

Sailors in jungle greens highly regarded by allies

The Navy has good reason to be proud of the RANHFV serving in Vietnam. It is right amidst the enemy and doing a remarkable job for the defence of the Free World.



CK Graham Stoneham of Balgowlah, NSW, in the galley, cooking steaks.

There are RANHFV personnel in every department of the US Assault Helicopter Company with which they are working in Vietnam.

But they are scarcely recognisable as sailors in the dress of the day . . . jungle greens.

They live in tents under very trying and dusty or muddy conditions.

Everybody works seven days a week with an R and R of five days during the year.

This is the overall scene in Vietnam but it may be of interest to readers to know how the FLIGHT's personnel spend their day.

The officers (pilots) are flying, of course, in both the lift platoon and the gunship platoon. The observers are engaged in Intelligence, Operations and Liaison with the ARVN forces.

Most of the 34 sailors are immersed in the maintenance

of aircraft, and around-the-clock operations keep them extremely busy.

They are recognised by all similar US Army units as being the best maintenance people available, and the very high aircraft availability figures their Assault Helicopter Company has, attests in substantial measure to this fact.

The maintenance is supervised by Lieut. W. S. Lowe, RAN, who is also a maintenance test pilot in the unit.

POACM Phillips is the company construction team NCO which is currently construct-

ing permanent billets, quite a major undertaking.

POACM Monty is an Operations NCO.

A/POAMW Jones is the platoon sergeant of the Armed Helicopter Platoon and his team of armorers fly as gunners in the gunships and also service the rocket launchers and minigun equipment.

Little is available in the way of entertainment except a movie programme which has just started to run regularly again since POEAC Ryan repaired the projector equipment.

At the moment, the Flight's personnel are preparing for the worst of the wet season—already monsoonal rains have turned the base into a quagmire.

These pictures give some idea of life in Vietnam.



STD Bill Oppenhuis, of Port Arlington, Vic., mans an M-60 machine gun as part of the perimeter defence of Black Horse, base of the RANHFV.



A/LAAB David Green, of Westmead takes time out to scrape mud off his boots. Recent monsoonal rains have turned the base into a quagmire.



ABOVE: A/LEMAW David Hardy and MECHAE2 Graeme Sharp, both of Nowra, work on a UH-1D helicopter at the Allied Shops Maintenance Area, Black Horse. LEFT: A/LAMW Burton and A/POAMW Jones (gun platoon), prepare pathways in readiness for the mud of the wet season.



LA/PAOT John Dawe, of Bendigo, with CW2 Chuck Blake, pilot of the gunship, make friends with some Vietnamese children. The children came out from a local village to look at the aircraft during a lunch time break.



At Black Horse recently, a group of West Australian performers gave a show for the men of the RANHFV, and the Assault Helicopter Company, with whom they are combined. The show, which lasted over an hour, was greatly enjoyed by all, even though some of the "Aussie" jokes left blank expressions on the faces of the Americans. LEFT: LCDR Neil Ralph, of Nowra, and MECHAE1 Ray Homer, also of Nowra, are shown with Kelly Green, one of the singers from Perth, and RIGHT: EMAW Perkins, of Tuart Hill, WA, with singer Cheryl Read.



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