



Aboard the Mohawk in Vietnam

An Army aviator writes about the inspiring labors of his observer — labors that are common among enlisted crewmen

Major Donald A. Roberts

NUMEROUS OV-1 Mohawk units, known as Surveillance Airplane Companies, support the ground troops in the Republic of Vietnam. One unit with these triple-tailed, twin-engined, turbo-prop aircraft is the 245th Surveillance Airplane Company.

At 1830 hours on 25 March 1968, a Mohawk from the 245th SAC rose into the sky from its home in I Corps. The crew of two, pilot and observer, started a normal surveillance run in the south

end of A Shau Valley and proceeded north to Khe Sanh. As the aircraft then travelled along the DMZ, the technical observer, SP5 Kevin Ward from Newbury Park, Calif., observed a surprisingly large number of vehicles traveling southeast from North Vietnam on highways 1A and 101. He quickly plotted their exact position and called in the coordinates, first to a fire direction center for an artillery strike, then to an airborne control ship for an airstrike.

In a race to fire upon this lucrative target, the artillery battalion won. They closed the area to aircraft as they pumped high explosive shells all along the road. There was a very low cloud cover, but the 245th SAC crew could still observe the fireballs illuminate through the clouds. Numerous secondary explosions occurred and the glow from the burning vehicles lingered throughout the night.

There were so many land and water vehicles moving toward