

(Copy from C 4/31st Inf. Bn. veteran James B. Simms with the assistance of Mike Crutcher a veteran of E & HHC, 1/5 Cav, 1969-70 1st Cav Div. May 2014.)
196th Crest "C H A R G E R" Knight on a rearing horse

196th Infantry Brigade
Da Nang, Vietnam

March 10, 1972 Page 1

2/1 Inf springs trap; rips enemy on ridge

By SP4 STEVE BROOKS

Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops got a big surprise on Charlie during February. Normally a VC and NVA stomping ground, the ridge was visited by Companies A and C of the 2d Battalion, 21st Infantry, as they searched for launch sites in the rocket belt west of Da Nang.

It all started when Company A was flown into the towering canopy of Charlie Ridge, and set up their first Night Defensive Position (NDP) on an "L" shaped piece of ground above a river.

An ambush was placed that night, then pulled in the next morning when the company got ready to move out.

Just as the grunts shrugged into their rucks, SP/4 Robert "Chief" Azure ran up to Captain Warren Mills, C.O., and told him that Vietnamese were coming down the river.

Mills studied the approaching figures through field glasses, saw packs and weapons, then quickly swung two platoons into a hasty "L" shaped ambush.

The enemy packs walked right into the jaws of the ambush, then suddenly spotted an American footprint - just as the GI's opened up with everything they had.

At the same time, the Artillery Liaison called in blocking fires behind the enemy to keep them pinned, and the grunts and redlegs fired into the riverbed for a solid 90 minutes.

As the fire was lifted, a team from the 63rd Combat Trackers moved into the riverbed, where they found one body, then killed another enemy soldier who jumped up from behind a rock with two hand grenades.

More squads sweeping the area turned up two more enemy bodies with pack and grenades, and one AK-M Russian assault rifle. They also found about 15,000 piasters and a shopping list. It seemed that Alpha Company had stopped a VC supply train going grocery shopping in the lowlands to feed their friends on Charlie Ridge.

The next morning Company C was inserted higher up on Charlie Ridge, hoping to drive other enemy troops into the waiting arms of Alpha Company. Their landing zone (LZ) was peaceful for the first few lifts, but quickly turned hot as the birds began taking fire from small arms and grenade launchers.

They quickly deployed into ambushes, where they fired on about 35 enemy packs trying to flee the area. When the firefight stopped, "Charlie had left behind two dead and a collection of booby traps. 140mm rockets and a 122mm rocket war head.

Meanwhile, down the hill an Alpha Company mechanical ambush exploded, so again they fired up the area, and later discovered a rucksack full of bullet holes and another AK-M rifle.

Alpha set another mechanical ambush, took fire and again, and again, and again processed artillery.

Charlie company stayed in contact day and night until they lost track of time, and their C.O., Captain Terry Fox, still can't remember how many days and nights they took fire and returned fire, over and over.

They were exploring a maze of caves, some of which ran six to eight levels below the earth and were connected by bamboo ladders.

One cave became a mystery as grunts as the grunts stumbled onto a large figure "4" made of logs and vines. They are still wondering about it - could it be a symbol?

The cave was obviously a V.I.P. quarters with furniture made of bamboo lashed with vines and large amounts of office supplies.

The grunts removed what they could and smashed the rest on the way out, then headed for a long scheduled 24-hour stand down.

Alpha and Charlie companies left behind 10 enemy dead and the smoking ruins of an NVA base camp. There were no American casualties.

Captain Mills commented, "Both sides caught each other by surprise, but the grunts reacted quicker. It was the first time we had seen "the Dude" for while, and when we did we smoked him good. It was the most exciting thing to happen around here in a long time.

more photos in center

Sammy hits Da Nang

Freedom Hill-Courtesy of the USO, the 196th Infantry Brigade hosted the Sammy Davis Jr. Show February 24th. Presented to over 5,000 cheering, clapping troops from the DaNang area, the show was part of a two week tour of U.S. military bases in Vietnam.

The star, of course, was Sammy Davis Jr. Alive, moving, driving; he performed with the style that made him an entertaining great. For a little while the GI was in Las Vegas.

A troop of 25 entertainers and technicians helped create the show.

