

Same Mud, Same Blood

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Description

In this NBC News Special from 1967, reporter Frank McGee profiles a platoon of the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam. Spending nearly a month with them on patrol, McGee looks at the integration of African Americans in the U.S. military. This is the full and unedited version of the documentary. Some parts may not be suitable for younger viewers.

Keywords

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Guns, Grenades, Warfare, Vietnamese, North Vietnam, Tony Mavroudis, Antonio Mavroudis, Helicopters, Equality, Rights, Racism, Career, Job, Society, Sociology, Service, Teamwork, Fatigue, Tension, Front Line, Stokely Carmichael, Civil Rights, Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, White Power, Sniper, Guerrilla, Discrimination, Segregated, Segregation, Desegregation, Desegregated, Integrated, Battle, Killed in Action, KIA, Taps, Salute, Memorial, In Memoriam, Experience, Bigotry, Prejudice, Eyewitness, Interview

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CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

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Transcript

Same Mud, Same Blood

FRANK MCGEE, reporting:

It's hot in Vietnam, often hotter than the Mojave Desert. The temperature rises to a hundred twenty degrees and the humidity hovers around eighty-five percent. You collapse from heat exhaustion.

I learned that jungle rot can begin in a cut or scratch in a few hours' time, that gangrene can begin in a wound in a day's time. That troops carry six canteens of water and a new man should take about ten salt tablets a day.

We were in the northern part of South Vietnam, west of Chu Lai, about halfway to the Laotian border. That was farther west than the 101st Airborne Brigade had ever operated. The Viet Cong had controlled the area for fifteen years. We were beginning a new combat operation. I was with Platoon Sergeant Lewis B. Larry, born and raised in Mississippi, a high school dropout. He joined the Army twelve years ago. Often, the lives of up to forty men are in his hands. Sergeant Larry is always keenly attuned to the mood of his men. He knows a recruit will be afraid his first time under fire. He told me--

Sergeant LEWIS B. LARRY: This is only normal for men to be scared. But if we keep him back in the rear of the squad until the first firefight or the second firefight, and he's got confidence in himself, that he can do just as well as the next man can. I try to make the guy feel like he's just with a bunch of guys who

want to survive, and are going to have to work together. And after three or four missions, then he'll start to work with the people. He'll get bigger and bigger and bigger to where that-- this guy's got more pride and more guts than twenty-five people like him in the States.

First Platoon is going to remain back here at the CP, right here. We'll get the perimeter set up here. Now when these three platoons move out, two men per position, going to make that three men per position, will drop down and I will show you what positions you're going occupy in the perimeter. Because we're going to receive supplies in here.

MCGEE: For this report, the fact that Larry is a Negro is of paramount importance. To the officers and men he serves with, it's a matter of total irrelevance. Larry knows them well.

Sergeant LARRY: Sergeant Wilson had joined the platoon sometime during August. After he got over the first rough steps or two, he was okay. Sergeant Wilson is a go-getter. He likes to move. He likes to move a little fast at times. There is one kid, Arkansas. Well, I can tell right away when something is wrong with him, because if he's not talking, something's bothering him.

JIM HAWKINS: We'll be moving out--

Sergeant LARRY: Jim Hawkins is fire team leader in the Third Squad. Hawkins, I know personally. I don't know the way he talk and way I talk, just seemed like we have something in common. But where I live now and where Hawkins live in Chicago, it's just about hollering distance.

HAWKINS: Any questions on this?

Sergeant LARRY: We picked up Lieutenant Wilkinson as a forward observer for the company. There's no telling when you're going to hit Charlie and actually need artillery, so he's going to have to be on his toes. He's not afraid of it. And he'll bring that stuff in so doggone close, it will make your hair rise up on your head. I've only had the one platoon leader since I've been here and that's Lieutenant Unger. Lieutenant Unger, he understands a basic problem of the individual, which is I-- I think is more important in knowing all of this to know he'll listen to all the problem.

Captain MAVROUDIS: This is six, roger. They should be in at about zero-three, as soon as they join up with you, give me a call, let me know, I'll have instructions for you. Out break 4-6-6, over.

