vanished, hidden by them, and I was sobbing. Even now the tears are falling on the paper. How sad it was, Mother. We have never been lucky, the two of us. I am now outside Vi's house, waiting for him to say good-bye to his parents, and then we will continue our journey.

It is June 7th. All day I have had an unbearable pain in my stomach. I went to rest in a house, looked at myself in the mirror and did not recognize myself. A month ago I was not so ugly. Now my cheekbones are protruding; the skin is so tight on them that my head looks like a skull. The fact is that I am not feeding myself. This evening I ate a little boiled rice, that was all. I could not get anything else down. I am tired, but all the same I am trying to write because I need to confide in someone. Even if it is only a piece of paper. Well, paper, everything in war is not ugly; you meet good people in war, like the members of the Thanh Long cooperative, in the village of Than Phong. Uncle Quy, Uncle Duong, Mr. Lam... dear people who care for us as if we were their family. And true Socialists; they share everything they have with us, from cups of tea to potatoes. I feel perfectly at ease with them and I shall remember them fondly as long as I live. But so many other things are ugly. The machine-gunning, the weariness, the pain in my stomach. My stomach hurts so much. I must stop writing. How on earth did I manage, before, to write every day?

It is July 4th. Two months! The months are going by and breaking my heart. I am suffering. Two months since I left and not a word from Can in these two months. It is hard to bear it. Did anything happen to her? Was our village bombed?



It is July 15th. This is a great day. I have had a letter from Can. My first letter from Can. My dearest Can is expecting a child.

It is July 17th. It is my birthday. All my other birthdays I celebrated at home. This time it has fallen on a Saturday. At home Saturday would have been a great day, but in war there is no difference between Saturday and Monday. I cannot even celebrate by resting; the commander has thought of organizing a show to raise morale and I have had to raise mine by working. I like to organize it, but I don't give a damn about the show.

It is July 18th. Did I tell you, my diary, that I have asked leave to go and see Can? I don't think so. I was so anxious to get it that I disliked even mentioning it. Well, I have got it! It is amazing. I heard yesterday evening. The commander called me and said: "I have a birthday present for you." I thought he was giving me something and I was rather moved. But when he exclaimed: "You have gotten your leave!" I was moved even more. I don't know what to say or what to add. I am losing my capacity to express myself in words. Perhaps I am being coarsened. Or is it joy? I am too happy. The journey will take ten days. For ten days I shall eat joy.

It is July 26th. I have been traveling for nearly a week, walking along road Number 7 at a speed of six kilometers an hour. This morning I ate only a bowl of rice, but I don't care; joy takes away my hunger. It takes me away from my fear as well: near Song I was machine-gunned by an American plane. But panic did not seize my legs as it did the day on the river with Vi. I flung myself into a hole and that was all. Now I am approaching

Dien Chau, where I was born. I shall arrive about four in the afternoon and they will tell me that my parents are still in the fields. I am so happy. Come, let's go on.

It is July 27th. I embraced my mother and father and my other relatives. I no longer even felt tired and I laughed when they said I had grown thin. I laughed . . . All I think about is the moment when I shall see my Can. I told myself: this is what I shall do, I shall walk a long way along the railroad track, then turn left along the river Tien, then I shall reach Hang Dua and take the bus to Phu Quy. It leaves at nine in the evening, so I shall travel in the bus until midnight and . . . I did not catch the bus at nine o'clock. I was there, but the bus was not. Ten o'clock came, then eleven and then midnight . . . Soon after midnight it arrived, but it was not going to Phu Quy. It was going to Vinh. I managed to get on a bus for Phu Quy only at one in the morning, and then it left at three. So I lost a whole night I might have spent with Can. It is now five in the morning, the bus is moving along in the darkness and I have just woken from a dream: I dreamed I was asleep in Can's arms. We hope to arrive before day because it is not wise to travel along these roads in the light. The passengers keep laughing and telling the driver: "Hurry, hurry! If Johnson sees us from the sky, he'll fire his bullets at us!"

It is July 28th. Perhaps it is silly to waste time writing a diary on a day like this, but just now she is asleep and I cannot sleep because I keep saying to myself: "I'm with her!" I want to tell you everything, my diary. The bus arrived at half-past five in the morning and I ran to the bridge. But the bridge was no

