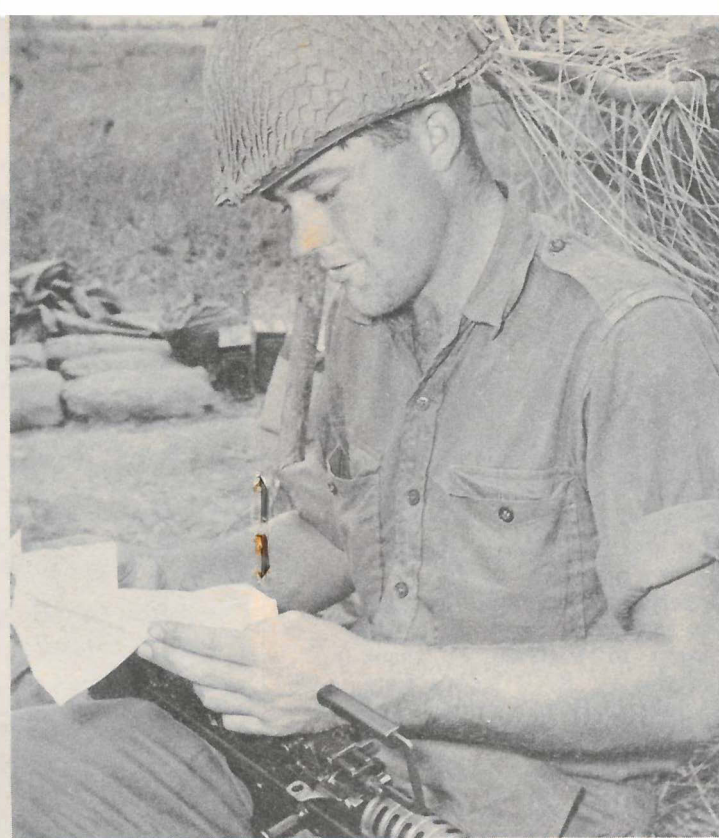
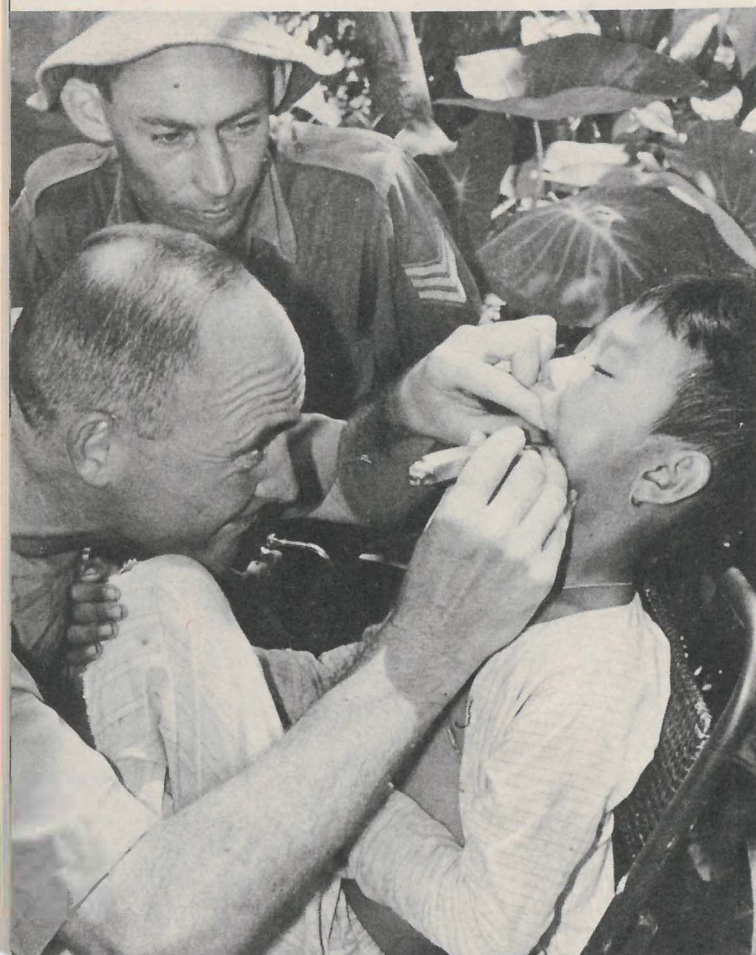
