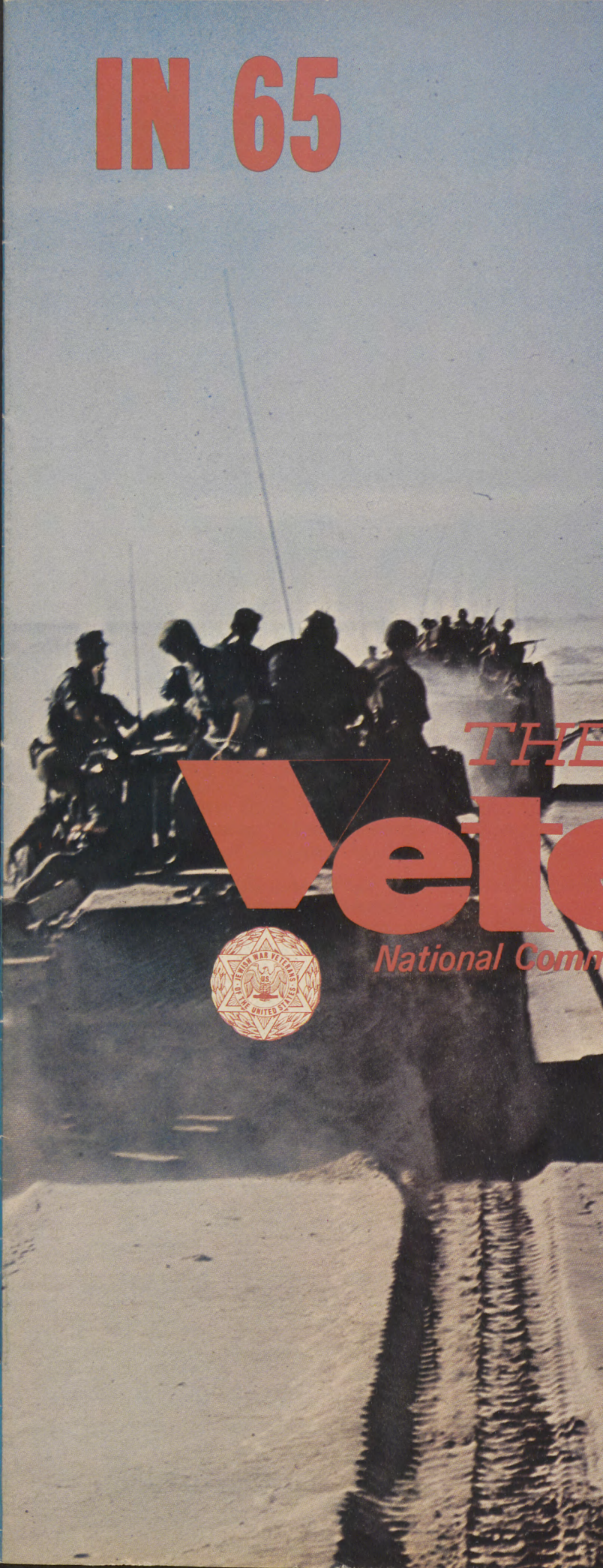
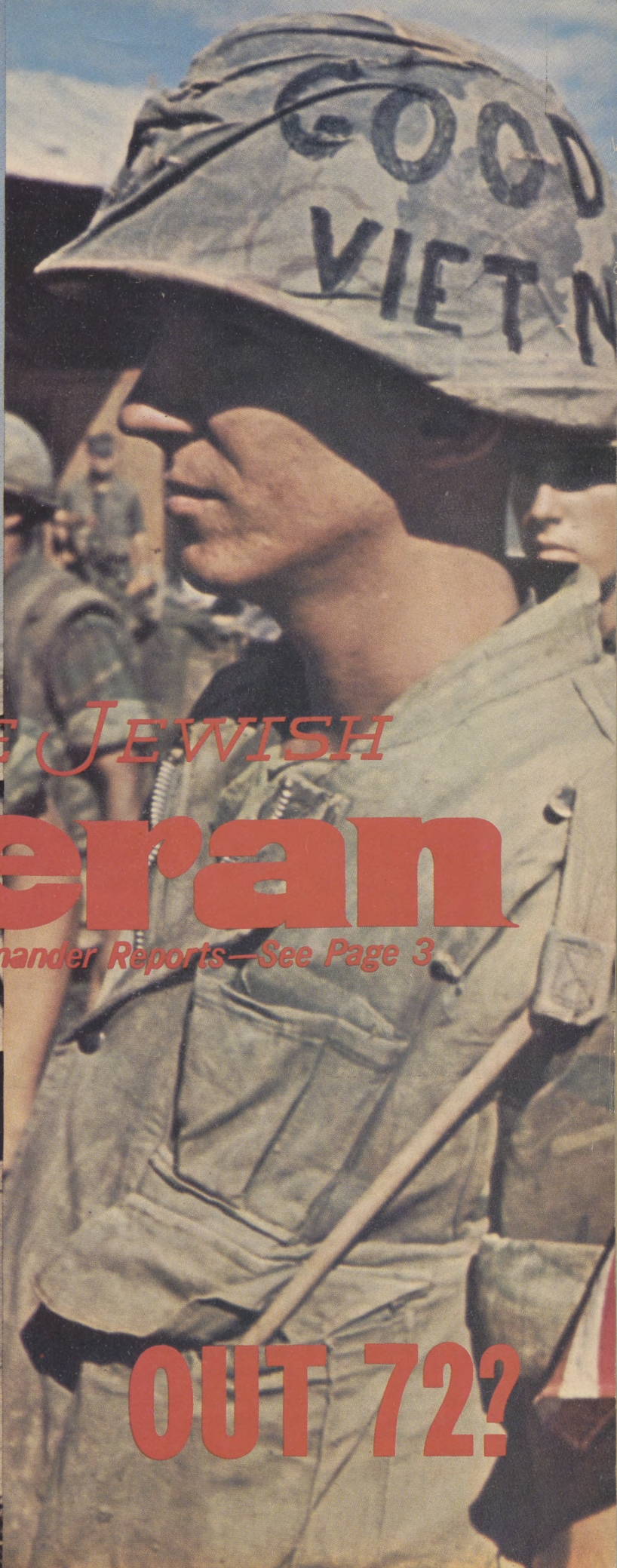