longer there. It had been destroyed by bombs and they had put up another, made of boats, a hundred yards farther down. Finally I crossed the river. What a tragedy. The city has been completely smashed by American bombings. There is an enormous crater in the park and another very big one where the bookshop I used to go to had been. That street no longer exists. Only the foundations are left of Tay Nieu's restaurant, the commercial school, the cooperative and finally of my laboratory. A tragedy a thousand times worse than I feared. Nghia Dam, my dear Nghia, which was such a lively place, is now a ghost town. I wandered about the ruins in bewilderment, thinking that I had lived here, that I had worked here, but I saw nothing but holes and weeds. My diary, how much I suffered. I kept saying to myself: suppose Can is dead? As I was walking toward the farming headquarters, bewildered, I met my friend Nung and asked him to carry my knapsack because I could not go on. He helped me home because I would have felt ill on my own. When we got near there I ran, rushed in, and shouted: "Can!" But Can was not there. I asked where she was. They said she was at the rubber plantation, next to the laboratory where I used to work. A bicycle, I said, a bicycle! They gave me one, I jumped on it and pedaled off. And there she was, coming toward me. I got off the bicycle and could only say: "Can!" We both wanted to throw our arms round each other. But we controlled ourselves; with so many people watching, it would have not looked right. So we just shook hands and stared at each other. Into each other's eyes. "How long will you stay?" Can asked. "Two days," I replied. "Only two days," she murmured. Yes, Can. All this journey on foot through the mountains, ten days' journey for only two days with you.



to see my mother again. They sent us to get some ammunition near our village and so I slept at home and I had breakfast with my mother. But I had to leave her at eight in the morning. She walked along the road for a long way with me and wanted to carry my knapsack. It was heavy, but I let her carry it because I understood it made her happy to do so. Then she put it back on my shoulders with a caress and we parted. Without saying a single word. It was as if we had nothing more to say to each other except our pain.

It is July 30th. I must leave this morning to reach my unit by tomorrow evening. In silence Can prepared my meal and some rice to eat on the way. It was dawn. In silence we ate our breakfast, staring at each other. My heart was broken and so was hers, I think. Soon I shall give her the last kiss, the last look, and then I shall go. All I do is repeat this to myself as she prepares to accompany me to the bus and I am writing just for something to do. To control myself. Not to get emotional while I wait. I shall go to Tay Hieu by bus and there get another bus. Good-bye, Can. I feel that this is the last time; I have a feeling that we shall not meet again. But wherever I go, however long I'll be away from you, perhaps until death, my love for you will stay the same.

It is August 31st. Another good-bye. I spend my life saying good-bye. By a stroke of luck I was able



It is October 18th. I hardly ever speak to you now, my diary. I am not the same man I was. We have started fighting and I am no longer the same man. Each time we fight I think I shall not survive, that I shall die, and when I find I am still alive I feel a kind of surprise and disbelief. After five months in the army I feel I have really sacrificed all for my country: my family, my work, my happiness.

It is October 23rd. When we have to climb rocky hills as we did today my stick becomes a real friend. You can count the kilometers better: five... four... three... two... one... and the camp! Sometimes when we reach the camp I do not even want to write; I go straight to sleep. And it is hard waking up again. Luckily when we are going through the villages people help us to carry our loads. The girls especially. They divided among them the things I was carrying and carried them for fifteen kilometers, along the path. With



such grace and strength. Now we are resting in preparation for the night march. It is better to march at night; then the American planes do not see us. Sometimes I wonder what their flares are for.

It is October 26th. After we had eaten at Pham Thi we reached Nam Lien. This is the birthplace of Uncle Ho—that is, our leader, Ho Chi Minh. While I was on my way to the Lien Tuong cooperative, to see my friend, Truong, I passed Uncle Ho's house. It consists of two simple huts covered with rice straw and surrounded by a bamboo fence. I have always wanted to see the house where Uncle Ho was born and it made quite an impression on me. The windows are shaded by pretty bamboo blinds and there was an old banana tree on the right. There was also a grapefruit tree and an orange. It seemed to me an important place, although it was very, very small.

It is November 5th. I have had three letters from Can. All together. As soon as we reached Son Ninh, I went to a shop where they take photographs and had one taken to send her. I wrote to her as well. And then I wrote to my father, to my sister Lang and to my friend Thuoc the bookseller. But I do not enjoy writing. I am too exhausted and depressed. Perhaps I should stop writing this diary. What use is it?

It is December 23rd. We have spent sixty days in this damned place called Son Ham, all in training for the mission ahead of us. Today we start the long march and I keep wondering where we are going and what we are going to do and what this mission is about that everyone keeps talking of. It seems important, yet no one has the slightest idea what it is all about. We have to do at least two hundred kilometers on foot. Just to think of it makes me feel

ill. Two hundred kilometers over mountains, along streams, carrying my knapsack and gun and ammunition. I cannot bear to think of it. I have taken up my diary again in order to relieve the tension.

It is December 24th. We started marching again at five in the morning, when it was still dark. I am so tired that my legs are aching. The terrain is still dangerous; we go along small paths right on the edge of steep cliffs. When we reach a house belonging to a peasant he lets us in to rest. But what sort of life is this? To love my country costs me a lot.