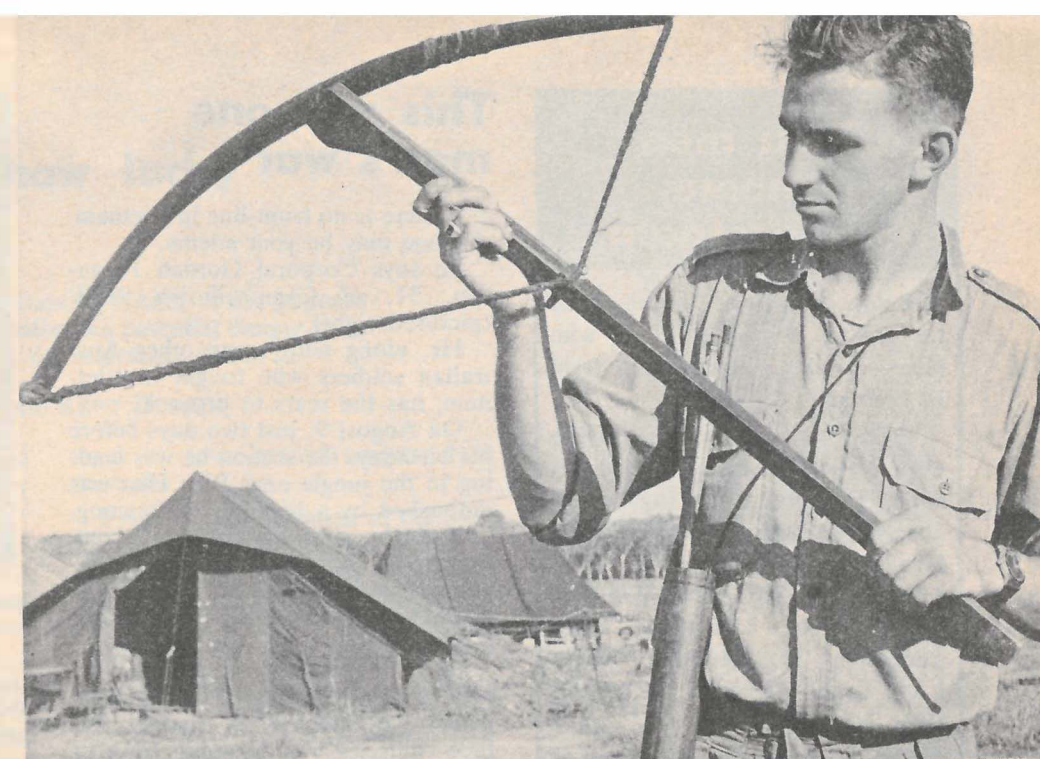