Sergeant LARRY: Captain Mavroudis, he's the company commander. He's real sharp with the words. And if you screw up, you can expect to be nailed by him.

Captain MAVROUDIS: Four-six-six. How many packs you have on that ship that didn't make it? Over. You make contact with Second Squad?

Unidentified Man: Sir, you want to start tight end right in here?

Sergeant LARRY: First Squad. Have the whole First Squad come on down.

HAWKINS: Excuse me.

MCGEE: Hawkins, the white boy from Chicago, had observed Larry's manner of commanding his men. Hawkins said--

HAWKINS: He doesn't just come up and tell you to do something that he wouldn't do himself. That he will, sort of, ask you to do something where in the sense he's asking you to do it and telling you to do it, and making you want to do it.

MCGEE: Arkansas is a Southern white serving under a Negro.

ARKANSAS: He's never up there jumping onto you because you've done something wrong. He'd tell you what you'd done wrong and-- and how to correct it. He's-- he's never on your back about it. That's one reason I guess men like him so well.

MCGEE: In civilian life, it's still rare for whites to take orders from Negroes, particularly in the South. Captain Mavroudis said--

Captain MAVROUDIS: Yeah, Southern boys in Sergeant Larry's platoon that possibly in-- in civilian walks of life would resent working for a Negro. But when we're out in the field, which is almost all the time, people go beyond the color barrier. The thing that they're worried about is that there's somebody is leading them who knows what he's doing and who's going to get him through these tight situations.

MCGEE: Arkansas.

ARKANSAS: It doesn't seem to bother anyone to take orders from him. No one in the field, they don't think anything about it. I've never heard a slang thrown at him because he is of Negro race.

Unidentified Man: Damn sniper out there.

Unidentified Man: You might keep your eyes peeled in that direction and see if he fires again, then we-- we might be able to figure his location, we hope.

MCGEE: We'd been moving toward a village, a cluster of peasant shacks or hooches. We were drawing sniper fire from the Viet Cong.

This is what creates a bond between men-- shared danger and dependence. And this.

Lieutenant Wilkinson, the young Negro officer said--

Lieutenant WILKINSON: I'm out here with everybody else, colored and white. And just the other day, we had so many casualties. And nobody said, well, we had one colored and we had five-- five whites. I mean, it were all casualties.

Sergeant LARRY: Hang on for a few more minutes, that chopper will be here. Hey, Sergeant Jones, do about-face with your element. Hold it up and wait until I move ahead of the column, and then we'll continue to move.

MCGEE: This trooper was a casualty of the sun. The air gets furnace hot and seems to scorch your lungs when you breathe.

Sergeant LARRY: They just returned to this location. I'm sending him back up to police... We're going to remain down here. We got this Medevac there. They should be reentering your perimeter in about 0-3-0.

Unidentified Man: I feel dizzy, doc.

Unidentified Man: What's that?

Unidentified Man: I can't get up.

Unidentified Man: Do you want to drink water or something?

Okay. You feel better walking or you want just somebody carrying you?

Unidentified Man: You want me to go down there in case you pass out?

Unidentified Man: Sergeant Oliva's people. Go right over here. Sergeant Oliva should be waiting for you right over there.

Unidentified Man: Perfect.

Unidentified Man: Go down and take a right.

Dr. STEVE VARGO: This is all by the 1-6 Element and the Charlie Papa, over.

Unidentified Man: We've got one PW that we wounded. We're still looking, beating through the bush. We estimate there were three to five of them. Over.

Unidentified Man: Hey, doc. Patch him up.

Unidentified Man: The other one had great casualties.

MCGEE: The doc who patched up the wounded enemy prisoner was a medic named Steve Vargo. It was also Vargo who shot him.

Captain MAVROUDIS: This guy is a local forest type. He claims there were thirty NVA with him. And when you people opened up on him, they beat it downhill--

MCGEE: Captain Mavroudis is of Greek descent. Therefore they gave him the radio code name Zorba. He didn't like it.

Captain MAVROUDIS: Be careful right there. Thirty of them are out there and you make contact, you have a fight on your hands. Over.

