

# An aerial defense?

by SGT Matt Gryta

If you happen to look up one day and spot an immense helicopter toting what looks like a small house under its belly, have no fears; division headquarters isn't moving out from under your nose.

Its defense system is merely being rearranged to a certain extent.

Since the end of October, working in conjunction with the Chu Lai Defense Command, the third platoon of Company C, 29th Engineer Battalion has been involved in the re-location of guard bunkers and watch towers along the Chu Lai defensive perimeter.

The engineers have seen to the air movement of nine bunkers and one fifty foot tower to date.

"A typical bunker lift recently took place when an abandoned bunker was moved more than two miles from the southern tip of the perimeter to a position on the Combat Center beach," explained 1st Lieutenant Michael L. Shaw, Forest Park, Ga., platoon leader.

"A similar bunker situated there had been washed away during Typhoon Kate."

Before a structure can be safely lifted by the helicopter, they must be partially dismantled, Lt. Shaw pointed out.

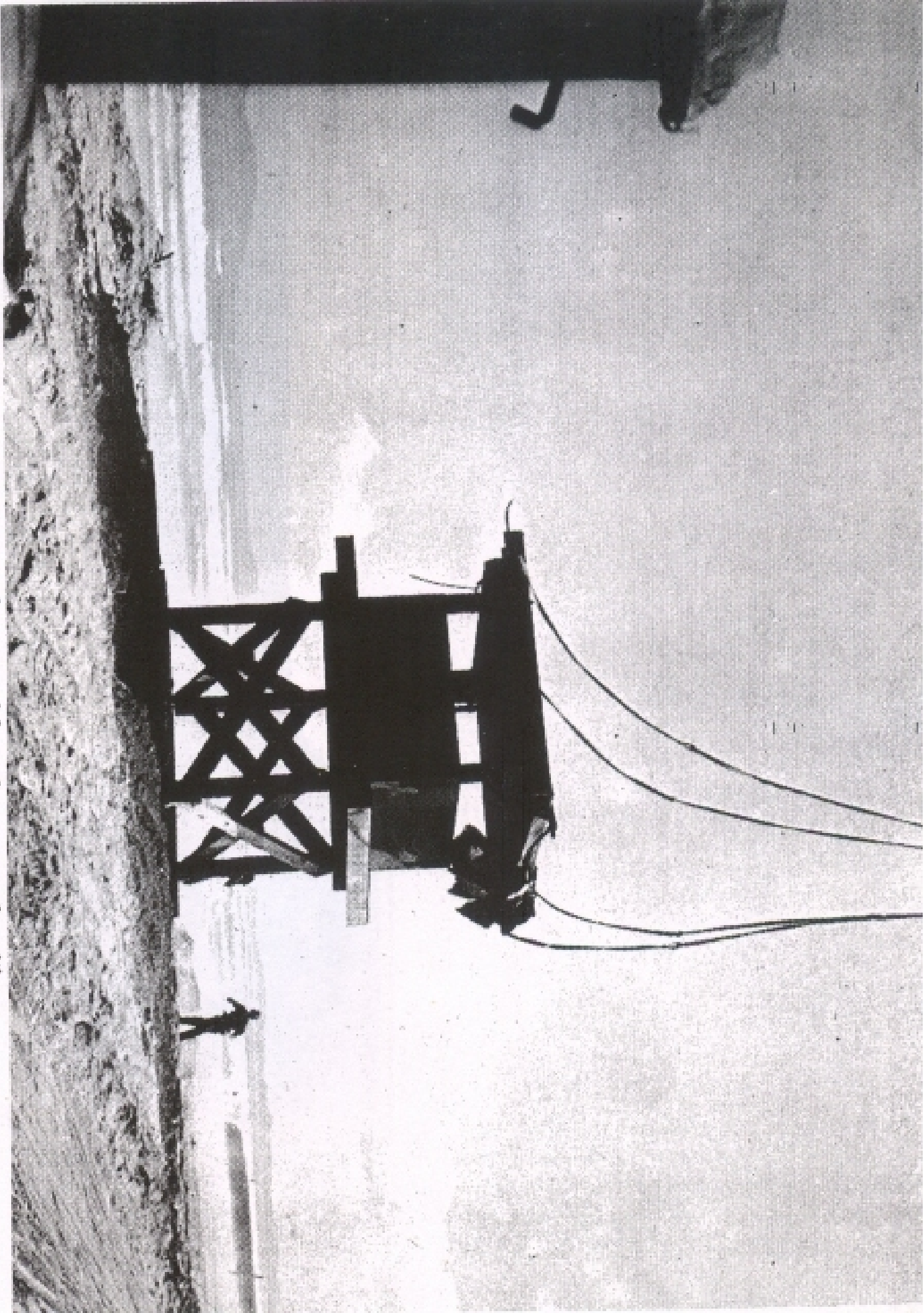
"Prior to lifting the structure we have to remove the outside revetment walls and sandbags," he said. "A CH-47 'Chinook' can lift the small bunkers but a CH-54 'Flying Crane' is required to transport the much heavier guard towers."