Mrs. Altovise G. Davis Jr., or as Sammy said, "His Old Lady," was the Mistress of ceremonies.

Lynn Kellogg, from the original case of Hair, and Sondra Williams provided beauty, voice and soul.

Also featured were comedian Timmie Rodgers, and dancers Adele Yoshieka, Gloria Gamble, Sandra Smith, and Janis Steen. The band conducted by George Rhodes, included fortunatos [sic] Richard, Lloyd Mayers, Albert McKay, and Harold Lindner.

After the two hour show Sammy and his troop boarded helicopters bound for yet another audience. They had all offered their talent for a good cause-the entertainment of the men in Vietnam.

Photos:

1. Sammy Davis Jr. belting out a song.
2. Altovise Davis, Sammy Davis Junior's "Old Lady" greets the troops at Freedom Hill.

MARS on LZ Linda

By SGT Mark A. Schultz

LZ Linda-Grunts, mortarmen and artillerymen on this landing zone are enjoying a comfort of the rear. They can make calls from the Linda Bell telephone booth back to the world almost daily.

Linda Bell is a MARS telephonic communication system set up by Staff Sergeant Thomas Dupont (Buffalo, N.Y.), Sergeant Thomas J. Wallace (Millen, Ga.) and Specialist Four Terry L. Howard (Daytona Beach, Fla.). These three men give 196th Brigade troops here the chance to call home to the United States using a tie with the MARS station in the brigade headquarters area.

Wallace explained that he arrived with the MARS equipment in December after it was moved from a 23d Infantry division (Americal) MARS station. The operation on LZ Linda then began calls home on Dec. 12. Wallace says that eight to ten calls per day is about average and the station is operating at least five days per week for the Linda troops.

"Calls are made on a first come, first served basis here at the LZ," Wallace continued, "and we try to give the artillerymen and grunts both a fair chance to get calls home."

In the two months of operation, approximately 170 calls have been processed. A record number of 14 calls was placed on Feb. 13.

Photo Caption:

DA FORM 3686 1 Jan 71 (Test) For use of this form, see AR-37-104-3; proponent agency is Office of Comptroller of the Army.

JUMPS: new system; new forms

So now you're on JUMPS.

By now, you should know all about the pay options from mid-month pay to pay by check or cash and all the rest.

But you say you are still confused over that LEAVE and Earning Statement you get at the end of the month.

It's really not that hard to figure out. But if you're like the Charger staff, you may need a little help at first. So here it is.

There are nine different lines running across the page; each line explains a different part of your pay.

The first is headed "ID." That line simply gives the information about you - the man getting paid. First comes your name and social security number. Next comes your sex and service component, then your unit identification code, then the code of the finance office that's paying you, and then a control number.

The second line tells about your past service, your rank, how long you've been in the army, when you're due to get out, the dates the current pay period and the day the voucher was prepared. The last block - marked "Amount BF" - is the money that is brought forward from the last pay period. For most people it will be less than a dollar, since Uncle Sam pays in even dollar amounts each month and carries any change over to the next month.

The next line -headed "ENT"- is your entitlements. Block 16 is your base pay, the BAQ is your quarters allowance, and the BAS is your subsistence allowance, or rations if you don't eat in the mess hall. Also on the same line will appear the letters HFP which means hostile fire pay. Any other money you are entitled to will also be recorded on that line with an abbreviation that is explained on the back of the form.

Following that line all the way to the right, you'll find Block 24, "TOT ENTITLEMENTS" which means, naturally, the total amount you are entitled to receive for the past month.

The next line is where the money starts coming out of your pay. "ALOT" means allotments that you have told Uncle Sam to take out of your pay each month. For instance, if you buy a \$25 bond each month, you'll find \$18.75 deducted on that line, or if you send your wife a few hundred each month, it'll be recorded there. Again, there will be a code just before the amount which you can decipher by looking at the back of the form.

Block 32 adds up all the allotments which are taken out of your pay.

Now, the fifth line from the top is marked "DED" and lists the money that Uncle Sam takes out of your monthly pay. SGLI is life insurance which is optional, INC TAX is income tax withheld from your pay, FICA is social security and SH is the Soldier's Home deduction which is 10 cents each month from all RA enlistees and RA warrant officers.