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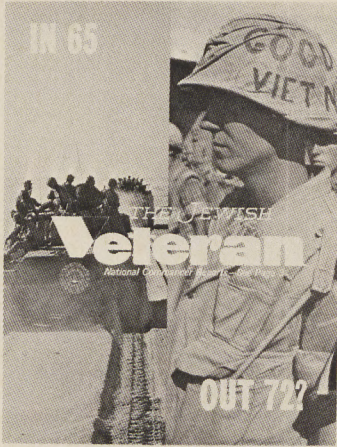


THE JEWISH
Veteran



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OUT 72?



The cover this issue shows the first American combat troops entering Vietnam in 1965 (although American "advisors" had been on the scene three years by that time) and the last of the combat troops being pulled out this year.

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commander-at-large

By Norman D. Tilles *National Commander*

As one who has been troubled over the years by our Vietnam involvement, I feel compelled to bare my soul. Since healthy debate is one of JVV's greatest strengths, I expect, through the form of our "Letters to the Editor," members will express their own views.

Ripley's "Believe It or Not" couldn't have posed a more incredible contradiction than that dividing the country on the issue of the Vietnam war.

Advocates of official U.S. policy believe that those who urge a unilateral stoppage of the war are prolonging it by giving hope to the enemy and that, conversely, the Administration, by keeping the war going, is proving that the U.S. wants to stop it.

This "stopping it" consists of dropping more explosives per square inch than has ever been done before—more than a ton of bombs for every single minute of the present Administration.

Until recently, the official position was that air support was needed to save the lives of our combat troops and to aid the process of Vietnamization. Now, the last of the ground combat troops have been brought home, and the step-up of bombing in the North carries the message that Vietnamization is a dream of American non-involvement about as substantial as the clouds of smoke drifting across the face of that tiny, war-torn country.

What exactly is the point to the bombing?

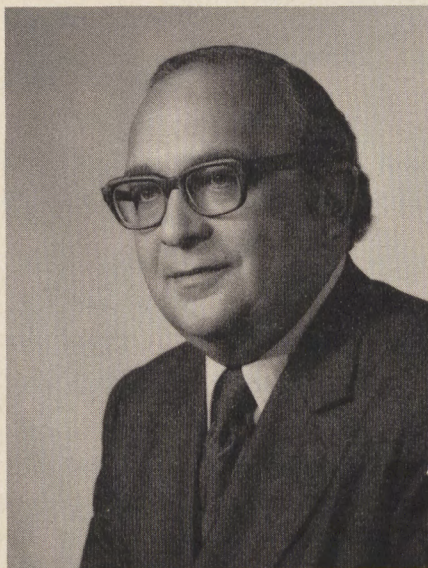
Elsewhere in this issue, a returned Vietnam veteran says it is to "reduce Vietnam to a rubble." Whether this is the aim or not, it certainly appears to be the effect.

The Administration no longer puts forward the argument that the point is to "contain Communism." Not now

when Moscow and Peking are now American trading partners!

It can hardly be to protect our combat troops, since the last of them have now come home.

It can't reasonably be to protect our planes and fliers in the North, because the best way of protecting them would be to keep them out of the North.



The Administration is understandably reluctant to justify its actions by saying the aim is to maintain the Thieu regime, a ruling clique that each day appears more dimly corrupt and despotic, and which evinces an almost brutal lack of concern for the Vietnamese people.

Two years ago, the word was that Vietnamization would enable the Vietnamese to carry on without us. Vietnamization was to be our key to getting out. Now the Administration maintains the program has been successful.

So, then, with the last of our ground combat troops safely home, why do we continue to indulge in the excess of a war we can't afford or need?

To think that we can break the will of the North Vietnamese people by raining ever-increasing tons of

destruction from the skies was a hope held by President Johnson. Hanoi consistently displayed a willingness to bear the costs and Johnson ended his public years by stopping the bombing of the North and ending the build-up of troops.

Yet, we are back essentially to the discarded Johnson policy of regular daily attacks on North Vietnam. The ranks of American POWs are again being increased.

Why has the Administration waited almost four years and expended 20,000 more American lives for an outcome that was within our reach in 1969? Clearly, all along there were limits to what the United States could do, and once the goal of military victory was abandoned, there was little to indicate that anything would be gained by prolonging the war.

The President can now say that the United States has done all that could be reasonably expected, and that if the results are not congenial, it's not the fault of the United States. A recent Washington Post editorial gave this unhappy summation of where we now stand:

"It may be that this prospect of a continuing, open-ended war, with almost no American casualties but with heavy American involvement from the air, is acceptable to most Americans. Maybe a majority is indifferent to the spectacle of the world's greatest nation — their own — relentlessly raining bombs on one of the world's smallest nations to no particular effect."

There simply is no good reason for the U.S. to participate in the destruction of the two Vietnams. The only honorable course left is a peaceful and merciful end to U.S. involvement now.

There is no reasonable expectation that we can do any good there, and every day we stay, we are adding to our moral dilemma. Like a stunned boxer, we keep in there, numbly staggering around the ring, too weak to win the fight, too strong to go down. □