Sergeant LARRY: Set down, well spread out and advance on a trail east to where you're directly above the last loop of hooches there that's in that little draw, and I'll check those and then join you back up on the trail, over.

MCGEE: While Larry would rather persuade his men than compel their obedience, he's no Boy Scout leader. Wilson, a tough Sergeant himself, said of Larry--

WILSON: He doesn't particularly talk a lot, but he says a lot. And it goes back to this just a few key words. Example? He'll say, gentlemen, why do you cause yourself undue harassment? The holes must be dug deeper, why didn't you do it the first time? Well, he-- he can be just as rough as he has to be.

Sergeant LARRY: If a man screw up, it's not going to hurt him for you to chew him out. Let him know he's doing things wrong. All you have to do is suggest improvement in the weakness and usually, the individual will comply. Everybody is willing to do what is right, because it might save somebody's life.

MCGEE: The trails are narrow, often no more than a foot wide and covered overhead by jungle brush.

Rarely could we see more than a few yards in any direction. There are many forks and the trails turn abruptly. That's why the point man, the trooper at the head of the column, must be exceptionally alert.

They told me, the point man had better be alive or he'll be dead. Our point man killed this young Viet Cong. Someone had placed a cigarette between his lips. This, I was told, had become a unit tradition.

Until now, there's been a belief Negro soldiers lacked courage. Lieutenant Unger said--

Lieutenant UNGER: On the subject of the courageous Negro soldiers, there's-- there's been a lot written that they did not measure up to the courage commonly found in the white soldier. I have seen quite a number of situations where both white and Negro had a chance to display courage and had a chance to display cowardice. And I think you get just as many white cowards as you get black cowards, and you get just many black heroes as you get white heroes.

Unidentified Man: They probably heard us coming, as quiet as we came down through there ... out of the area.

Sergeant LARRY: Check that trail down through there and see how far that one goes down. Mack, just stick your head up that one over there and see if that trail goes up. The trail, that's no trail?

MACK: That's no trail.

Sergeant LARRY: Okay. We're going to continue on down to the edge of that creek and rejoin Sergeant Wilson and them over there. But no hooches out there.

Unidentified Man: ...they're the same ones as these--

Sergeant LARRY: Okay. Okay. We're going to turn around and take off back down there where Sergeant Wilson is...

MCGEE: Frequently, but not always, the peasant hooches are burned. The rationale? Destroy the enemy's home. Farm animals are slaughtered. The rationale? Deny the enemy food. Definition of enemy? Anyone out there but us.

Sergeant LARRY: When he left the point over there and they spotted them coming across, but he was too far for them to fire. That's why he wanted me to take the Second Squad and try to cut them off in there. But then the tracks, we found in the stream indicate there were somebody going down this way the stream, so maybe there's three of them. We'll find them.

Being a platoon sergeant, when you're moving, you have an opportunity to observe each man and you can tell right away, I can, about watching each one of them close, I can tell if he's normal. And if he's a little bit on a shaky side, I pull him off. Look, he shouldn't be in the spot of a column that he is. He should be pulled back a little bit. If he's a little bit shaky that day, you know, then I pull him back, put him in the rear of the column behind me.

Drop-- drop back about five meters. Five meters.

MCGEE: The officers above Larry and the men beneath him have seen him under fire. There is no more severe test of a man. At such a time, buried racial antagonisms might surface. I was anxious to learn what his officers and men thought of Larry under fire.

Sergeant LARRY: Tell Pennington to bring his fire team on over here.

Unidentified Man: He's never lost his cool. And I-- I don't think he ever will. And the troops know that no matter what the situation is, he'll come through it, he'll get them out of a tight spot in such a way that people won't get hurt unnecessarily.

Unidentified Man: Who's that shooting?

MCGEE: We had two Charlies trapped in caves. The troops call them spider holes.

Unidentified Man: When we are receiving fire, well Sergeant Larry, he-- he's right up helping lay it along with the rest of us and giving us orders and, well, he ain't going to stand back in the rear and just direct the fire.

Unidentified Man: Grenade.

Unidentified Man: Don't everybody bunch up on in at one time.

Unidentified Man: Okay, machine gun, move up right over here.