After the deduction line the next two lines are marked PMTS or Payments and list the amount of money that you receive each month. Since there are several pay options open to you, the final pay voucher each month lists the amount of mid-month pay you received. If you elected mid-month pay, and it will also list the amount of your end of month pay.

If you drew a partial pay during the course of the month, that, too, will be itemized in the payment section.

Then comes the TAX line, which is just that. Here is listed the amount of taxable income you earned during that pay period. Then you have the amount of taxable income you earned during the current calendar year to date, the number of exemptions claimed, amount of income tax withheld year to date, and so on.

Also on the TAX line is another important listing for some individuals. That is Block 57, which lists the total amount of indebtedness to the U.S. - if you happened to owe the government money for a particular reason.

The last line is marked LV is your leave statements, but don't let it fool you. Your leave is figured on the fiscal year and not the calendar year. Thus, Block, 49 - BF or balance forward - lists the number of days of leave you earned and carried over from the previous fiscal year.

Then, successively, the form lists the amount of leave time you have earned to date during the current fiscal year, the amount used, the amount used fiscal year to date, the number of days lost during the current fiscal year and finally, the number of excess leave days you may have accrued if you happened to take too much leave.

Also on the LV line is listed accrual data in Block 50-still another pay option. The number of dependents claimed for BAQ in Block 61.

The rest of the form is titled REMARKS. Here any adjustments and changes to your account are noted.

1972 TAX TIPS

All wage earners should now adjust their income exemption certificates (Form W-4) according to the recently enacted Internal Revenue Act of 1971, the Internal Revenue Service has announced.

Otherwise, the IRS pointed out, many will be subjected to over-withholding and unnecessary reductions in their take home pay.

The new with-holding provisions of the tax law apply to all wages paid after January 16, 1972, and employees should file new exemption certificates as soon as possible.

The changes in withholding reflect the increases in the standard deduction and in the personal exemption provided by the 1971 Act, and are designed to eliminate the major causes of under-withholding that many taxpayers experienced in 1971. The withholding tax rates are adjusted so that single employees earning up to \$25,000 a year and married employees, whose spouses are not employed, with earnings up to \$31,000 a year can generally expect to have their full tax withheld.

The new law also introduces "special withholding allowances" for one-job individuals and families and liberalizes the provisions governing additional with-holding allowances for taxpayers who itemize their deductions (for charities, taxes, etc.).

IMPORTANT STEPS

The IRS pointed out that generally, an employee should do these things:

1. Claim all of the withholding exemptions to which he is entitled for himself, spouse, dependents, etc. Employees who formerly under-claimed exemptions in order to counterbalance the under-withholding in the withholding system will probably find that his is no longer necessary or desirable.
2. Claim the new "special withholding allowance" if single and he does not earn more than \$25,000; or if married, his spouse does not work and he has only one job from which he earns not more than \$31,000.
3. Claims the "additional withholding allowance" shown in the table on the back of the withholding exemption certificate (Form W4) if his itemized deductions are substantially larger than the standard deduction.

However, the IRS suggested that all single employees who earn more than \$25,000 and married employees who earn more than \$31,000, figure out their 1972 tax and withholding based on expected earnings for the year. Then if their withholding is not sufficient, they can increase it in order to avoid having to make payments on a declaration of estimated tax. They can do this by under-claiming their exemptions or asking their employers to withhold additional dollar amounts, or both.

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Brigadier General Joseph C. McDonough .. Commanding General
Major Michael J. Williams.....Information Officer
Second Lieutenant David M. N. O'Bara.....Officer-in-Charge
Specialist Four John G. DriesbachProduction Editor

ON THE RIDGELINE

During the day it's hot. It's dusty or muddy, depending on the season, and boring. At night the fog rolls in. It's cold. There are strange noises out there in the swirling white blanket, and lights move where no lights should be.

It's called the ridgeline, and if you are a grunt in the 196th you get to know it, sooner or later. You get to know it very well.

Its bunker line stretches around the rim of the valley bowl that encloses the Charger complex, and guards Da Nang from the west.

If Charlie wants to come into the bowl from the west, he must pass under the guns on the ridge line. He knows it. So do the grunts on the ridge line, and the tension is always there.