It is December 25th. It is Christmas, Jesus Christ! It is Christmas and I am carrying a gun on my back. A fine Christmas. We have marched for three days in the jungle and the mosquitoes have taken full advantage of it. I also fell and twisted my ankle. It is now swollen and so is my leg. And my feet are covered with blisters. We went back onto the main road and then walked along the railroad track, taking advantage of the darkness. The rain grew heavier and heavier and seemed to be poking holes in our faces. Then at three in the morning we had to wade through a very cold river. We reached a Catholic village in Chu Le district at sunrise. Now we have stopped here for rice and to rest a little. We will start out again at one in the morning, but my feet are so swollen that I wonder if I shall be able to follow my unit till the end. The rain continues and many parts of the road have been destroyed by bombs. Bridges as well. The Americans do not spare us here. The sight of all this ruin makes me feel worse and often I would like to stop by the roadside to catch my breath. But then I have to run to catch up with the others, and my ankle hurts, it hurts... They have given us nylon bandages to bind up our legs and protect us from the leeches. But I simply cannot go on, I

cannot... Oh, what a terrible Christmas! And what about Can? What is she doing? How is she? Is the child growing well inside her? It is strange, I think continuously of Can but in a different way. A kind of rarefied way.

It is December 29th. Seventh day on the march. Usually we are up before dawn so as to walk when it is dark but cool. It would not be so bad if my ankle did not hurt so much. Sometimes my comrades carry my gun for me, but even this does not help much. If we are not going through the jungle, through the leeches, we are climbing mountains. Luckily, in these parts there are tunnels. These are long passages cut into the mountain; of course I had heard of them, but I had never seen them. You can walk through them quite well, but it is completely dark. You have to keep talking to stay in touch with the others. At a certain point it becomes a bit stifling. Like that tunnel that was two hundred yards long. We could not get into it; it was blocked by the rubble that had fallen during a raid. So we had to go up over the mountain and it was raining. It is still raining and every time my ankle makes me trip I fall on the ground and it takes almost five minutes for me to get on my feet again. I console myself by thinking that the human can do anything, can conquer distances and leeches and an aching body.

It is December 30th. When we saw a house, Li and I took off our equipment and went in to ask for food. The owner gave us a pan of freshly cooked potatoes and a bunch of bananas. We ate until we nearly burst and then called Nuoi and Mai to give them the rest. We wanted to pay him, but the good man refused. He even offered us a cup of hot water to help us digest the food. His kindness put us into a good mood

and when we reached the ferry we felt like joking around. Li called out the password, "Son!" in the darkness. Someone answered with the other password, "Sam!" Then I shouted, "Long live Uncle Ho!" And Li said, "You idiot! D'you want them to hear you?" My ankle is hurting much less and tomorrow is the last day of this long march. How dirty we are! We stink disgustingly. I'm longing for a wash. Just think of having a hot bath. The sea is now only a few miles away.

It is January 9th. Today is a very important day for me because it is the first anniversary of my wedding. A year! No one could call Can and me a lucky couple. After our marriage we were together for only four months and in those four months we spent most of the time twelve miles apart, because I was working at the laboratory. In fact, we met only at weekends and on holidays. Then I was called up and saw Can for those two days, three months later, and then never again. What a cruel fate for people who love! I wonder what my dear Can is doing. I hope nothing has happened to her. I must admit that for weeks I did not think of her much, I felt so bad, but now I have been dreaming about her again. And as we approach Tet* my longing for her is like a thorn in my heart. This will be my first Tet away from home. I wish Tet did not exist, because it only makes me suffer. And I have to keep this suffering to myself. I have only my diary to confide in. Great loneliness lies ahead of me. And then perhaps death.

It is January 14th. People keep saying that something big is being prepared. We have plenty of weapons and

*Tet: Vietnamese New Year. This was probably the year of the "Tet Offensive" [1968], a major victory for the National Liberation Front.

are short of food. When we pass through the villages the people are still asleep. Each of us is carrying at least fifty-two kilos on his back, which include ammunition, rice, etc. At dawn we are exhausted. We hide and rest until five in the afternoon and then the march starts up again. But where are we going?

It is January 18th. Only a few days more and then we shall celebrate Tet. Suddenly we have been ordered not to stop in houses, not even to go inside them. Something new is in the air. We must keep silently marching. So while other people are gaily celebrating Tet we shall have to hide quietly in the woods. I remember the last Tet; Can and I spent it together. We were happy.

It is January 20th. Our ration of meat has been tripled. What a lot of food they are giving us. It is strange, though, that each man eats in silence. As if lost in his own thoughts. At midday we were on the march again. I was carrying a small cannon on my back. We have been told to be very quiet. We always move in darkness and when it rains the road is slippery. Loaded as we are, we take two hours to cover two kilometers. Slipping about with a small cannon on your back is not pleasant.

It is January 22nd. I can say proudly that today is the day we have begun to work on a road to liberate South Vietnam, the first road we've built. It is still raining, but each one of us is determined to carry out his great mission to the very end. The 13th Company has the honor of heading the column. From now on I shall have a new address, 8757 HS. I have written to tell Can. In the jungle I picked and ate some delicious figs.