ABOVE: Private Harold Dennis, of Sydney, hands out biscuits to children of Ong Huong village, near Bien Hoa. BELOW: A small Vietnamese boy relaxes as Australian Army dentist Captain Peter Naughton, of Curl Curl, NSW, inspects his teeth. Assisting is Sgt. Brian Wilson, of Gympie, Queensland.



PRIVATE John McIvor, of Richmond, NSW, takes a rest at the Bien Hoa air base, to read a letter from home.



ABOVE: Private Noel Smith, of Parkes, NSW, inspects a primitive but deadly crossbow found in a Vietcong hideout. BELOW RIGHT: Capt. John Jackson, of Manly, NSW, talks with a Vietnamese sentry.



## DIGGERS IN VIETNAM

LOOKING at locally made dolls at a roadside stall in Saigon are (from left): Private Colin Wren, of Latham Park, WA, Private David Duncan, Windsor, NSW, and Corporal Ken Pitt, Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, SA. This was their first trip to Saigon after arriving in South Vietnam.





## Supplying the troops from the sky

As you read this, chances are that some young Australian pilot and his crew are spiralling down from the sky in a Caribou transport plane to a small airstrip somewhere in South Vietnam.

They are "spiralling" for a very good reason — to avoid groundfire from the communist Vietcong.

The technique, developed by veteran Australian pilot Squadron Leader Chris Sugden (DFC and bar) has been followed to some extent by the Americans in Vietnam.

"But largely they have carried on landing and taking off in the conventional way," he says.

**In Korea.** Sugden (who joined the RAAF in 1941, flew in the Pacific War and won his DFC for raids he made during the Korean War) was in charge of the RAAF Transport Flight when it flew into Vietnam to begin operations there in August last year.

He had with him one other widely experienced airman (a flying instructor), 70-odd men who had not been to war and six Canadian-built, twin-engine, Caribou transport planes.

They set up base with the US Army at Vung Tau, the former peninsular French holiday resort 40 flying miles from Saigon.

Today the picture is the same, except that Sugden is back in Australia ready to retire (to a NSW north-coast farm) and many of the men who went in the original squadron are back with him after completing eight months' service there.

Squadron Leader Gordon Harvey is the man now in charge of the RAAF in Vietnam. The men who have returned have been replaced by others.

The RAAF's effort in Vietnam has tended to be overshadowed by the Army.

The Army in Vietnam is a combatant force; the RAAF is not.

Australian soldiers have been killed; not one airman has.

Nevertheless, the RAAF's task in Vietnam is equally important and not less heroic.

**Four bases.** The RAAF operates largely from four main bases in Vietnam — Vung Tau, Haiyen in the south-east, Da Nang in the north and Nahtrang on the east coast.

From these points it flies troops, equipment, food and supplies to more

than 100 airstrips throughout South Vietnam.

Keeping four aircraft in the air seven days a week (a record that has never been broken and which is a feat in itself) it flies from eight to ten sorties a day, each an average 75 miles, carrying up to three tons of cargo a sortie.

The normal flying routine is a 5 a.m. take-off, returning to base at dusk.

Sometimes night flights are made, landing at airstrips lit by flares.

Says Sugden: "Flying conditions generally in Vietnam are not bad. It's very seldom that a plane can't get through."

Of greater risk are the short and often poorly surfaced airstrips.

"The Caribou is a short-haul aircraft and is designed to land on small strips of almost any surface," says Sugden.

"But the smallest strip we would operate from was the one at Haiyen, which is 1000 feet long, 44 feet wide.

"That's all right for landing, but you have to leave a ton of cargo behind on take-off or you won't make it."

**Wrecked.** One pilot who "didn't make it" wrecked his plane while landing on a half-finished strip in the north of the country.

The salvagable pieces were taken away by helicopter.

Another Caribou was damaged slightly landing at Haiyen, further damaged when cargo was accidentally dropped on one wing and finally flew out again . . . with one American and one Australian wing.

But overshadowing all of the difficult operations of the RAAF in Vietnam is the same danger . . . the communist Vietcong.

It is for this reason that the RAAF has adopted its special landing and take-off technique.

Says Sugden: "You never know when you're going to come under fire."

While the airstrips are usually guarded by South Vietnamese, there is never any guarantee that Vietcong are not lurking in the bush nearby with automatic weapons.

**Under fire.** Only just recently the communists fired on an Australian Caribou from the SIDE of a strip as the plane was taking off.

Sugden recalls the odd experience



SQDN. LDR. CHRIS SUGDEN  
... "our boys are magnificent."

of Flight Lieutenant Don Jordan whose aircraft was attacked by Vietcong.

"A 30-calibre bullet pierced the cabin, put the radio out of action, passed through the trouser leg of his flying suit, then ricocheted back on to his leg," Sugden says.

"It hardly left a mark on his leg."

The same pilot was taking off from Ashau when Vietcong machine-gun fire put his aircraft's port engine out of action.