Unidentified Man: Watch. Grenade, grenade, grenade, get down, get down, get down.

Sergeant LARRY: Do you see them?

Unidentified Man: Yeah.

Sergeant LARRY: Drop down little further over there. Machine gun is going to stay in place. Stay down there around the CP and guard the CP.

Take your time and try to toss it right in. Don't expose yourself too long. Get all the way down. Grenade-- grenade, hit the ground. All right, that was a good one. That one was dead in there. Hey, machine gun? Pull back. Hey, sir.

Unidentified Man: Yeah.

Sergeant LARRY: Shrapnel came all up in there where you are. If it didn't go, go in that hole.

Unidentified Man: Hey, hold up on that grenade.

Sergeant LARRY: Hey, don't throw any more grenades in there. That's enough to kill a damn horse.

Unidentified Man: It sounds like it's a long way off.

Sergeant LARRY: Hold them grenades. We got him now. I know damn well it hit him. Give him a little time, he'll bleed to death. I know damn well he's hit.

Unidentified Man: Hey, Scott.

Sergeant LARRY: Get back out of the way. Johnson is going in there with a pistol. Be careful, Johnson. We're clear? Get right down here behind this thing, here. Okay, we're clear on this side.

MCGEE: My feelings became mixed. There have been a lot of us against only two of them. But when your life is at stake, you want the odds in your favor. Still, they were dead, and unknown people in some unknown village would weep. During the firefight, I learned a lieutenant who'd loaned me his hammock only three nights before, had been severely wounded in an another fight about a thousand yards away. Time after time, they tried to get helicopters in to remove him. He lay for six hours out in the broiling sun on a jungle trail, and then died.

Unidentified Man: This is a teaching point, make sure your weapon's unloaded.

Unidentified Man: That should do it.

MCGEE: Eventually, the enemy weapons become the property of the troopers who killed them, if the troopers want them. Shortly after the firefight, a young North Vietnamese prisoner was brought in. He'd been taught to believe he'd be killed and beheaded.

Unidentified Man: Check him out and see if he's got a weapon on him.

Unidentified Man: Oh, I'm sorry, you didn't get hit?

MCGEE: I noticed I'd begun to look at Negro soldiers and not even see their color. I checked this idea with Arkansas.

ARKANSAS: You look at them and they're just another guy out there, a guy that you can bum a cigarette off of if you're out, or get a drink of water if you're out, or a can of food. Everything is share and share alike.

MCGEE: Arkansas grew up where Negroes must drink from separate fountains. Today, he drinks from the same canteen cup with them. I wondered how the folks back home would feel about that.

ARKANSAS: Most of them think it is the most terrible thing in the world, you know? They come over here and spend a couple of months, they'd learn it, too. The hard way.

MCGEE: Hawkins from Chicago.

HAWKINS: After you're with them for so long, you're not looking at a man's color. You're looking at his intention and his job and what he's doing. You look over there and say, well, that man's picking up the shovel. You don't say that black man's picking up the shovel. You don't say, hey, colored sergeant, come

here. Or hey, colored sergeant, can I talk to you?

MCGEE: This old man, bound and hunkered in the rain, claimed the hooch some of us stayed in was his. Maybe it was.

This kind of life would seem to have little to recommend it, yet three times as many Negroes reenlist as whites. Sergeant Larry said--

Sergeant LARRY: One of the things that make the Army a factor to me is that being a Negro, I like I'm given every opportunity to develop myself and show what skill I have to the max, and given every opportunity to-- to prove beyond any doubt in anybody's mind that I'm a man and I can perform. I think this is a major thing that attract a lot of us. There's no racial barrier of any sort here.

MCGEE: The men spent a month, sometimes two months in the field. And then they pull back to the base camp for a short break. They called it a stand-down.

Unidentified Man: I don't believe this.

Sergeant LARRY: Captain Mavroudis had given considerable thought to why so many Negroes make the Army a career.

Captain MAVROUDIS: The Army is one of the few places in our society where-- where a Negro is not ostracized, is not looked down upon. It's a different society within itself. Whereas back in civilian life, a man does not associate with on a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis with the people that he works with. In the service, the people that you work with on a daily basis are also the people that you socialize with day in and day out.