It is January 23rd. Suddenly we heard planes and someone shouted: "They're bombing us." A second later a plane dived straight above us, then came a terrific explosion and fragments of the bomb hit everywhere. One passed not four centimeters from my head. I heard it whistling. What mysterious laws govern a man's life and survival? If my head had been four centimeters further in that direction, I would have been killed. Does everything happen by chance? After the whistle I ran and crouched in a hole that was only about eighteen inches deep, while the bombs kept falling. I ran to another hole and found a comrade covered in blood. I gasped: "Are you wounded?" "Yes," he answered. I went closer to him and realized that one of his feet was almost blown off. Only a piece of skin joined it to the leg. I took off my shirt and tied it tightly round his leg to stop the bleeding. Then I called for a medic and together we dragged him under a tree. The foot was dangling this way and that, like the pendulum of a clock. The medic then cut through the piece of skin and tossed the foot away. The odd thing was it did not upset me much. I was more upset by the cow lying there in the road, dead that first night. Perhaps because it was the first creature I had ever seen killed. When the bombs stopped falling, there was a lot of smoke around us. I walked around a bit and found bomb craters all around the hole in which I had been hiding. I can hardly believe it, but I have escaped. Clearly it is not my destiny to die here. Where is it written that I am to die?

It is January 26th. We got up very early and had breakfast before dawn. Everything is ready. I wrote a letter to Can and gave it to a friend who has just come back from Thailand and I hope he will manage to get it to her. Can, my dearest Can. Perhaps the

end is waiting for me, but there will never be an end to our love. Even if I die or you die it will not end. Can, my dear Can. Now we must go. The commander is calling us and telling us to . . .

February 19th. The diary stops here. He must have died five or six days later, on the outskirts of Saigon. At Than Son Nhut, perhaps, where there were North Vietnamese troops. Or else he may have died on January 26 itself, in a bombing raid like the one I went on with Captain Andy in the A-37. I can't think of anything else. And I keep wondering: "Does Can know about his death?" Perhaps she has just received his last letter and is writing to him at his new address: 8757 HS. I even spoke about it to the officials at Vietnam Documents and Research Notes—that is, the people who translate and catalogue these little books. They laughed at me and said I was too romantic, I was like the Vietcong whose diary sounds like Neopolitan songs, always talking about love. That made them think of something. Would I like to read one of those diaries about love, they asked. I said yes, I would, and here it is. It was captured on last February 6 by a patrol of the Third Division Marine Corps in the province of Quang Tri, and this time it was not by an unknown soldier. His name is in the book: Le Vanh Minh, born on May 25, 1942, at Quang Binh. He died just two weeks ago.



LE VANH MINH

Tuyet Lan, my darling! I should not have sent you such a sad letter, I know. I should have thought that it would only make you unhappy. So I ask you to forgive me. It will not happen again, my love. But I cannot stop writing to you, and so do you know what I shall do? I shall write to you just the same and keep the letters in my diary and then give them to you the day we meet again. Today I need you more than ever, because today is the anniversary of the day someone came to the political education camp of Ha Tay and pressed my arm and said: "Be strong, Le Vanh Minh, your parents are dead." I began trembling, then weeping like a child; you know how much I loved them. Even at the camp of Ha Tay my mother used to send me poems. I read them again and suffering chokes me. In this suffering, I think of the day I left at dawn and you came with me to the river Hien Loung, which divides our country into two. I was biting my lips, do you remember? I was thinking that from that moment it would also be dividing us; no one knew for how long. Until our country is reunited and spring has burst out again with lotus flowers instead of bombs. Here in the South it is still winter: our people are lying dead under the enemy's heel; many of us are already dead and buried. But they fought well, didn't they? Good-bye for now, Tuyet Lan. I always have your photograph over my heart. Be faithful to me.

Tuyet Lan, my dear. Rivers and mountains keep us apart and yet I seem to see you at every crossroads, behind every clump of grass and every tree. A swallow flies toward our village. I ask him to carry you my love and to ask you to wait patiently for me. You are suffering, but so is South Vietnam. Its sobs rise from every rice field, from every coconut tree, from every canal. The river Hien Loung divides not only us but so many others who love. And if you really love me, you too must help in this struggle. So that I shall be proud of the photograph you gave me. Happiness must come to both of us and to all who weep as we do.

