













He was the noblest soldier in Vietnam—
a color-blind, round-the-clock helicopter
hero who saved 500 lives, but not his own

The Saga Of "Madman" Kelly

By Jack Pearl

Illustrated by Bill Hoffmann

*For I hold as a simple faith there's no denying
The trade of a soldier's the only trade worth plying
The death of a soldier's the only death worth dying . . .*
—Robert Service

IT is ironic that this poem by Robert Service, which glorifies battle and bloodshed, should have been chosen as a graveside eulogy to Major Charles Kelly of Sylvania, Georgia.

Charles Kelly was a small man, five feet, seven inches tall, and 160 pounds, with kind eyes and a gentle voice. He was sensitive and intelligent, with a deep feeling for children and for his fellow man. In between wars, he had served his community both as a teacher and as a high school principal.

In his 39 short years, he devoted almost 18 of them to military service. Paradoxically, Kelly was a soldier dedicated to the preservation of life. And in this pursuit, he was courageous, reckless and scornful of his personal safety.

He hated war, yet he believed that there were principles for which men must be prepared to fight and die. Democracy was one of them.

And, in January of 1964, when he was assigned to South Vietnam as a pilot (Continued on next page)