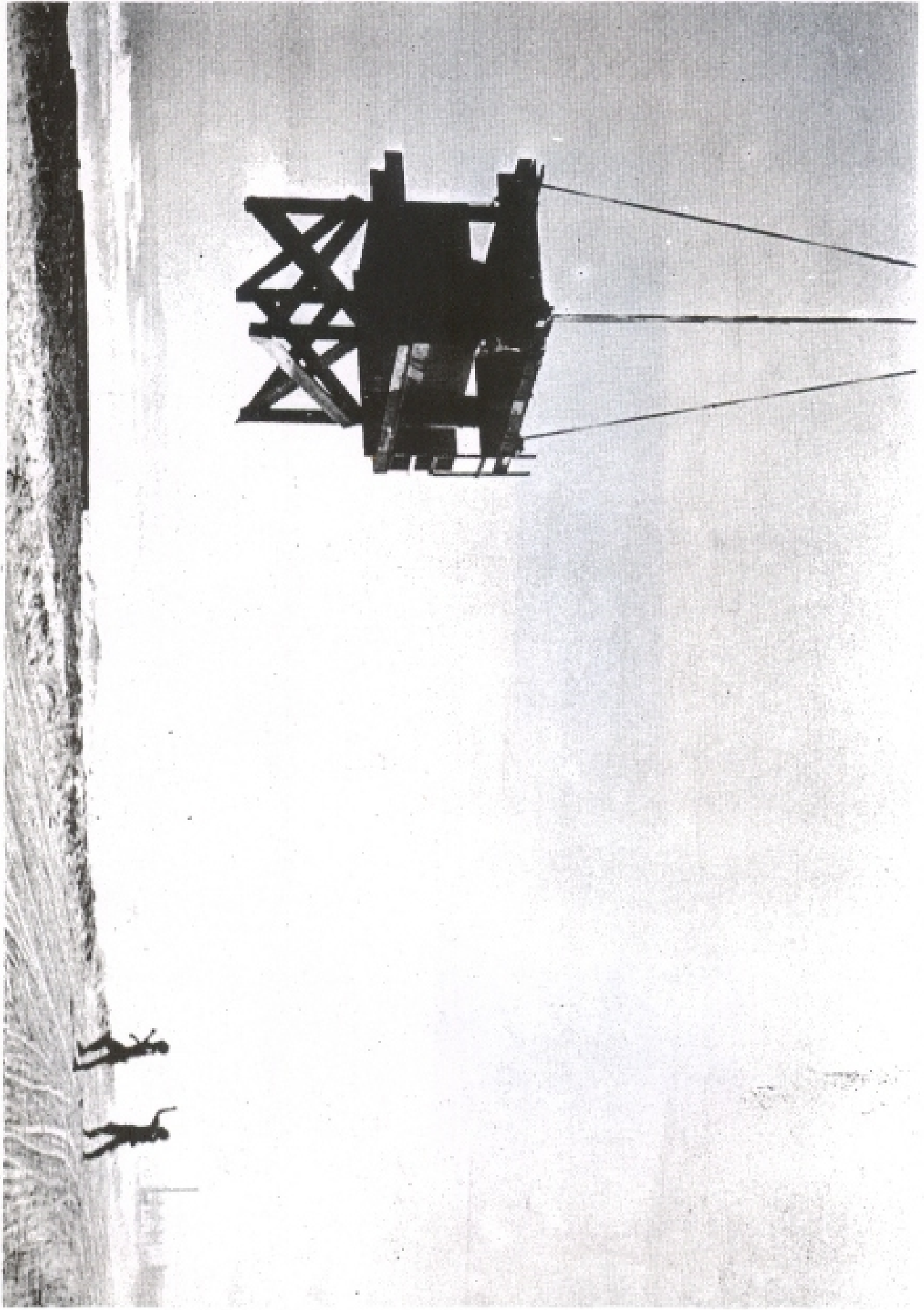
The engineers have the airlift technique down to a science now, but it wasn't always so.