Tuyet Lan, my darling! I should like to write you an August poem to celebrate your birthday, your twenty years. And I should like its verses to contain all my love for you and all my hatred for the enemy. Accept this letter as a poem. It is your birthday today, isn't it? You are in the spring of life and revolutionary passion. You will grow with it, and with it grows my tenderness for you. I feel I left you only a moment ago: my hungry eyes still follow your white dress as you move away and your hair waving like the palm trees in our villages. My love is so exuberant; and it is as sweet as the scent of the lotus flower, as fresh as the water of a stream, as precious as the sun that gilds the earth. It helps me when I see the bombs falling on my country and tears running down a woman's face. It makes me stand up against the Americans like a mountain against a storm. It makes me strong as a river sweeping its refuse—the Americans—to the sea. I feel like the mountain Chi Linh and the river Bach Dang, which bear traces of other defeated enemies. How many enemies have invaded our country? For how many centuries have we



been fighting? And what a brave country ours is.
We shall destroy the new enemy, Tuyet Lan.

In the shade of a coconut tree I am thinking of you, Tuyet Lan. We are at Tri Thien in the province of Quang Tri and before me is the river Ven Hai with white beaches along its banks. It is an autumn morning and I am homesick. Actually I am always homesick, even when I am eating or on the march. And everytime I see a red flower my homesickness grows, because you love red flowers. When you see them, you call out softly. Ah, if only we could live together, even here. It is beautiful here, you know. The line of the mountains is beautiful, the green of the forests is beautiful and so is the fluttering of the birds, the trembling of the leaves. I would like to paint apricot trees, tufts of bamboo and orchid petals. But in the evening a sinister silence falls over everything. And what was delightful becomes horrible. And I miss you desperately, Tuyet Lan.

I am still not sending these letters, Tuyet Lan. But what a sacrifice it is! If you are really so strong, why can you not read my letters from time to time, Tuyet Lan? Why do you make me keep them like this? What is the point of writing to you if you do not see what I write? They might kill me, Tuyet Lan, and then my letters would be lost and you would never read them. Are you in good health, Tuyet Lan? Are you faithful to me? You must remain faithful, Tuyet Lan. The fighting will not last long, you will see. Wait for me, Tuyet Lan. One day I shall be back. I promise you, my darling.

I have written a poem for my mother, Tuyet Lan. But she will never read it. So I am putting it aside for you.

Dear mother! I call you but you are so far
away,

I call you and a deer replies.
He came running to me, through the forest,
he was breathless as you were when the
bombs fell,
when you called for help and no one heard you,
and your heart broke into a thousand pieces.
Whom shall I give my love to now, Mother?
There is only one mother, no one can take
her place.

Sometimes I dream of coming home, Mother.
I go back in my dream, but there is nothing
left,

only bomb-holes that stir me to vengeance.
Our house is destroyed, disappeared,
and it was so beautiful, Mother.
We used to read the story of Kim Van Kieu
and we found it the saddest story in the world.
We did not know sadness, remember?

Sadness means lighting candles:
a candle for you and a candle for Father.

I have brought three candles,
the third one is for me, for my tomb.
I feel like Loc Van Tien the Mandarin.
When he came home with his Mandarin's rank,
he found his mother was dead, only his girl
was alive:

Nuyet Nga who had waited for him ten years.
And he wept so much that he became blind.
So I send you my hatred for those who killed you.
The river may dry, the mountain may break,
I shall have my revenge, Mother.
It does not matter if they kill me afterwards,
and no one lights this stick on my grave.

Tuyet Lan, my darling. I know you do not want to hear me talking of hatred, but how can I possibly not feel it? I know you believe in forgiveness, but how can I sink to that? I think of nothing but this—destroying the Americans. And I think even a stone, or a child, may help to do that. This is why I ask you to take part enthusiastically in the Resistance. You may say that you are not suited to it. Reality does not seem to suit you. Your hair is as soft as the surface of this stream, your hands are as tender as the petals of this flower, your shoulders are as fragile as the threads of this spider's web, Tuyet Lan; but you must do it, all the same. And then your next birthday, all your birthdays, will be gayer, and you will forget that you grew up amid bloodshed and explosions. Do not be downcast, my love, leave that to me. Difficulties teach us how to live, they help us to grow. Now look, we are camped in a forest: it is cold and raining and we are all chilled and soaking. But if I did not fight what sort of a man would I be? I would not even be a man, just a chilled, useless object. I ask you to feel what I feel. But it is all useless, my love, because you will not read what I write.

The sound of a flute is enough to take me back to my rivers and to the sailing boats skimming through the water, to you and to the dimples on your lovely cheeks. If you do not want to fight, Tuyet Lan, do not do so. I don't mind; all I care is that you stay alive and wait for me and are faithful to me. Because if anything should happen to you I would throw myself in front of the first machine gun I met.

Am I silly, my love, Tuyet Lan? I wrote a poem for you as well. The other guerrillas tease me when they see me bending over my paper. They say: he is writing a poem, he is writing another poem! But I let

them talk, and write and rewrite it until I am satisfied with what I read. I am satisfied with this; in fact, I have copied it out without any corrections. Here it is, Tuyet Lan. It speaks of you and of our village. Really, the two of you are the same thing.

