

The Manly Art

LITTLE PUBLICITY was given one of the most popular pastimes in the battalion during its tour in South Vietnam — moustache growing.

This was surprising because some pretty spectacular whiskers were produced.

Many soldiers merely neglected to shave the upper lip, hoping this would result in fungus worthy of them.

But wait. We know that's not the way to do it. It's all a matter of studying the three basic principles:

Type to be grown.

Shape of face (Jong, fat, lean, hungry).

Maturity.

Ardent moustache growers will tell you they always consider these principles before setting out to grow one. It's



like the principles of war — ignore them and disaster is inevitable.

Throughout the battalion there were many types tried. Worthy of note were the Ronald Coleman and Errol Flynn types (there is a difference, even if it is slight), Anthony Quinn type, Adolph Hitler type, sergeant majors' type (that's the type I like), Pancho type (seemed to be favoured by V Company), Alf Garnett type (the favourite of the fellows who considered themselves devil-may-care), and, to cap it off, beefy mutton chops.



When I arrived in South Vietnam and saw the attempts being made, frankly I started to get a little concerned. Although I had a couple of years start on them, some of the fellows' whisker growth was fantastic. It was unbelievable. Boy yesterday, old man today.

I could see my long-standing reputation of having the best moustache in the battalion going to a young whisker-growing whipper-snapper of 20.

But this was only my initial reaction. A lot of the would-be growers failed to consider the principles.



Take the shape of the face. Now, I ask you, can you imagine the Errol Flynn or Ronald Coleman type of moustache on the long, lean and hungry looking face; or the Pancho type or Anthony Quinn type on a fellow with very pale skin; or the mutton chops on a fellow with little or no meat on him at all? Worst of all was the fellow with no military bearing or background who tried to grow the sergeant major type.

How important the third principle is. Maturity. And this, without doubt, is the hardest to obtain because there is a requirement to marry up the other two principles — ensuring the type of moustache matches your type of face, your personality and your age.



Although quite a few fellows thought growing a moustache was great, a lot shaved them off after a very short time. There were many reasons; they got whiskers in their mouths, they appeared to have aged beyond their years, because it itched, because it caught dandruff (this, I don't believe), or because the little lady back home wrote saying, "Don't you come back here with that thing on."

Growing a moustache was an ancient custom to show masculinity. It showed then, as it does now, who the men were.

How many showed their womenfolk just how masculine they were when they stepped ashore in Brisbane? I don't know, but I did.

GUESS WHO?