"He had the choice of returning to Ashau — which he naturally didn't make in the circumstances — or trying to fly out of a valley and over mountains to the next base 60 miles away," Sugden says.

"He feathered his port engine and just made it to the other strip.

"But when he was about to come in to land the Vietnamese ground control with whom he'd been in radio contact ordered him to make another circuit.

"They'd rolled other aircraft out on to the strip for take-off—instead of leaving it clear — and so Jordan had to do what they said.

"That wasn't easy on one engine and at that height."

**"Magnificent."** The former commander makes no bones about the respect he has for Australia's airmen in Vietnam.

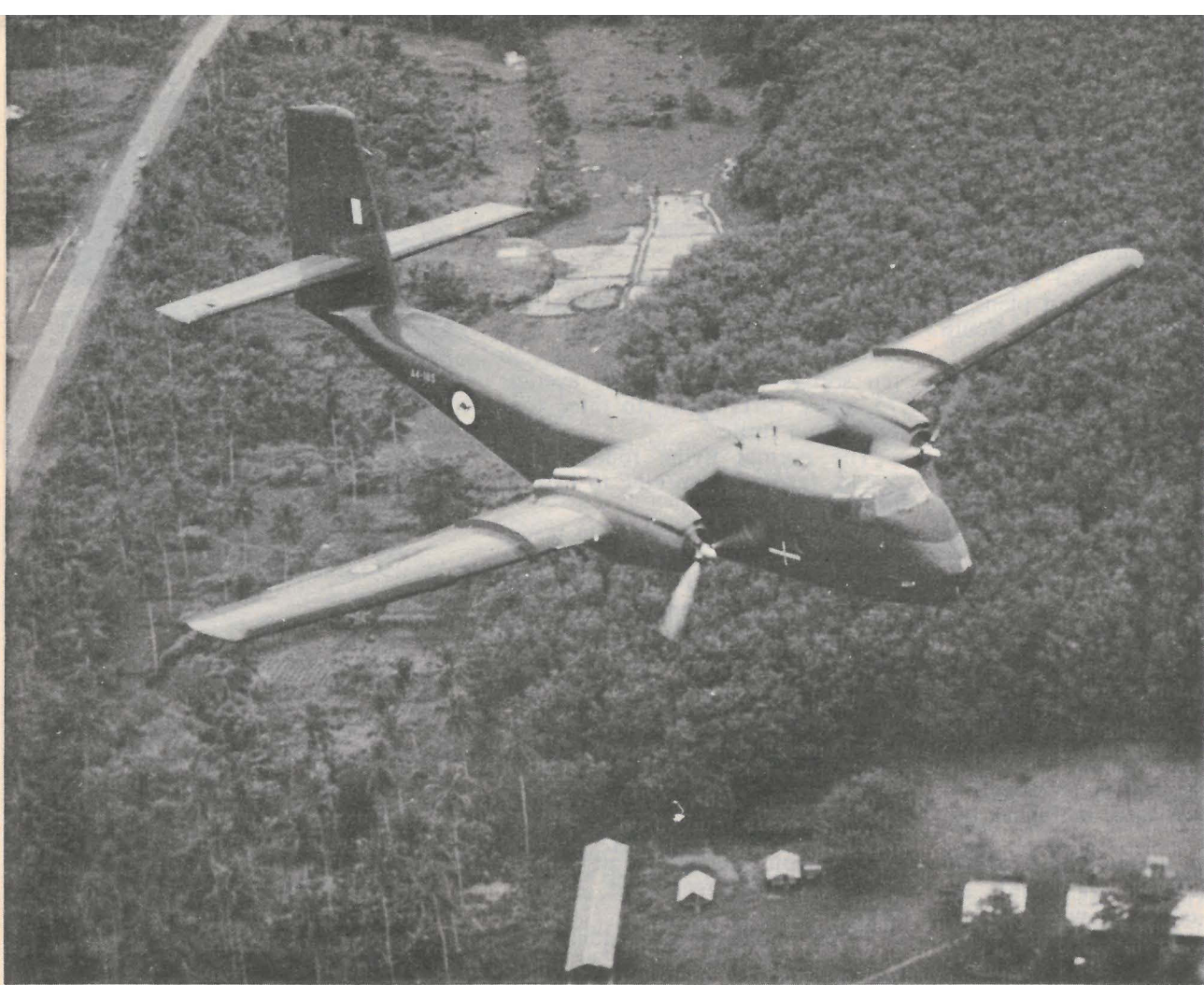
"They are a magnificent lot," he says bluntly.

