

Usable Army equipment made into junk

PHU BAI, Vietnam (AP)—Bulldozers are busy making junk out of equipment the U.S. Army says is not worth keeping and too expensive to give away.

Here on a muddy hill the ebbing American military presence has left dunes of crushed desks, lockers, air-conditioners, refrigerators, bunks, steam tables and other paraphernalia of modern war—some 3,000 tons of metal alone.

Before the bulldozer strikes, much of the equipment is battered but usable. A small amount is new.

But most of the metal here—and at seven other Army property disposal facilities in Vietnam—will be sold for scrap at prices ranging from \$4 a ton for light iron and steel to \$100 a ton for aluminum.

It is easy to be shocked at the waste, but not so easy to advance a solution to this irony of wartime economics: the property disposal agency says the only

items legally consigned to the scrap heap are those it would cost more to dispose of in any other way.

Most of the incoming equipment has been so judged, says Warren S. Everett, the agency's deputy director in Vietnam.

But much of it has served U.S. units until dumping time and could be put to use by the Vietnamese, who patch up anything from roofs to automobiles with an adeptness born of necessity.

Vietnamese interest in American castoffs is evidenced by occasional attempts to steal from the Phu Bai facility.

The disposal men are bound on one hand by red tape designed to prevent corruption and pressed on the other by a work load that has doubled in the last month and may double again before spring.

"There, they've done it to us again," sighed S.Sgt. Sylvanus Watts, pointing to three steel acetylene gas cylinders dumped

near a heap of scrap aluminum.

"We've had them bring new motors in here, still in the crate, and I've turned them back. We can't accept those things, but there's only half a dozen of us. We haven't got the men to keep it all out."

While the yard crew is racing to keep up with sorting and paperwork, a steady stream of trucks spirits in more and more usable equipment.

The reason, disposal men say, is the accelerated withdrawal. U.S. military units are in haste to pack up and get out, and dumping equipment is easier than going through channels.

Equipment left legitimately at the facility is available to U.S. and allied military units and to other agencies through supply channels. To bypass the red tape would be to invite corruption.

"I had a Vietnamese officer offer me an AK47 rifle if I'd just let him come in here with a truck and load up," said Watts, who is

from Nashville, Tenn.

The disposal men say they have neither space nor manpower to save equipment from the weather and the bulldozer, and neither resources nor authority to distribute it on their own.

Director Everett says \$35.9 million in used equipment was officially consigned to military and other recipients in the fiscal year that ended last June.

Sales during the same period brought in about \$2.3 million for usable equipment that cost \$39.1 million when new. And 183,000 tons of scrap were sold for \$6.4 million to buyers from Asian countries and the United States.

Everett said the property disposal agency is trying to cope with the influx by consolidating facilities, but "with everybody going home, this is not the time to scream for more people."

Besides, he noted, the cost of expanding the disposal operation would come out of the taxpayer's pocket.

Wadsworth gives seminar

Dr. R. B. Wadsworth, A&M industrial engineering professor, presented a systems engineering seminar this week at the Monterrey Institute of Technology in Mexico.

Wadsworth's session with engineering faculty members at the institute tied in with a new curriculum in systems engineering being organized by the Monterrey school.

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Urban farmers change ideas on land use

His bib overalls are a new blue and a bit scratchy, and they don't seem to go well with his old tennis shoes. In his mouth is a wad of chewing gum—not tobacco—and on his fingers are rings, not calluses. Leaning against his shiny pickup, the latest book of "How To..." in his hand, he surveys his herd of a half dozen cattle, and thanks God he got away from the city, at least for the weekend.

Yes, the Urban Farmer has arrived in Texas, and according to a resource economics specialist at A&M, his numbers are growing and his actions are causing some

serious re-thinking about the uses of rural land.

"For the first time in the history of the world, it's possible for a large portion of a country's population to view land as a consumption good," began Dr. Ivan Schmedemann of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology.

"Traditionally, land has been considered as a factor of production, one of the inputs in a farming or ranching enterprise." Most of the buyers of consumptive land, however, are looking for property that will provide primarily recreational benefits, Schmedemann said.

"It appears they are buying land in the same way they buy boats, pickup campers, travel trailers or other leisure-time items," he continued. "In terms of physical attributes, 'romance' counts much more than soil productivity."

"Buyers are very interested in having trees, lakesites and wildlife on their property. However, consumptive land is also bought for livestock production. To many, weekend farmers, raising cattle is

recreation with some monetary benefits as well."

In a paper he co-authored with James F. Faubion and William R. Masch, both research associates with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Schmedemann explored the implications of urban farmer activity in East Texas.

The region is favorable to such recreational development, he said, pointing out that East Texas not only possesses an abundance of water and undeveloped land, but also is situated within commuting distance of the major metropolitan areas of the state.

The realty investments made by the urban farmer, Schmedemann said, have stimulated the East Texas land market. The researcher added that 1970 data indicates

a more than 200 per cent increase over 1962 in annual sales of 10- to 25-acre tracts, the size most desired by urban farmers.

For consumptive land tracts, the number of sales and the level of land prices is governed much more by the general economy and the availability of credit than by prices of agricultural commodities, Schmedemann said.

As these sales gain an increasing share of the East Texas land market, lending agencies are restructuring their land appraisal policies to reflect consumptive uses instead of traditional agricultural uses. Such appraisals of intangible satisfactions are much more difficult to make, he added.

"Loans for these properties are becoming more 'man-based' than 'land-based,'" Schmedemann said.

"The individual's earning power from sources other than land becomes very important, and his managerial ability as a farmer on the land, less so."

Conservation agencies will be serving a new clientele. The urban farmer, he explained, will be less concerned with maximizing profits and more interested in the trade-offs between economic returns and satisfaction derived from consumptive uses.

Schmedemann suggested that local economics could receive some economic benefits from an expanded tax base as urban farmers drive land prices higher.

There likely will be some costs involved, however, as additional public services will have to be provided to meet the needs of an expanding population.

Wigginton honorary member of A&M Club

Donnie Wigginton, the quarterback for the University of Texas Longhorns last season and now an A&M coach, received an "Aggie Instant Conversion" package and honorary life membership in the

Brazos County A&M Club Wednesday.

Wigginton and his wife, Janice, were special guests at the club's fish supper and game night.

President John West and Ac-

tivities Vice President Herb Gersbach teamed up to surprise the Wiggintons and welcome them to the Aggie community.

Gersbach complimented Wigginton on his appearance at the Texas awards night program when Wigginton showed up in full Aggie uniform giving the Longhorn fans the "gig 'em" sign.

"For all of us Ags, we appreciate the actions above and beyond the call of duty in Longhorn country," Gersbach said.

Mrs. Wigginton, also a UT-Austin graduate, opened the surprise package which included his and her Aggie sweatshirts, "Howdy" bib and Ol' Sarge bib for the couple's three-week old girl and a baby bottle with measurements in Aggie football quarters.

Gersbach presented a plaque to Wigginton making him the first honorary member of the Brazos County Club. Gersbach pointed out Texas fans had an Aggie coach running the team in the Cotton Bowl, since Wigginton was on the A&M payroll as of Jan. 1.

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