

U.S. Veterans Aid Copter Training for Iranians

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By The Associated Press

Recently retired United States Army aviators working for a private American company run by their former commanding officer are providing Iran's emerging army with the latest tactical training in combat helicoptered assault warfare.

These officers, veterans of the Vietnam war, are part of a 1,500-man American civilian force assembled in Iran in the last 18 months by Delk M. Oden, a retired major general who was formerly in command of the United States Army Aviation Center at Fort Rucker, Ala.

As president of Bell Helicopter International, General Oden is in charge of a program to help set up the Iran Sky Cavalry Brigade, a strike force using helicoptered gunships and assault helicopter that is modeled on the United States' First Cavalry Division (Airmobile), which fought in the Vietnamese highlands.

A spokesman for the Bell Helicopter Company, a sister organization, said yesterday that the five-year contract held

by Bell International provided for tactical training of Iranian pilots, in addition to maintenance and other skills.

A similar contract held by the Vinnell Corporation Corporation of Los Angeles to train Saudi Arabian National Guard troops to protect oilfields has come under Congressional fire.

Inquiry Started

John C. Stennis, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, began an inquiry yesterday into the \$77-million Defense Department contract with Vinnell. The Mississippi Democrat told reporters he had asked Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger for an explanation of Vinnell's recruiting of former United States Special Forces soldiers and other veterans for a 1,000-man force to send to Saudi Arabia.

The helicopter contract with Iran differs from Vinnell's in that it was signed directly by the Iranian Government with Bell Helicopter International, a company formed by the Textron Corporation of Providence, R.I., specifically for the training

mission. Textron also owns the Bell Helicopter Company.

Many Seek Saudi Jobs

ALHAMBRA, Calif., Feb. 11 (UPI)—The Vinnell Corporation, which has a \$77-million Pentagon contract to train Saudi Arabian National Guardsmen, has been deluged with calls and applications from former servicemen wanting jobs.

More than 100 men lined up early today to fill out applications at Vinnell's offices here, and the switchboard has been swamped, a spokesman said.