MCGEE: Nowhere in America have I seen Negroes and whites as free, open and uninhabited in their associations. I saw no eyes clouded with resentment. It's a tradition with the men on stand-down to throw all the officers and the senior noncommissioned officers into the ocean. A medical officer told me the saltwater helps cure the men's jungle rot. It's the iodine. The young Negro officer, Lieutenant Wilkinson, had some interesting thoughts on the Army as a career.

Lieutenant WILKINSON: His values for a young Negro as an officer in the Army, he has a status. He has a status. You go back to civilian world, and Negro officer automatically has a status. Because most people back there, especially Negroes, they look up to an-- a Negro officer because they have not seen that many in the past. And the more they see now, they look at them as-- as if he's really done something.

MCGEE: In a remarkably short time, the deep lines of weariness were fading from their faces. It's one thing to be friends in the field, another to be friends in the rear areas. Captain Mavroudis said--

Captain MAVROUDIS: When they come back on stand-down they do tend to go back to groups of Negroes and whites. I think part of it is that, you know, after being in-- with another individual in the same foxhole for night after night, for possibly as long as a month or a month and a half, they just want to get a little variety. I don't think that the groups are formed on the basis of color. I think they're formed on the basis of mutual interest.

Sergeant LARRY: This is 1-6, roger, I want to move on over just a little more. There's two more hooches there. And then it should wrap it up. There are three more scattered about here. And we're going to turn around as soon as we check these other two hooches over here. Now you can probably support us from where you are, just remain in position and we will join you there.

Unidentified Man: Your-- is your location still right two point two, down four point one-over? This is six, roger. We'll put fires at the base of the hill in that streambed. You might be able to adjust by noise. Over.

Sergeant LARRY: This is 1-6, roger, I think so too. Either that or dirt mounds, it could be dirt mounds stacked up, that's what they appear to be from here. And they have a shape of it.

MCGEE: There were peasant hooches and farm animals in that area. I heard no effort made to keep the artillery fire away from them. Most hooches have caves dug under the floor, peasants and the Viet Cong hide in them during attacks. Sergeant Wilson had noticed that when the tension ends, a peculiar thing happens.

Sergeant WILKINSON: When the situation has relaxed, the Negro soldier tends to gather together with more people and more enthusiasm than any other group in the Army. The Negro tends to get louder, quicker, and faster, and sustain it until somebody comes by and breaks it up. Charlie can hear it if he's close and if he hears it, he's got a group to fire at instead of just one man.

MCGEE: The men are always behind enemy lines. From the moment they jump off a helicopter they're surrounded. Everything, food, ammunition, clothing must be flown in to them. The dead and wounded are flown out. An effort is made to fly in hot chow every sixth day. In the month we were with them, they got hot chow once. On such resupply days they get mail, newspapers, which might remind them of the race riots in the States. I talked at length with Larry about the race riots. He said--

Sergeant LARRY: I don't understand it. I'd ask both my race and the white, how can somebody feel the way they do? I-- I see all this stuff on television as what devil is this? And today I-- I still can't believe it. And if I could find a way to answer my own questions then I think I would be better off. But right now I'm confused. I'm sure a lot of other people are confused because I refused to believe that-- that people just can't live together.

MCGEE: The young Negro officer, Lieutenant Wilkinson.

Lieutenant WILKINSON: Some of these people believe just because they get out there and demonstrate and tear this city and burn up this city down that somebody's going to make a everlasting rule and say, well, okay, this is it, everybody is the same and the whole problem is solved just by saying those couple of words, but it's not going to happen like that. They're trying to skip over this so fast that instead of progressing forward you may be going backwards.

MCGEE: Larry is a Negro who is a leader. I wanted his thoughts on a Negro leader in the States, Stokely Carmichael.

Mr. STOKELY CARMICHAEL: This guy encourages the people to dodge the draft, but what he's saying is that he wanted them to dodge them being America. He wanted them to shirk the responsibility that goes along with being an American citizen. And when I read something like it, the first question that pop in my mind is that this guy didn't believe I'm American citizen and he don't want to accept the responsibility that goes along with it. If one American is going to have to fight here, then it should be all Americans. I don't think you can say, well, you don't have to go to Vietnam and fight because you're white. But you're going to have to go because you're colored.