It is at Quang Binh, my beloved village,
 that the rivers run best,
 that the coconut trees throw the longest
 shadows,
 that the marine pines give the biggest cones,
 landing with small, polite thuds.
 It is at Quang Binh that the green is greenest,
 and the winds carry the scent of growing rice,
 and the herons cover the fields with their
 white wings,
 and the sand slides against you like a caress.
 Because at Quang Binh is you.
 My memory returns to Quang Binh,
 and I remember a girl from the North,
 the days I lived with her,
 sharing sweetness and bitterness.
 The road to Revolution is long and hard,
 but victory will come, girl from the North.
 We shall free this country of ours,
 we shall unify it again, so as never to lose
 it again.
 I shall go back to Quang Binh, my grief will
 disappear,
 and the hatred the bombs have put into my
 memory
 with the smoke of fires, with the explosions.
 All this will be over, Tuyet Lan, I swear.
 And again the boats will go out into the
 open sea,
 again the rice fields will be kissed by the
 wind,

while we listen to the melancholy notes of a flute.

Shouldering guns, the soldiers go to fight the Americans for this. That is, for you, Tuyet Lan.

I don't believe it, Tuyet Lan. It isn't true, Tuyet Lan. They came and told me that you are dead, Tuyet Lan. They told me you were killed like my mother, in a bombing. I don't believe it, Tuyet Lan. It is too much, Tuyet Lan. I cannot bear it, Tuyet Lan. It must be a mistake, Tuyet Lan. If not, I shall go mad. You are alive, Tuyet Lan, you are well, and we shall meet again, Tuyet Lan, we shall walk again on the bank of the Lake of the Swan, and the Gulf of the Yellow Star, where there is always a little breeze. That breeze you like so much, which ruffles your hair, Tuyet Lan. We shall look into each other's eyes, your hand in mine, and we shall never leave each other again. There shall be no more farewells on the river, Tuyet Lan. Tuyet Lan, Tuyet Lan, Tuyet Lan! I am dreaming, Tuyet Lan. You are dead. We shall meet again but in another world, if there is one, when I am dead myself. Because now there is nothing left for me, Tuyet Lan. And I don't care about anything, anymore. They have asked me to go on a patrol and I am going. To die.

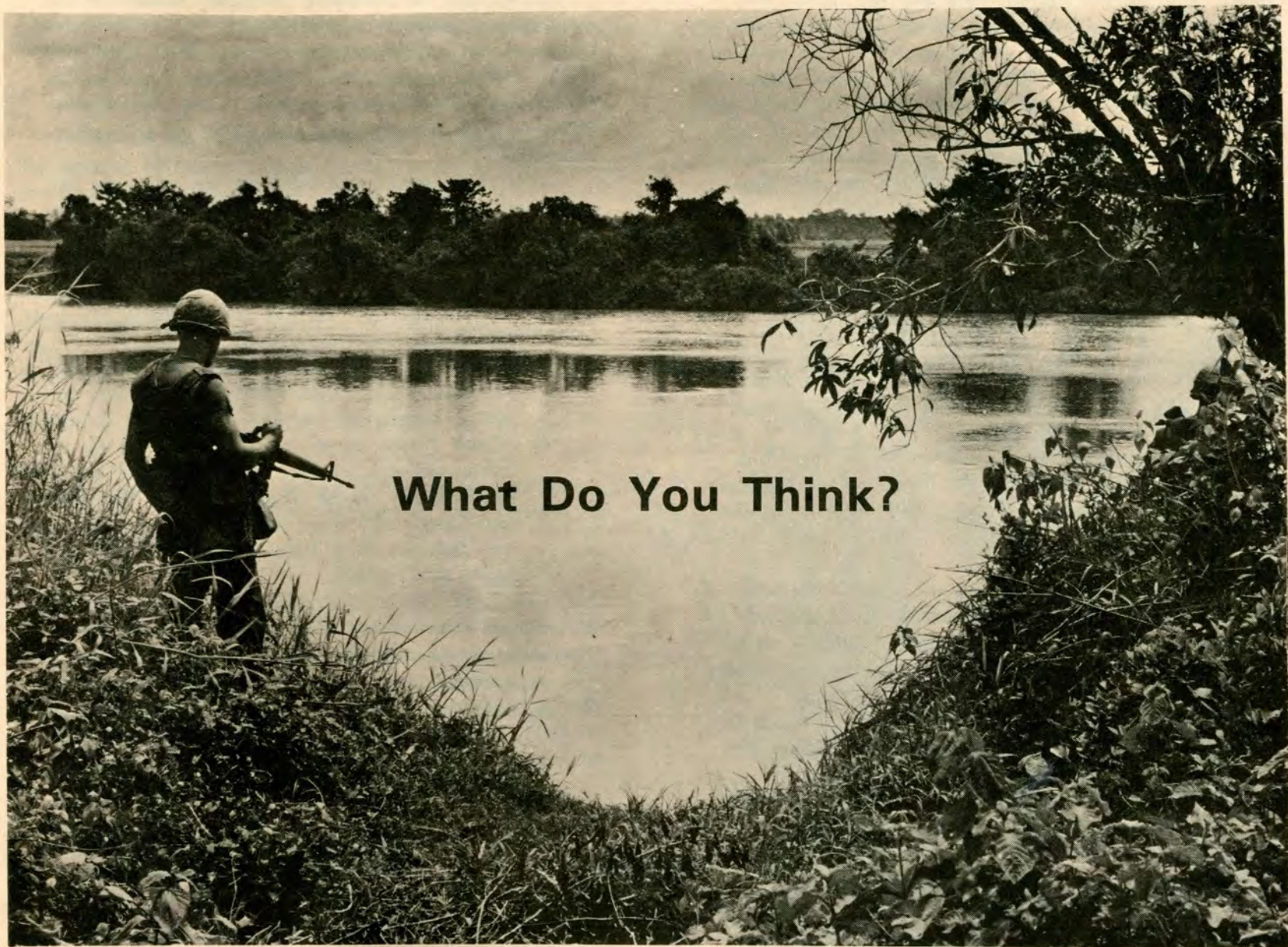
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1-a. How would you answer the question "Why are you participating in this war?" if you were one of the NLF soldiers? Frank Elkins? Bruce Anello?