Little things break the routine, and become memorable events in the day's happenings.

A big mail call.

AFVN radio plays one of your favorite tunes.

The Donut Dollies visit.

The momentary excitement and interest dies down and the ridge line is still there. The grunts from the Charger Brigade are still there.

Waiting.

Photo Captions:

- 1) Officers from 3/21 Infantry survey their "domain"... the western approaches to Da Nang and the "Charger" complex. The view may be beautiful, but the job is serious.
- 2) The ridgeline is a place of swirling clouds, looming mountain peaks and lonely vigils.
- 3) PFC Steve Fuchs (Eugene, Oregon) lf the second platoon A/3/21 checks his "pig" {pig = M60 machine-gun) on the ridgeline. "Charlie" may never come, but the men and weapons protecting Da Nang must be ready if he does.

Centerfold Photos on pages 4-5 of the Sammy Davis Jr. show are related to the article on page 1.

1. **ABOVE LEFT** - Lynn J. Kellogg, a member of the original cast of HAIR, seems to enjoy her work. The ever smiling Miss Kellogg knocked 'em dead at every stop on the tour.
2. **ABOVE CENTER** - Sammy Davis Jr. go out to see the crowd and sign autographs. Sammy seems to have a fine collection of fatigues going. Necklaces, bracelets, rings and bits of uniforms from different units... he shouldn't have any problems with clothing bills.
3. **ABOVE RIGHT** - Sammy and his wife Altovise face the crowd at the Freedom Hill Amphitheater. Mrs. Davis was the "mistress of ceremony."
4. **FAR LEFT** - Comedian Timmie Rogers, a man enchained (check out the shirt), broke loose with a good laugh for the GIs.
5. **NEAR LEFT** - Dancer Dianne Crump waves her best wishes to the crowd at Freedom Hill.
6. **LOWER RIGHT** - Lynn Kellogg faces "Woodstock East" in the amphitheater. Thousands of GIs managed to make the show despite the security problems that delayed announcement of the show's schedule.

PHOTOS BY CHARGER STAFF

not just gripes**IG: Multi-role job**

By SP5 Sam Rousso

Lieutenant Colonel Donald G. Mullins is the Inspector General for the 196th Infantry Brigade, and he has very definite ideas on his job's requirements and his philosophy of how those requirements should be satisfied.

According to Mullins, "A man would rather feel he's being helped by his own unit, but if a unit can't resolve the problem, well then, that's what we're here for."

The IG has many missions besides the day-to-day hearing of complaints and request for assistance.

Col. Mullins inquires into matters of command mission accomplishment, esprit, morale, economy and efficiency. He also is the confidential adviser to the commanding general on these matters.

All of these mission[s] are accomplished by Annual General Inspections of battalions, companies and separate units within the brigade.

"Brigade staff sections are inspected by representatives of higher headquarters-in this case, that's USARV," explains Mullins.

In addition, when the circumstances warrant it, the IG conducts special investigations of a non-Article 32 nature. For instance, says Mullins, "When Firebase Maryann was overrun last year, the investigating officer was the IG of the 23d Infantry Division (Americal)".

"Although we log all complaints and requests for assistance," stated the IG, they really can't be used as an indicator of morale." The Colonel pointed out that sometimes complaints come in more at the first of the month because of pay problems than during the rest of the month.

"When a man comes in, I don't expect him to look like the soldier of the month-sometimes.... it's impossible. But I do expect a man to come in here in proper uniform and with a proper haircut."

When a soldier comes to the IG, he fills out a form. The usual question questions are asked - name, rank, unit, date departed US and so on-and a space for the soldier's complaint is provided.

There is also a checklist at the bottom of the form, indicating how far the soldier has gone through the chain of command before deciding to visit the IG. "We use it mainly to give us an idea of where to start," says Mullins.

And if a man hasn't gone through the chain of command. "Well often it's just a matter of communications, and the problem can be resolved almost immediately.

However, a man should obtain permission to be absent from his unit when he comes to" states Mullins.

"And on that there's a misconception that I think should be cleared up. No commanding officer can punish a soldier for going to see the IG," Mullins continued.

Mullins feels there is a definite purpose for his job. "I'm here to see the troops get the services they deserve. I'm required to protect the best interest of the individual and the government, as a sort of balancing force."

