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VC terrorists skip Soulsville

By MIKE DAVIS
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SAIGON — Are colored soldiers on the streets of Saigon exempt from Viet Cong terroist attacks and sniperfire?

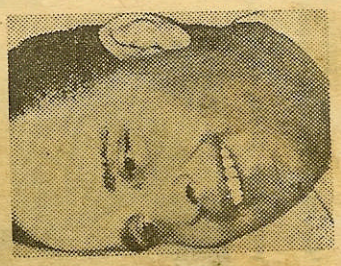
A Army enlisted man from Alexandria, Va., thinkso.

S4 Russell Jordan told the AFRO this week that few cored servicemen have been the targets of VC terrorin.

T; question has particular relevance this week as South ietnam prepared to go to the polls Sept. 3 to elect a ational government.

Irreased terrorism in the Saion area has resulted in a mitary directive warning Americans in the South Vietnarese capital to be "extremly alert" while on the strets.

A ':30 p.m. curfew was expectel. Last week Viet Cong terrorism directed at Americans increased three-fold over incidents of the previous week and though two major attempts to blow up major U.S. installations including the press headquarters here have been thwarted, an all-out attempt to disrupt the elections is



MIKE DAVIS

—VC terrorists

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expected.

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SOULSVILLE, an area on the outskirts of Saigon frequented by colored soldiers, was virtually deserted early Sunday evening as soldiers returned to their billeting hours before the mandatory curfew.

"The night belongs to Charlie," Jordon observed as he talked with this reporter at an enlisted men's billet. "We haven't had any of our fellows hit on the street yet, but two white soldiers from our billet were shot last week."

Soulsville bars have not been the targets of grenade attacks, while bars frequented by white troops along the more popular Tu Do Street are hit at regular intervals.

Special reaction teams in jeeps with M-60 machine guns mounted on the hood patrol main streets in Saigon and government vehicles will stop and offer rides to pedestrians.

Saigon is like a powder drum. No one knows exactly when and where the attacks will come, but if the past is a precedent, some kind of violence seems imminent.

"The only thing we can do," Jordon said, "is stay off the street as much as possible and move quickly between the mess halls and our billets.

"You certainly won't find me in a public bar or a dinner until the elections are over," he concluded.

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AN OMINOUS sign that all is not well in Saigon is the recent placement of signs in buildings in which Americans live, instructing the occupants on the procedure to be used in event of an explosion.

"This sign could save your life," is printed in large, bold letters on the top of the posters. "At first sign of enemy activity roll out of bed and fall to the floor."

Americans in Saigon do have some defensive mechanisms available. Explosive Ordinance Demolition teams have been especially busy this week, rushing through the city to check out reports of suspicious boxes and garbage cans near American buildings.

The EOD teams, two men in siren and red light equipped jeeps are called in at the slightest hint of an explosive.

Military police, who usually arrive first on the scene, clear the area and move all civilians and military personnel indoors.

The EOD teams, who are trained in disarming all types of explosiges quickly, locate the device and carefully render it harmless.

THE MOST deadly threat to people in Saigon's streets is the claymore mine. It has an effective range of 200 yards and can be aimed to cover a wide area.

Smaller grenades which are usually hurled into crowds are less effective than the claymores but nevertheless deadly.

A typical Viet Cong tactic is to plant a claymore mine near a small explosion and time it to explode after the initial blast brings rescurers and curious onlookers to the scene.

A number of Americans and Vietnamese have lost their lives when they rushed in to aid the victims of small grenade explosions.

But now regardless of the [illegible] age [illegible] ng pr[illegible]

gon was hit by recoiless rifle fire, is particularly concerned about the pending elections.

"The elections are very important," he said, "to the future of Vietnam. In a way they represent all that we have been fighting for here We have to give these people an even chance to establish a true democracy without being harassed by the Viet Cong. Every successful terrorist attack is a moral booster for the enemy and a step backward for the allied forces.

"Once we show them that we can stop them cold, they will leave the South Vietnamese alone."

Asked why few colored soldiers have been killed by terrorists, Jordon said, "The Communist are getting a lot of mileage out of all of the racial dissent back home.

"They feel that the colored soldiers are against this war and they have been indoctrinatd to make friends with the colored troops and show that they like them.

"I am always careful when a Vietnamese tries to make me believe that he likes me more than he likes the white soldiers.

"This is a typical Viet Cong method."

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TERROR OR no terror it's a better than even bet that the election will be successful though the election of the provincial military junta is almost a foregone conclusion is press circles here.

The two military standard bearers, Thieu and Ky have been voc[illegible]ally disturbed over mounting discontent in the [illegible] Senate over the honesty of the coming elections.

Nevertheless, few of the civilian candidates are give[illegible] much of a chance of winni[illegible] the Thieu-Ky ti[illegible]