"When you think that these crews are each chalking up more than 600 hours, or over 1000 sorties in eight months, you get an idea of what a job they're doing.

"And the technical boys do an equally grand job.

"Without them the aircraft wouldn't be in the air."





ABOVE: A Caribou on its way to one of the many hundreds of airstrips in Vietnam to offload supplies for the troops. BELOW: Aircrew members of the RAAF Transport Flight, which was then led by Squadron Leader Chris Sugden (centre).





# RAAF HAS HAZARDOUS SUPPLY JOB

These pictures show the RAAF Transport Flight at work in South Vietnam where it has been since last year to help American and South Vietnamese forces.

The unit's job is to work in close co-operation with the Americans and Vietnamese in ferrying huge amounts of equipment, food and arms — as well as troops — to hundreds of air-strips throughout the country.

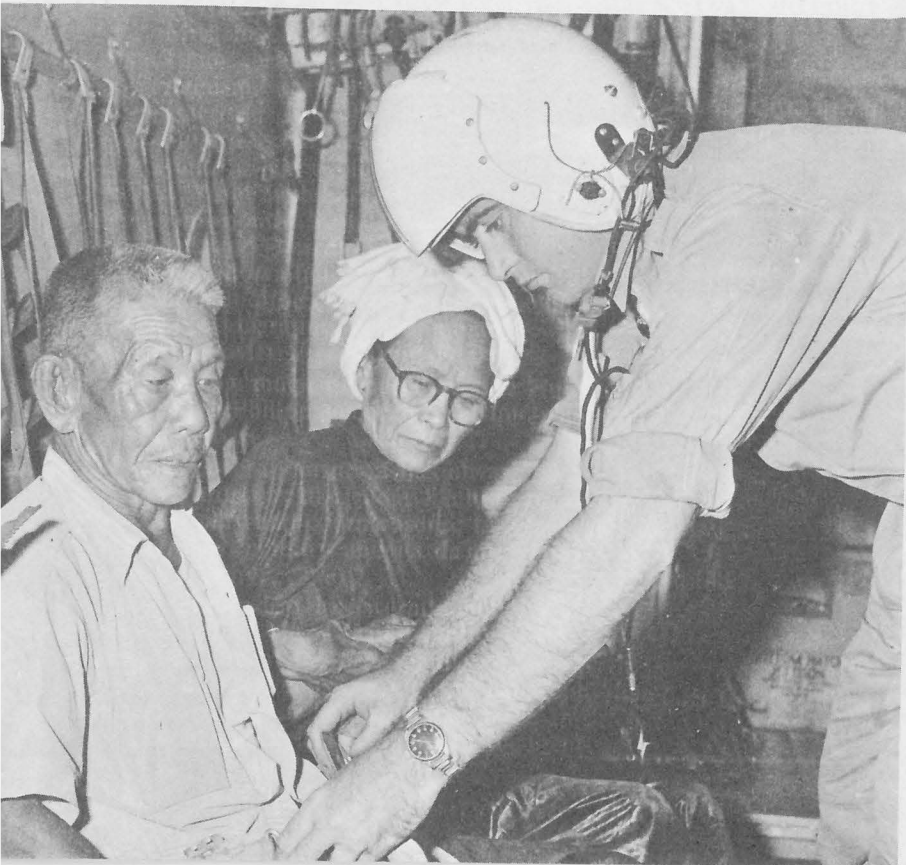
Aircrews frequently have to fly into areas held by the Vietcong, at the same time operating maximum loads from difficult airstrips.