"We learned that when moving a bunker by air it's a good idea to paint an arrow on the roof showing the direction of placement," noted Lieutenant Shaw.

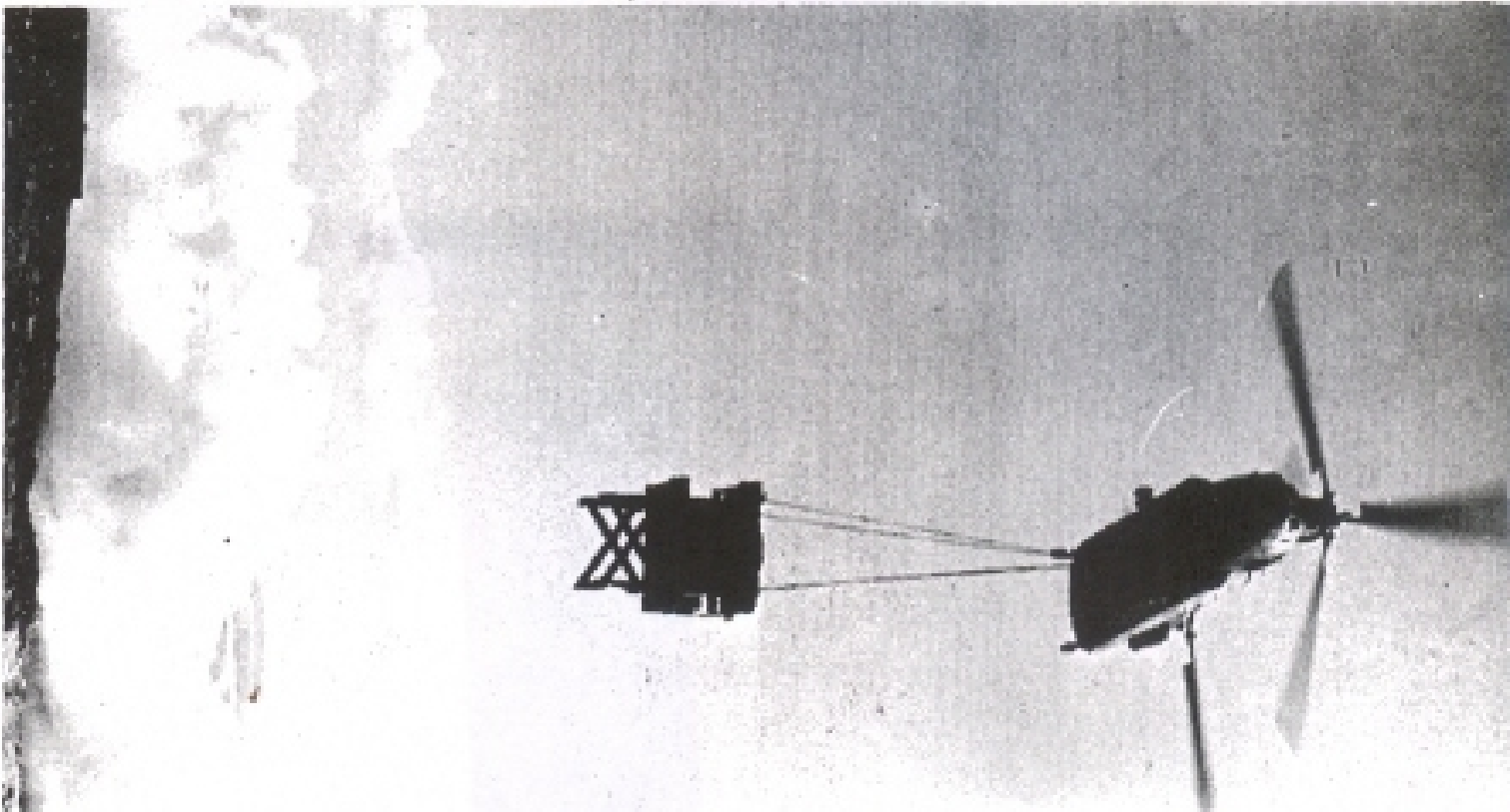
"Some of our first attempts landed with the entrance way facing the enemy, and perpendicular to the enemy, a few were set down as they should be with the door away from the enemy."