MCGEE: I talked with Wilkinson and Larry, both Negro soldiers, about the concept of black power.

Sergeant LARRY: These people that are advocating black power are trying to get there in a hurry and

while they're getting there, they don't care whether or not they step on your face.

Lieutenant WILKINSON: I don't think there's such thing as black power or white power. That this one-sided thing of black power versus white power, it's nonsense.

MCGEE: I told Larry that in the States today he would be called an Uncle Tom.

Sergeant LARRY: Those that would have called me an Uncle Tom I feel sorry for them. But it wouldn't bother me one bit if-- if somebody call me Uncle Tom because I'd just say it-- it's just another stupid comment from somebody who's narrow-minded.

MCGEE: I told him there were some concerned that Negro veterans might return, join militant groups, use their gorilla training perhaps become snipers.

Sergeant LARRY: I don't believe that one of these boys could go back and get discharge and pick up a sniper weapon and join a mob. I don't believe that he's small-minded enough to go back and utilize this against anyone.

MCGEE: No man goes through a war unchanged. Its sights and sounds are seared into his memory. Life is reduced to its most fundamental values. The true is rapidly sifted from the false. Captain Mavroudis talked about the war's effect on the future attitudes of some white soldiers.

Captain MAVROUDIS: I think the people who were in the group that really discriminated, these people who come over here and really see that the Negro is not everything that their social group said they were and they'll know that they're not because we've fought alongside with them, and their life in many cases was in a Negro's hands and vice-versa. They'll be able to go back to that same social group and tell them that you can feed your life and you're biased from now till doomsday but I know better.

MCGEE: We had no political scientists, psychologists, or urban affairs experts in our platoon, but they spoke with unassailable authority because they'd lived what they were talking about. Hawkins from Chicago found himself imagining a race riot in which he might look up and see Sergeant Larry.

HAWKINS: In the case ever arises, and I look across and see Sergeant Larry, he would probably say something like, Hawkins, I never dreamed that someone like you that served under me in-- in Vietnam could actually come back and do something like this. I'd probably cry. I would expect him to drawback and hit me as hard as he could. I would get up and walk away. That's-- that's how much I feel towards the man and I say man, not the colored man. I would feel like a dog. I pray to God this never happens.

MCGEE: And Larry imagined the feelings of a Negro veteran if he should become a sniper in a race riot.

Sergeant LARRY: I'm the sure that if he was standing in that mob or firing at somebody and he had to face one of the people he faced while he was in the Army, he'd probably throw his weapon down and run and hide his face.

MCGEE: Finally, some thoughts from a Southern white boy who grew up in a segregated society, Arkansas.

ARKANSAS: After I've gone through what I have over here, if a white man tried to get me riled up against the Negro, maybe go through a riot demonstration or something, I think I'd just get mad enough to shoot him, period, and be done with it.

Captain MAVROUDIS: This is Zorba, roger. Back off to where you are, I'll be going at them in the same direction, I want to, kind of, flank them. I'm asking you what direction you're firing? It sounds to me like

you're firing east, over. What direction are you firing at? Now I know where the action is, I can hear it, but I want to know what direction you fired and I'll come in on it at a flank, over.

Unidentified Man: That a ground attack, sir?

Unidentified Man: Yeah, thirty of them.

Unidentified Man: Roger that.

Unidentified Man: All right. Get ready to move.

MCGEE: A Company was in deep trouble. Pinned down by heavy fire from North Vietnamese regulars. Our outfit, C Company, Charlie Company, was trying to relieve them.

The battle came at the height of a typhoon. It rained fourteen and a half inches in twenty-four hours. The men fought most of that time. Fear is a human instinct, not a racial one. Lieutenant Unger knows it.

Lieutenant UNGER: He said to a man there's an enemy machine gun down there, let's go get it. And his heart's going to drop into his stomach and his throat's going to start to tighten up. I don't care whether he's white, black, blue, red, or green, he's going to be afraid.

