



## The American Soldier, 1965

The U.S. Army fighting in Vietnam in 1965 used new tactics, techniques, and weapons. Divisions and separate brigades built fortified base camps from which they launched extensive search and destroy operations and also carried out security and pacification missions in neighboring districts. At times, U.S. units shifted far afield, there to construct a temporary base camp and forward fire-support bases for their operations. On many of these missions, particularly in the thick jungles of the highlands and the flooded rice fields of the delta, companies and battalions were wholly dependent upon the helicopter for support, resupply, and evacuation. Airmobility, flexible fire support, vastly improved signal communications, and an unprecedented network of logistical bases were the developments characteristic of the new type of fluid combat in Vietnam.

All of the troops in this painting wear the two-piece olive green, rip-stop cotton poplin, tropical combat uniform, developed in the early 1960's, and the mildew-resistant tropical combat boots with direct-molded soles, model 1956.

In the right foreground is a first lieutenant of the 5th Special Forces Group (Abn) as shown by the black flash with yellow and red stripes and the distinctive black and silver crest, both worn on his green beret, and by the teal blue and gold Special Forces shoulder patch authorized in 1954. The black airborne tab is worn above the shoulder patch. He is armed with the .556-cal., M16 rifle and carries both M16 yellow smoke and M26 fragmentation grenades.

In the center foreground is a major of 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, as indicated by the insignia on his collar, crossed sabers with a superimposed "7." On his left sleeve he wears the subdued 1st Cavalry Division insignia, the horsehead and bar in black with the normally yellow background a dark gray.

Above it is the Ranger shoulder tab. He is armed with a carbine .30-cal., M2, and M26 fragmentation grenades. He carries a bottle of mosquito repellent in the camouflage band of his helmet and on his right wrist is a brass wristlet obtained from the Rhade tribe of Montagnards, worn by many troops as a good luck charm.

In the left foreground is a captain, an Army aviator carrying his flier's helmet. All of his insignia are of the subdued type adopted by troops in Vietnam. He is wearing a utility cap and is armed with a .45-cal. pistol, model 1911, A1.

In the background are troops loading into CH-47A (Chinook) helicopter.