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### STALAG 17--AK LA VIETNAM

TUY HOA, SOUTH VIETNAM--The motel-like, powder blue compound for the 85 American advisors based here--surrounded with wire and machinegun turrets--is perhaps a symbol of the state of siege which increased Communist political and military strength has imposed upon government cities north of Saigon.

The American advisors have built a rather elaborate defense system around their compound by building four powder-blue turrets at the four corners of the compound.

"Each fifteen minutes during the night, the Vietnamese guards pound a big gong ~~to~~ to signal all's well," one American advisor explained. "We found they could hit the gongs by gongs by sitting down without standing up, so we had to raise the gongs higher. We always keep anti-personnel mines around the base of the turret in case we are overrun," he explained.

"We call our compound Stalag 17. It is a prison--except the machineguns are pointing outwards."

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To the north and south of this seacoast town <sup>east</sup> 230 miles north of Saigon, American army and marine units have landed in major pockets or ~~it~~ so-called "enclaves" of military strength. But without American combat troops--the Viet Cong Communist guerrillas and subversives, reinforced by North Vietnamese Army units, have created their own ~~enclave-long before the~~ <sup>And in</sup> enclaves along the South China Sea ~~as plus~~ the jungled mountain highlands in the rear.

~~start~~

Only yards from the powder-blue American compound, ~~in~~ a crumbling, vine-covered French fort guarding the South China Sea serves as a painful reminder that the Americans are now ~~in~~ <sup>almost</sup> in ~~exactly~~ the same position as the French forces were a ~~year~~ <sup>2</sup> decade ago ~~with the exception of increase~~ <sup>Y</sup>. On the military side, the only tactical weapon ~~the~~ <sup>2</sup> the Americans have which the French did not is helicopters, which have increased their mobility.

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Hence, while French troops were ~~road~~<sup>2</sup>-bound, Vietnamese government troops, by forsaking the security of the roads in many cases, are virtually air-bound.

"All roads leading to Tuy Hoa from any direction no longer exist," one American advisor explained. "The Viet Cong wander between the blown out bridges--we try to put several government battalions around ~~surround~~ to hold it so that it's not a Viet Cong ~~2~~<sup>that</sup> valley they can start farming themselves."

Around this small Vietnamese city of 25,000 population the ~~Viet~~ Communists have imposed a virtual state of siege. To the north, Vietnamese government troops can ~~not~~<sup>2</sup> drive ~~but~~<sup>one</sup> one mile (two kilometers) out of the city limits. Going south, they can drive ~~five~~ three miles (five kilometers). On the west, the Viet Cong attack government hamlets only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles (four kilometers) outside the city limits and the Viet Cong mine the road even closer than that. On the east is the South China Sea.

The H national railroad is usable for 15 miles (25 kilometers) to the next ~~2~~ village, but is too expensive to operate and fuel is too difficult to import.

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"In late May, the provincial highway to the west had 80 ditches and cuts in it within a ~~five~~ five kilometer stretch," one American advisor explained. "We used two ~~arm~~ Vietnamese army battalions ~~clear~~ the road. It took them four days to secure it and to fill up the 80 holes. ~~The morning after we left,~~ The morning after we left, the Viet Cong Cong had put ~~another 35~~ 35 new cuts in it. We haven't gone back since."

Within the city limits of Tuy Hoa, ~~the~~ the cement bunker with machine machinegun portholes has been newly built. It also serves as the government flagpole in the center of the city.

"The ~~commanding~~ commanding general several weeks ago put out the order to defend the town on every street corner," one American advisor explained. "There's no place to ~~now~~ <sup>go</sup> except to fight on the street corners. He also ordered government civil servants to ~~be~~ be armed to defend themselves; he said he was tired of having his troops defend clerks."

Even so, last month Viet Cong ~~in the city~~ <sup>within the city</sup> terrorists threw satchel charges near the American military oil depot--the depot was saved but one armored personnel carrier was damaged. Other Viet Cong ~~terror~~ terrorists have planted mines on the ~~the~~ firing practice firing range of American and government troops. One of these mines threw two American enlisted men out of their jeeps, but they escaped with only scratched legs.



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Because of the state of siege, the newly-constructed Shell gas stations throughout the city have no gas to sell. Cement for new construction is in demand. The price of beer has tripled.

The black market price of rice is double the ~~if~~ official government fixed price within the city--even though the surrounding valleys are a rice surplus area.

~~In~~ Some of the isolated district towns ~~have~~ have now depleted their ~~government-controlled~~ government-controlled rice stocks. In those areas, areas, the Viet Cong sell one kilo of rice to each peasant--at less than the black market price--if the villagers will move four kilometers into Viet Cong ~~territory~~ territory. ~~to listen to a Communist propaganda lecture.~~ to listen to a Communist propaganda lecture.

TOMORROW: THE PLEIKU AIRLIFT.