Col. Mullins feels that he has a fulfilling rewarding job. As a battalion commander (with the Americal), I wasn't always able to do as much for my men as I wanted, but now, as the brigade Inspector General, I can insure that troops get the support and service they deserve.

Photo Caption: LTC Donald G. Mullins, IG, talks to an unidentified soldier

**Top Chargers
VIP treatment
3 days R&R**

By SP5 Sam Rousso

DA NANG - the 196th Infantry Brigade's Charger of the West "program has met with unanimous approval - at least from four recent beneficiaries of the program.

The Chargers of the West interviewed were Specialist Four Larry Clark (Ozark, Ala.), of Headquarters company, 2d Bn, 1st Inf; Specialist Four Jimmy L. Hall (Dallas), of the 2d Bn., 94th Arty, Specialist Four Alan R. Higgins (Millenocket, Me.), of the Admin Company (PROV) and Specialist Four Albert E. McLean (Chicago) of Company B, 1st Bn, 46th Inf.

"I think that it's a fantastic program," said McLean. "Getting to talk to the general is something that doesn't happen every day, he even asked if we had any gripes."

"I didn't think anyone cared, until now. It was really an honor to meet the big man., "said Hall.

"It was a real surprise," said Higgins. "Someone came up and told me to report to the CO. I met someone else there and we were both asked some questions, the other guy was told he could go. Then I was told that I had been named Charger of the week."

"It was the first time anybody ever gave me credit for anything," said Clark. "It was a really gratifying experience."

The Charger of the Week program is designed to bridge a communications gap by showing the selected Chargers what part their unit plays in the mission of the 196th- the defense of American installations in and around Da Nang.

During their five-day tour, the chargers of the Week are given briefings by brigade staff sections, tour the brigade area of operations, visit Vietnamese officials and tour Da Nang Air Base.

"It's an incentive for good soldiers," says the brigade's top enlisted man. Command Sergeant Major Lorenzo Rivera. After all the official activities the Charger of the week is treated to a three-day R&R at China Beach.

'Loach' pilots: guts are a necessity

By 1LT Kent Flanagan

MARBLE MOUNTAIN ARMY AIRFIELD - "To be a good LOH (light observation helicopter pilot you've got to be all guts and no brains."

That is the favorite expression of captain James F. MacLeod Jr., commander of D Troop, 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. He may say it, but he's got to be kidding. He is a qualified LOH pilot and the LOH is his favorite aircraft.

A native of Anaheim, Calif., CPT MacLeod took over command of D Troop last August, and now has served 54 months in Vietnam out of a total of 14 years service in the Army.

MacLeod served several years as an enlisted man before he received a commission through Officer candidate School at Ft. Benning in 1965.

Most of his 54 months in Vietnam have been with aviation units. In fact most of his 2000 hours of flight time in various rotary wing aircraft have been in combat in Vietnam.

He is qualified to pilot the UH-1 "Huey" Series A, B, C, D, and H; the AH-1G Cobra; and the LOH "LOACH" models OH-13, OH-23, and OH-6.

MacLeod is firmly convinced that the air cav is where it's all happening. "Everybody in the air cav has to go out each day with the attitude that he's going to get in a fight, and he prepares himself accordingly."

That's where the LOH pilot comes in.

"In a cav troop, the guy in the LOH controls the war," MacLeod stated.

The main mission of the Loach is to provoke the enemy into revealing himself. On an air cav mission, the LOH pilot can be the key to success or failure of the mission.

Low level observation is not exactly the safest occupation [in] the Army, but LOH pilots face the danger of being knocked out of the sky every time they go on a mission.

When a LOH pilot first comes in country, he is used as an observer in the left hand seat, according to MacLeod.

"Usually, it takes about 100 flying hours (anywhere from a week to a month) to learn to pick up the signs," said MacLeod.

"The LOH pilot is hovering at 20 feet looking for signs and he is all alone down there," he continued.

"If he draws fire, he gets out fast, the Cobra rolls in to neutralize the area and the LOH goes back in to check out the damage.

"This is possibly the most dangerous time for the LOH pilot," MacLeod explained. If the neutralization isn't successful the Loach is wide open.