The RAAF has adopted special flying techniques as a protection from enemy ground-fire when the planes land and take off.

Both the RAAF and the US Army use Caribou aircraft for their transport operations. The RAAF unit operates from Vung Tau, a US Army base near Saigon.

Each day it helps deliver tons of cargo, vital in the struggle against the Vietcong.

ABOVE: Crew of a Caribou is welcomed by South Vietnamese soldiers in delta country south of Saigon. The Australians are (from left): Cpl. Joseph Thomas, of Bulaburra, NSW; LAC Noel Brown, Warrnambool, Vic.; Flt.-Lt. Ronald Raymond, Richmond, NSW, and Flg. Off. John McQueen, Sydney. BELOW: LAC Trevor Pratt, of Nimmitabel, NSW, helps fix the lap straps for an old Vietnamese couple. BELOW RIGHT: South Vietnamese troops wait to board an RAAF Caribou.





## Caribou men come home from Vietnam

Below are some members of the RAAF Transport Flight who have served an eight-month term in Vietnam.

From left to right: Flying Officer John Staal, 24, of Young, NSW; Corporal Barry Ingate, 30, Derby, WA; Flying Officer Kevin Henderson, 24, Newcastle, NSW; LAC Mick Gwin, 24, Windsor, NSW; Flight Lieutenant Mike Lancaster, 30, Kempsey, NSW; LAC Brian Richards, 25, Seven Hills, NSW.

The airmen were members of the original group that began operating in Vietnam last year.

Note the Caribou — given the airmen by the Canadian Air Force while in Vietnam, and now taking pride of place in the airmen's mess at Richmond, NSW.



## This was one man's war

"There is no front-line in Vietnam. Anyone may be your enemy."

So says Corporal Gordon Ferguson, 31, of Campbelltown, NSW (pictured right).

He, along with many other Australian soldiers who fought in Vietnam, has the scars to prove it.

On August 9, just two days before his birthday, the section he was leading in the jungle near Bien Hoa was ambushed by a handful of Vietcong.

Both he and his forward scout, Private L. A. Bakker (from Toongabbie) were shot down.

Bakker, shot in the stomach, is on his feet again.

So is Ferguson who, although he had a nerve damaged in his neck which has affected his hearing and face muscles, is heading towards complete recovery.

**Rejoining.** Already he is talking about rejoining the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

"I've been with them since I joined up in 1958 and most of my mates are in the battalion," he explains.

**Fought in Malaya.** Action is not



new to Ferguson. He fought the terrorists in Malaya in 1959-60.

He went to Vietnam by plane (most of the 1st RAR troops were shipped there in HMAS Sydney) and arrived at Bien Hoa on June 3 this year.

"The Americans took us in buses, with an armed escort, the 14 miles from Saigon to Bien Hoa," he recalls.

"The Americans gave us lessons in tactics based on their own experiences against the Vietcong.

"Then we dug in."

The war that Ferguson fought and the other many men of his calibre are still fighting has no real counterpart in warfare history.

**Some are lucky.** As Ferguson says: "It's one in which you can be lucky, or you can be unlucky.

"It's a matter of knowing who your enemy is, and that's just about impossible.

"He might be a peasant in a paddock field, or a boy on a bicycle."

**1400 soldiers.** There are 1400 Australian soldiers now serving in Vietnam.

The main group was shipped there in HMAS Sydney at the end of May, while others were flown there.

The initial force was supplemented during September by a further 350 men to make the force a battalion group.

This gave it certain arms and forces, including artillery, that it didn't have before.

The battalion, serving as part of the American 173rd Brigade, is based largely in the Bien Hoa area. A section of the 1st Australian Logistics Support Company is based in Saigon.

The Australian troops include a hundred members of a military training team who have been in Vietnam since mid-1962.

