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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (20 Aug 68) FOR OT RD 682264

5 September 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 12th
Combat Aviation Group, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

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BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

1 Incl
as

Kenneth G. Wickham

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Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 12TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP
APO 96266

AVCG-SC

14 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI)(U)

See Distribution

1. (C) Section 1, Operations: Significant Activities:

a. General:

(1) This quarter began with the TET Offensive. The results, effects and actions taken by HQ's 12th Combat Aviation Group during the VC TET Offensive are discussed in Special ORLL - TET Offensive. (Incl 1)

(2) During the period, one air cavalry squadron, one armed helicopter company, and the 2nd Flight Platoon of the 273rd Assault Support Helicopter Company (Heavy) arrived in-country from CONUS. The 7/1st Air Cavalry Squadron main body arrived by boat at Vung Tau on 26 Feb 68. The air cavalry squadron was moved to its base camp at Di An and became operational on 22 Mar 68. The 7/1st ACS was placed under OPCON of II FFORCEV. The 361st Armed Helicopter Company arrived in-country on 8 Apr 68 and was moved to Di An on 18 Apr 68. The 361st AHC is assigned to the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion. The 2nd Flight Platoon of the 273rd ASHC was moved to Vung Tau to join the Company (-).

(3) During the period the 308th Combat Aviation Battalion was alerted and moved to I CTZ to support the 101st Airborne Division in the III MAF area of operations. The units assigned to the 308th Combat Aviation Battalion upon deployment were the 17th AHC, 188th AHC and the 200th ASHC, plus organic detachments. The 308th CAB was attached to the 16th Combat Aviation Group.

b. Mission: No Change.

c. Organization:

(1) Organization of the 12th Combat Aviation Group during the reporting period included the following units with headquarters located as indicated:

- (a) HQ, 12th Combat Aviation Group - Long Binh
- (b) 11th Combat Aviation Battalion - Phu Loi
- (c) 145th Combat Aviation Battalion - Bien Hoa
- (d) 210th Combat Aviation Battalion - Long Thanh
- (e) 214th Combat Aviation Battalion - Bear Cat

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- (f) 222d Combat Support Aviation Battalion - Vung Tau
- (g) 269th Combat Aviation Battalion - Cu Chi
- (h) 308th Combat Aviation Battalion - I CTZ
- (i) 7th Squadron, 1st Air Cavalry - Di An
- (j) 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry - Tay Ninh

(2) In addition, these organizations had units stationed at Phuoc Vinh, Lai Khe, Long Giao, and Vinh Long in IV CTZ as well as field positions as called for by the tactical situation. For a detailed breakdown of the organization of the 12th Combat Aviation Group, see Incl 2 and Incl 3.

d. Personnel Changes:

(1) Colonel R.O. Lambert, 063400, assumed command of 12th Combat Aviation Group on 9 Apr 68 vice Colonel Nicholas G. Peaki, 062121.

(2) LTC Christopher B. Sinclair, 028265, assumed duties as DCO on 1 Mar 68 vice LTC Wilber A. Sidney, 071599.

(3) LTC Wilber A. Sidney, 071599, assumed duties as S-2 on 1 Mar 68 vice Major George W. Harris, 04042827.

(4) Major Jonah B. Davis, Jr., 094067, assumed duties as Adjutant on 1 Mar 68 vice LTC William W. Brannon, Jr., 081386.

(5) LTC William A. Hobbs, 085769, assumed duties as S-3 on 22 Apr 68 vice LTC William F. Bauman, 068430.

(6) LTC Lowell K. Solt, 060200, assumed duties as S-2 on 23 Apr 68 vice LTC Wilber A. Sidney, 071599.

(7) LTC Wallace I. Baker, 070259, assumed duties as S-4 on 1 Apr 68 vice LTC Lloyd D. Smith, 091263.

e. Unit Strength as of 30 April 1968:

(1) Military:

Subordinate Unit	Officer		WO		EM		Total
	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	
HHC	23	31	1	6	51	146	75 183

(2) Civilian:

Subordinate Unit	DAC		VN		3d Nat'l		Contractor	
	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H
HHC	0	1*	13	13	0	0	0	0

* Attached

f. Aircraft Status as of 30 April 1968 - See Incl 4

g. Operational Results as of 30 April 1968: Reported by assigned battalions.