There is no doubt about it. Good LOH pilots have to be "all guts and no brains."

Photo: LOH helicopter and inset photo of a caption wearing a cavalry hat. [Assumption is that this is a photo of Caption Mullins and an OH-6A from D-troop].

Photo caption: Look familiar? Think again, this time cover her with body paint... Remember? We don't remember her name, but she was the dancer on Laugh-in, the one they always covered with slogans. Playboy convinced her to scrub up for a few minutes. Now, why would anyone want to cover all that with paint???

(PHOTO COURTESY PLAYBOY)

Cobras are mean and deadly
Ride in Cav Snake?

By 1LT Kent Flanagan

MARBLE MOUNTAIN ARMY AIRFIELD - The Cobra AH-1G attack Helicopter is the deadliest meanest-looking aircraft in the Army inventory of weapons systems.

Trying to compare this sleek fast ship to a Huey is like comparing a sports car to a four-door sedan-there just isn't any comparison.

I can remember many times during my Vietnam tour when I have seen a Cobra overhead and wondered what it was like to fly in the machine known by most REMF's as a Cobra, and by the Grunts as a snake.

I was covering air cavalry missions at D Troop, 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav., when a Cobra pilot by the name of O'Hara offered me a ride.

Almost before I knew it, captain Tom O'Hara, a veteran of 30 months as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, had finished his pre-flight and was showing me how to get into the gear that I would wear on the flight.

First, he asked me if I was armed. I showed him my camera, loaded with film and ready to shoot. Somehow, I began to think that wasn't what he was asking me about.

Then he showed me how to put on the armored breast plate, that the called a chicken plate. I was snug and hot, but reassuring. Then came the special Nomex gloves.

I had to ease my six-foot frame into the Cobra's front seat. I was sweating profusely by the time I had put on the flight helmet and O'Hara had closed the canopy.

It was then that I began to have second thoughts about flying in a snake, "This is too easy, I wonder why O'Hara asked me if I was armed? I'm too short to be messing around like this!"

I really didn't have much of a chance to change my mind about making the flight-O'Hara had just climbed into the rear seat of the Cobra and was making his final check.

Slowly, then more rapidly the main rotor began revolving as the engine caught and whined to life.

O'Hara prepared for takeoff, "Marble Control, Sabre 72. Request permission for take-off."

I pinched myself just to make sure I wasn't dreaming.

We headed west toward LZ Linda to rendezvous with a LOH (light observation helicopter) and a CH-47 Chinook. Our snake was to escort the other two ships on a mission near Charlie Ridge.

On the way to the rendezvous, O'Hara put the snake through its paces just to show me what the aircraft could do-steep diving passes, hard banking turns, and high gravity climbs.

The mission lasted about an hour and a half, and we we headed back to Marble Mountain Airfield.

O'Hara called to me on the snake's intercom. "Put your feet on the pedals and take the collective and cyclic."

"What's he doing now?" I wondered.

"Okay, you've got the aircraft."

I was thunderstruck! Frantically, I tried to find the ship's intercom button with the heel of my right boot, but it didn't do any good because I found I couldn't talk.

I tried to keep the snake on a smooth, level course, but I soon found that flying a helicopter wasn't as easy as it looked. The ship seemed to react to the slightest hint of hand motion.

O'Hara kept talking to me, "Just take it slow and easy. Okay, let's make a left turn here and parallel the river.

"Good, now just drop down a little and maintain your present heading," he continued.

Then as we neared Marble Mountain Airfield, I was beginning to wonder if he was going to have me land the snake, too.

"Okay, I'll take over the ship, now." he said.

Relief.

"I put my hands up over my head and slowly collapsed while O'Hara took the snake in for the approach to D Troop's revetment.

O'Hara finally shut down the gunship, and I extracted myself from the cockpit and stepped own to good Ol' Mother Earth.

As we walked back toward D Troop Operations, I looked at O'Hara and asked. "You didn't really let me have control of the Cobra, did you?"

He just smiled and kept on walking.

Graphic Art: Drawing of author sitting in front seat of a COBRA holding his hands over his face while moustached pilot sits in the rear seat.