## INDONESIA:

## We don't know how lucky we've been

**It is not enough for Australians to WANT to live in peace and harmony. We must realise the potential danger from the north . . . and do something about it.**

BY SIR WILFRID KENT HUGHES

The recent blackout of power and light in the north-east States of the US caused a war panic in some cities.

The recent blackout in Australia of events in Indonesia has only increased our blindness to the dangers that threaten us.

Australians are friendly folk. We want to live in peace and harmony with our neighbours and help them develop their countries and raise their living standards.

For many years Australia has bent over backwards to establish friendly relations with Indonesia, ignoring the obvious march of events and hoping for a miracle.

Perhaps that miracle is the attempted coup of September 30, but the Indonesian Army's counter-coup and the suppression of the rebellion and revolution have not yet been completed.

Interference in Indonesia's internal affairs has been very wisely avoided.

Even a very mild and well-meant statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paul Hasluck, was purposely misconstrued and rebuffed in Djakarta.

Now, nearly eight weeks after the attempted coup, some of the fog which enshrouded the Indonesian landscape has lifted, and it is time to take a closer look at what has happened.

**Narrow escape.** First and foremost, Australia has, by the narrowest margin, escaped the extreme peril of a communist take-over in the Island Empire with which she has a contiguous land border.

The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) has for many years past been increasing its power and influence in close association and co-operation with Peking.

The visits of the leaders of the Australian and New Zealand communist parties (Marxist-Leninist) to Peking and Djakarta, and the communiques they issued in conjunction with Aidit, the leader of the PKI,

seem to have passed unnoticed in Australia.

Even the establishment of the New China News Agency (renowned in Africa as the centre of subversive activity), in Queens Rd., Melbourne, has scarcely caused a ripple on the surface of Australian self-assurance.

Australians, particularly trade unionists, have been allowed to visit Peking, where they have taken part in Peking Radio broadcasts giving loud praise to the Chinese communist authorities.

A delegation also visited Hanoi recently to take part in a conference which passed resolutions denouncing America and Australia for their actions in South Vietnam.

When the communists became so self-confident that they began importing propaganda films on the Vietnamese war (showing our allies as sadistic butchers) into Australia, the Government at last was stirred to action and banned the films.

However, Australians do not seem even yet to have realised the danger of the close tie-up between the ACP (M-L), the Chinese communists and the PKI.

**Troop training.** One intelligence source reported Chinese instructors training guerrilla troops in West Irian.

If it was true, it can be expected that the Indonesian Army has probably taken action to send the instructors back to Peking.

But has the training stopped?

The USSR has supplied large quantities of ships, planes and arms to Indonesia. This followed the original secret agreement made by President Sukarno with Russia in the early days of independence.

The Dutch intelligence service knew of this through a prisoner captured during fighting in Java.

One of the results has been the Russian-built centre for oceanography at Amboina, which is a camouflage for a submarine base.

The unusually outspoken com-



SIR WILFRID KENT HUGHES

ments of the commander of HMAS Sydney on his return from transporting troops to Vietnam, would seem to indicate that his convoy had been shadowed part of the way by submarines from this base.

When Aidit changed the allegiance of the PKI from Moscow to Peking, the Chinese communists took over many of the Russian privileges, and were given extra strategic rights in West Irian.

One very credible intelligence source has reported that the September 30 coup was attempted at that time for two reasons.

The first was that the PKI had planned a slower takeover, hoping that Sukarno would live until 1967, by which time they hoped to have increased membership to five million and to have gained more official positions of power.

What upset this timing? Apparently Sukarno had a slight collapse which was wrongly interpreted by one of his Chinese doctors as severe.

The latter went to Aidit and told him he would have to act quickly.

The second was that the Army chiefs had been informed of the smuggling of light arms to the PKI by the Chinese, and were planning to take counter-action, probably on Army Day, early in October.

**Smuggling arms.** Since September 30 the Army officially reported having uncovered some of the smuggling of arms.

Another intelligence source reports that most of the arms traffic was being channelled through fishing fleets operating out of Semarang, and protected by Indonesian Air Force planes.

In this connection it is interesting