

Army Graduates Advisers for Asia

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FORT BRAGG, N. C., June 9—The newly reorganized John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance has just graduated its first class of new "ugly Americans"—39 officers who received a concerted six-week smattering of knowledge in the political and social sciences.

Like the fictional Ugly American in the 1958 best-seller, the men will be sent to Southeast Asia to do good works: advising the Vietnamese on health and sanitary facilities and improving such ventures as rice production, currency control, psychological operations and medical aid.

A few words on how to deliver babies was included in the course.

"We're in an ever-changing business," explained Maj. Gen. Edward M. Flanagan Jr., the wiry Special Forces officer who commands what the Army formerly called the Special Warfare Center. "Our emphasis now is on people rather than hardware."

The new emphasis was apparently spurred by the Nixon Administration's intention to shift several economic and social programs in South Vietnam and Laos from civilian to military control.

A sharp increase is planned this year in the number of graduates destined for assignment in Southeast Asia. A second class, consisting of 76 senior sergeants, is about to start the six-week cycle. By July, 1971, the school will have graduated 5,500 men compared with slightly more than 3,000 in the last 12 months.

The 264 hours of instruction are designed to reduce "culture shock"—the depressing impact of frustrations and tension that assail an American adviser in a strange land. The students are taught something about the demography, geography, history, culture, religions and philosophies of the Vietnamese.

Stress on Languages

"Americans are probably the most sneering, holier-than-thou people in the world," said Col. Roy F. Bond, chief of the division of the school dealing with advisers for Vietnam. "We think Vietnamese are lazy because they take siestas and we call them barbarians because their children run around half nude."

"What we forget is that the Vietnamese have no air-conditioning and take their mid-day break to conserve energy so they can work into the

night. And as for the nude children — well, there hasn't been a single case of diaper rash in the whole country."

Colonel Bond's staff consists of officers who have completed two or three tours of duty in South Vietnam. The school puts heavy reliance on guest lecturers from the Agency for International Development, the State Departments, universities, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Department.

"I'm a great believer in language training," General Flanagan told a visitor, "even three weeks of it so an adviser can at least carry on a conversation about the weather and the kids."

Col. Harry H. Jackson, director of the Military Assistance School, said that about half the graduates would go on to Fort Bliss, Tex., for more language training, of which there are 84 hours here.

The history course stresses that the Vietnamese are a people proud of their national identity

and should be accorded dignity.

To establish rapport students are taught co tuong, a Vietnamese game similar to chess that is said to be a popular measure of intellectual ability.

The only note of skepticism heard at the school was offered by Maj. Do Duc Tien, a South Vietnamese liaison officer.

"Americans spend too much

money trying to instill democracy," he told a visitor. "After 20 years of fighting, the Vietnamese want a strong government."