MCGEE: From the siege of Troy until now, the same thing has kept soldiers going, Arkansas said it.

ARKANSAS: No, no, it don't seem to bother me being shot at me. I just get it in my mind, hell, I'm not going to get hurt so. I ain't going to get killed. So hell, drive on.

Unidentified Man: One-six Bravo, this is six, over.

Unidentified Man: Four-o-one. Four-o-one.

Unidentified Man: Give it up there.

Unidentified Man: Right, sir.

Unidentified Man: Is he firing out that way?

Unidentified Man: He just stopped firing out there.

Unidentified Man: Yeah.

(Cross talking)

Unidentified Man: Okay.

Unidentified Man: Hey give me yours, you're internal.

Unidentified Man: I got mine on internal.

Unidentified Man: Two-six, two-six, this is six, over.

Unidentified Man: This is Bravo. I think I'm there now, but I'm going to try to link up with him. Break, Maverick, Bravos.

Captain MAVROUDIS: Maverick, Bravo, this is Zorba, over.

Unidentified Man: That way. Fire that way.

Unidentified Man: Negative. Don't fire. Don't fire any way. We're surrounded.

Captain MAVROUDIS: Greenhorn, it's Zorba. I've linked up with Mavericks, I'm trying to find Maverick and try to get things consolidated.

Unidentified Man: Hold on, hold on.

Unidentified Man: This is Bravo, Bravo, over.

MCGEE: Contact was made with the survivor from A Company. He was wounded but walking.

Unidentified Man: Come on, Sergeant... You're the Maverick team. Move.

Unidentified Man: All right. Let's go.

Unidentified Man: Come on, let's go. Aim the squad. Aim the squad. Watch out left and right.

(Cross talking)

Unidentified Man: Move your eyes up to the front now.

Unidentified Man: Move.

(Cross talking)

Unidentified Man: First platoon gun?

Unidentified Man: Yes.

Unidentified Man: Right over there waiting for...

MCGEE: There were casualties.

Unidentified Man: Stay down. Stay down.

Captain MAVROUDIS: Company. Ready. Aim. Fire. Aim. Fire. Aim Fire.

MCGEE: Finally when the time allowed, there was a memorial service for the dead.

Some may feel that our society through the war in Vietnam is making a terrible demand of the Negro in exchange for accepting him as a man, a human being. But Sergeant Larry feels a debt to the Army.

Sergeant LARRY: As a career man in the Army, I've actually too much of military experience to get out. I think I'd be wasting it. I think I would hurt the Army. I think if they can use my experience in the Army and the younger people will-- that going to come in, I think they need somebody to help them.

MCGEE: Our history books have taken little notice of the Negro soldier. How do the troops of this war, black and white, want its history written? Captain Mavroudis.

Captain MAVROUDIS: You can't divide them as a group. It's the man, it's not the color, and as far as I'm concerned the credit for anything that happens in this war, no matter what the outcome is, belongs to both the white and Negro.

MCGEE: Wilkinson, the young Negro officer, told how he would want a child of his to question him about the war.

Lieutenant WILKINSON: I would want my child to ask me the role of the American soldier in Vietnam. But as to breaking it down to say, well, we have a total of good deeds by colored soldiers this high and we have a stack of good deeds by white soldiers this high, I mean, no, I won't think it would come out that way.

MCGEE: The American army is fully a generation ahead of the American public in its handling of the racism. What the Army has achieved is what America, despite bigots Negro and white, hopes someday to achieve--the elimination of race as a factor in human existence. The Army has achieved this to such an extent that the men I was with had difficulty in reorganizing their thoughts to match mine and answer questions on the subject they've stopped thinking of. Captain Mavroudis.

Captain MAVROUDIS: The thing that is hard for me to convey is that we don't feel that way in the service. That feeling doesn't exist in the-- in the Army. We're all soldiers and only color we know is the khaki and the green, the color of mud and the color of the blood is all the same.

MCGEE: Five days after we left him, Captain Anthony Mavroudis, who believed the color of the mud and the color of the blood is the same, was killed by an exploding landmine.