1-b. Describe the doubts or conflicts you might feel, again comparing answers.

2. The unknown NLF soldier writes, "If my death helps my people, then I am ready to die." Are there any circumstances under which you could make the same statement? If so, describe what these circumstances would be.

3. How do the villagers in these diaries feel about the Vietnamese soldiers? How do the soldiers feel about the villagers? Why?



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Ask a Vietnam veteran that you know to read Bruce Anello's diary and compare it with his own experiences. You may also want to raise some of the questions that came out of the class discussions and see how his answers compare to the ones you came up with.

Read one of the books listed under "Suggestions for Further Study" and report back to the class.

For example:

- Compare Rick Springman's story with George Smith's (P.O.W.: Two Years With The Vietcong), pages 73-108.
- Compare the six poems by GIs in this book with these poems from We Promise One Another: "Invasion," "What a Sight! 550,000 GIs in Viet Nam," "Let Us Stand Up," "A Guerilla's Tale," and "The Present."
- Compare William Calley's account of the My Lai massacre with what came out at the Army's investigation (skim Cover-Up: The Army's Secret Investigation Of The Massacre At My Lai 4, pages 147-195, for details).
- Select the testimony of five GIs from "And All of Them Can Be Killed And Most of Them Are Killed," in The Winter Soldier Investigation.
- Listen to testimony in "Missing In Action" on the record "Winter Soldier II" and compare it with Frank Elkins.

Role play the following imaginary scenes, or others involving soldiers from the book. After one group of actors has improvised the scene as they think it might develop, discuss their interpretation and let another group show how they think these men would relate to each other. (You may want to add other characters.)

If a scene seems especially interesting, some students might develop it into a written play to present before other classes.

- a. Rick Springman is a member of Bruce Anello's company. Bruce returns from leave determined not to take up his gun and discusses his decision with Rick and David Lang.
- b. Gerald Snead and David Parks are assigned to Firebase Pace. Two white GIs approach them about signing the petition to Senator Kennedy.
- c. Frank Elkins' plane is shot down and he is taken prisoner by Le Vanh Minh and the other NLF soldier whose diaries we read. Through an interpreter the three of them discuss why they are fighting, their feelings about the war and their families, etc.

(One difficulty in this assignment is that some of the soldiers were writing early in the war and others years later, when attitudes had changed considerably. You may either try to overlook this difference or to play a character as you think he would have been at the later time—for example, David Parks as he would be in 1972 rather than as he was in 1967.)

Several of you may want to read through Winter Soldier Investigation and do a dramatic reading of it for the rest of the class, rewriting parts to make it more appropriate for oral reading.

A group of you may want to plan a discussion that the whole class participates in, based on the following questions:

How did racial stereotypes affect the attitudes and actions of white soldiers toward Asians? Of Black and white soldiers toward each other? Of Black soldiers toward Asians?

The following selections from books listed in the bibliography may be useful in planning the discussion: "You've Gotta Go To Vietnam, You've Gotta Kill The Gooks," pages 5 and 6 in Winter Soldier Investigation; "Beyond Vietnam" by Martin Luther King Jr., pages 81-91 in Vietnam and Black America.

One explanation for United States military involvement in Vietnam is "opposition to communism." How would you define communism?

After the Mylai massacre, Lt. Calley said, "we weren't in Mylai to kill human beings, really. We were there to kill an ideology." Do you agree that this was why the United States was in Vietnam? If you agree, explain why you would or would not support this policy. What other reasons might account for United States involvement in Vietnam?