3 out of 10 try

Mail yields contraband

By Spec. 4 Steve Brooks

You know you goofed when the letter from home asks why you mailed the empty box. Of course, it wasn't empty; it contained a receipt and a police report filed by the black-hatted Customs Police that inspect packages mailed from Vietnam.

The MPs search packages at random after they have been mailed at an APO, carefully unwrapping them in an almost undetectable fashion. If there was no contraband or government property in the package, the package, the receiver will probably never know it has been opened.

The MPs have opened packages containing live chicom hand grenades, and dozens of poncho liners and camouflage jungle fatigues.

MP Sgt. Gaylord Baker (Seattle, Wash.) discovers unauthorized items in about three packages out of every ten he opens, ranging from parachute flares to hand grenades to machine guns.

Some mailers honestly declare their contents - one customs declaration announced "4 VN Blankets, 1 empty bottle."

Sure enough, the carton contained four poncho liners and an empty bottle full of an opium-based residue.

The Customs Police are hand-picked. Barker has been a Customs MP since December 1970, when the Joint Customs Group Da Nang Detachment Postal Inspection Team was founded.

Baker and his partner, Sp/4 Tim Mayhal (Geoga, Ill.) find that they often re-wrap packages better than the original sender. When Baker went home on Christmas leave, his family saved all their packages for him to wrap.

Opening one package containing a wooden statue, Baker commented, "You've got to try and think what the sender is thinking, then think him one better."

Tapping on the base of the statue, he added "I'm still looking for the proverbial hollow statue I've never found."

Once Baker's search led him to take the back off a hi-fi speaker cabinet, where he found 40 marijuana joints.

When the inspectors find contraband goods or government property, they remove it, place a signed, witnessed receipt in the package and file a police report with the provost marshal and the sender's commanding officer. The confiscated material is sent to the 80th Group Provost Marshal.

Baker commented that U.S. Customs inspectors check much of the Vietnam mail when it enters the United States, and said that the goal is to inspect 100 percent per cent of incoming packages. If U.S. Customs finds illegal material, the matter is turned over to the Army Criminal Investigation Department.

Items that may not be sent by mail include: jungle fatigues, field jackets, Vietnamese food, poncho liners, weapons, war trophies, and contraband such as narcotics and hard core pornography.

Items which can be sent include: underwear, head gear and socks, stateside issue fatigues and boots. Photographic film may be sent safely, as non-fogging flourosopes have replaced X-ray machines.

So don't try to surprise the inspectors-ever since one opened a package and found a human skull, they have become pretty immune to shock.

Somebody cares

By SP4 Gary Sonsky

CAMP FAULKNER - People can always be found who will say that nobody cares about the guy next to him. People like that would be in for rebuttal if they talked to the Blackhawks of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry.

Two very good reasons for this would be Major John F. O'Brien and Sergeant Stephen Corsiatto. These two men are responsible for the success of the Blackhawk's Drug Rehabilitation Program.

Realizing the seriousness of the drug problem Major O'Brien, the squadron XO, initiated the program the first part of December. He did so by informing his troops that everything in his power would be done to stop the increasing number of drug abusers.

A concerned Sgt. Corsiatto, realizing the sincerity of the message, requested to be the Blackhawk's drug counselor. The former infantryman was so appointed and immediately struck out in every way he could to combat the problem.

Pressure was put on pushers and users alike. More heroin was confiscated and the drug became harder to obtain. This along with periodic urinalysis tests, soon started to show results.

Either from fear of being caught, or the realization of what harm they were doing to themselves, many men began turning themselves in for help. This is where the real involvement came in. These men weren't harassed or reprimanded in anyway-they were helped.

First they were sent to Camp Viking to kick the habit. The first three days were for "dry-out" purposes with the following 11 for a rehabilitation program.

After the 15 days at Viking, the men returned to their unit.

Corsiatto commented, "Since these men volunteer for the program, no disciplinary action is taken. After they return to Camp Faulkner they can request transfer, if they like. If not, they continue with the job where they left off and try to start back on a normal existence-instead of one supported by a habit. They take a urinalysis test once a month and are encouraged to talk to other former users and to us when they deem necessary."

"What good is it if you get a guy off heroin and then pretend he doesn't exist afterwards? That is the period he most needs help to show him that people care about him."