Touchdown, -- now the towlines can be removed from the new guard position.

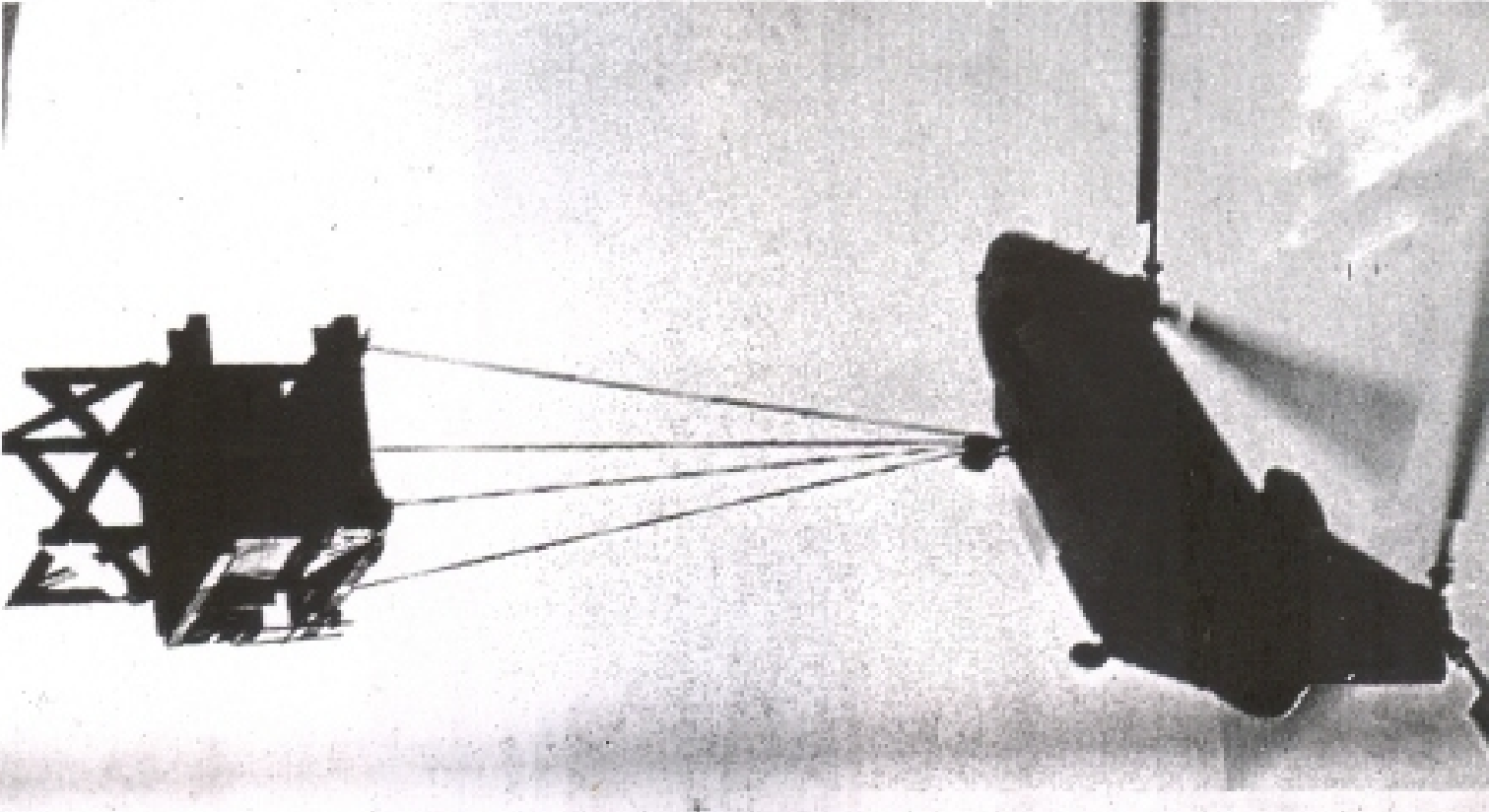




Amid a howling sandstorm churned by the blades of the "Chinook" an engineer ground crew uses hand signals to guide the bunker onto its pre-fabricated foundation.



A "Chinook" supplied by the 178th Assault Helicopter Company carries the bunker toward its destined location on the Combat Center beach.



The bunker was stripped of its outside revetment walls and sand-bagging to ensure a safe lift.