Do a drawing, painting, collage, sculpture or poem showing your response to the stories in the booklet. Focus on one of the following themes: A Pawn in the Game; How did the "heroes" feel about themselves?; What were we fighting for in Vietnam?



SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

P.O.W.: Two Years With The Vietcong, George Smith.

Personal account by a young Green Beret held captive by the National Liberation Front for two years. Tells of his younger life, his boot camp days, experiences as a POW and his return home.

Ramparts Press, 1971. Distributed by Monthly Review, 32 W. 14th Street, New York 10011.

Winning Hearts and Minds, Edited By Larry Rottmann, Jan Barry, and Basil T. Paquet.

Poems by American soldiers in Vietnam. Powerful and direct.

McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Flower Of The Dragon: The Breakdown Of The United States Army In Vietnam, Richard Boyle.

Talks about the war from the perspective of the "grunts." Looks at drugs, mutinees, deserters, the Green Berets.

Ramparts Press, 1973. Distributed by Monthly Review.

Nothing, And So Be It, Oriana Fallaci, translated by Isabel Quigly.

An Italian woman journalist travels with American troops in Vietnam and gives her impressions of the war. Provides a clear picture of what it is like to be living and fighting in Vietnam. Written in terse, exciting style.

Doubleday, 1972.

Vietnam And Black America, An Anthology of Protest and Resistance, Edited by Clyde Taylor.

An anthology of poems, speeches, articles, journals, and statements by Black Americans who opposed the war "as a natural expression of a personally felt concern for human rights and racial justice."

Anchor Books/Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New Jersey, 1973.

Cover-Up: The Army's Secret Investigation Of The Massacre At My Lai 4, Seymour M. Hersch.

Based on official transcripts and documents of the military investigation with judgments and additional information supplied by Mr. Hersch, the journalist who first brought the massacre to light.

Vintage Books, 1972.

Winter Soldier Investigation, Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW).

Transcript from an inquiry into American war-crimes held by the VVAW in 1971. Testimony of 75 veterans.

Beacon Press, 1972.

The Opium Trail: Heroin and Imperialism, Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars.

Discusses addiction in the United States and in the Army. Looks at Southeast Asia as a major source of opium and discusses how the United States is involved in the sale and traffic of this drug.

Available from New England Free Press, 60 Union Square, Somerville, Massachusetts, 02143. 1972. \$25.

We Promise One Another: Poems From An Asian War, Indochina Mobile Education Project, 1971.

A collection of contemporary and traditional Vietnamese poems by students, soldiers, and folk singers. The poems deal with themes such as love of country, devotion to family, and the struggle against foreign domination.

Available from Indochina Mobile Education Project, P.O. Box 39013, Washington, D.C. 20016. \$2.00.

Record: "Winter Soldier II"

Testimony by Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Boston, Massachusetts, October, 1971. "Missing in Action" is stories of men who were bomber pilots; "Air War/1984," testimonies about the George Orwell-like electronic battlefield.

Rounder Records, 186 Willow Avenue, Somerville, Massachusetts 02144. \$1.00.

Slide Show: "The Electronic Battlefield"

How GIs were replaced by an intricate system of sensors, computers, and remote-controlled bombers. Slides, script and documentation for use with Kodak Carousel projector.

NARMIC (National Action Research on the Military-Industrial Complex), American Friends Service Committee, 48 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139 or 1125 16th Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102. \$10 rental, \$50 purchase.

Slide show: "The Post-War War"

Documents how the war has continued since the signing of the Peace Accords in 1973, including the transformation of American military personnel into

civilian workers on Pentagon contracts. Slides, script and documentation for use with Kodak Carousel projector.

NARMIC \$10 rental; \$50 purchase.

Film: "Vietnam: Still America's War"

British documentary which details the continuing suffering of the Vietnamese people from the ongoing war. 16mm color, 26 minutes.

May be rented from AFSC or from Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC), 235 East 49th Street, New York, NY 10017, for \$10.

Film: "Introduction to the Enemy"

Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda, members of the Indochina Peace Campaign (IPC), interview people in North Vietnam and the areas of South Vietnam controlled by the Provisional Revolutionary Government about their experiences during the war and their hopes for restoring their country. 16mm color, 60 minutes.

IPC, 181 Pier Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90405.

"What Every Vietnam Veteran Knows," Philip Scribner Balboni, *The New Republic*, December 19, 1970, Vol. 163, No. 25.

Interviews with other veterans who witnessed other incidents similar to Mylai.

"Two Pilots, Two Wars," Steven V. Roberts, *New York Times Magazine*, June 10, 1973.

Contrasts the attitudes of a pilot in World War II, who firmly believes in what he did, with a pilot during the war in Vietnam, whose faith was shaken by his experience.