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h. Training:

(1) 2.75" FFAR (Rocket) : A 100% team from MUJOM arrived in-country to instruct personnel in the handling, storage, and assembly and actual firing of the 17 lb Warhead (XM-229) and the proximity fuze (XM-429) for the 10 lb warhead. In order for the 1st Aviation Brigade to develop doctrine and rules of employment for those new warheads, the 334th Armored Helicopter Company conducted a comprehensive training program and actually tested procedures while in support of ground operations. The 17 lb warhead had a one third reduction in maximum effective range due to the added weight. A more accurate employment of this larger warhead is gained by using a 10 - 15 degree dive angle which is steeper than normal. The 17 lb warhead has 3 more pounds of composition "B" explosive than the 105 mm howitzer HE projectile and has several thousand more fragments. The XM-429 proximity fuze is certified for the 10 lb warhead only at the present time. As a result of its greatly increased lethal radius and aerial burst, it is not being used for close in-support of troops. Rather, its best use is for LZ preparation, area targets, and fire fly, (a combination of a light ship, 2 gunships, and a C-130 aircraft mounted with a .50 cal machine gun). At the present time, the XM-229 warhead and the XM-429 fuze with the 10 lb warhead are not to be fired over the heads of troops. It will require approximately a two week training program for each aviator to adequately train in the use of these new additions to the 2.75" rocket family.

(2) A total of 12 VNAF (Vietnamese Airforce) pilots received UH-1 transition training and in May 68 will begin training as IP's in the UH-1H with the 214th CAB. In addition, two (2) VNAF enlisted personnel are undergoing OJT training in avionics (RL) Teams with the 145th CAB.

i. Intelligence:(1) Security:

(a) The S-2 Section continued in its capability as the focal point of advice to the Commander for matters pertaining to personnel security and safeguarding of classified material.

(b) The Group Headquarters continued to maintain a very strong security posture. Security posters were displayed in all staff offices, and no security violations were recorded during the reporting period. The section received no formal inspections by personnel of supporting MI units.

(c) In Mar 68, there was a change in the S-2 Staff Officer, resulting in a change in the Security Control Officer.

(d) During Mar and Apr, a 100% inventory was conducted of all SECRET documents within the Group Headquarters. There were no deficiencies noted. As a result of the inventory, 247 documents were destroyed. Before destruction of the documents, each primary staff officer concerned was contacted to verify that the documents were no longer needed. At the end of the reporting period there were 186 SECRET documents in the classified repository.

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(e) In Mid-April a new steel plated door was installed in the main entrance to the office. The door was fitted with two Sargent & Greenleaf locks; resulting in increased security for the section.

(f) In late February and early March, several incidents took place within the 214th Combat Aviation Battalion aircraft Maintenance, which were considered to be possible acts of sabotage. Cotter keys were found missing; safety wires were found out; and certain critical bolts had been loosened. Personnel from the 219th Military Intelligence Detachment were sent to the Battalion for approximately 7 days, and an investigation was initiated. The CI investigation was inconclusive; however, two suspects were noted.

(2) Intelligence Statistics:

(a) The classified repository and distribution facility operated by the S-2 section processed approximately 11,103 incoming and outgoing pieces of CONFIDENTIAL material and 158 incoming and outgoing SECRET documents.

(b) Also during the period, a total of 221 security clearances were validated throughout the Group.

(c) Map processing continued to be an S-2 function which received considerable emphasis. A total of 17 map requests were processed resulting in issuance of approximately 44,650 map sheets. The section continued to maintain a stockage level of approximately 10 copies of each map sheet of the entire III CTZ plus portions of the eastern IV Corps and western II Corps. These maps are maintained in both 1:50,000 and 1:250,000 scales.

(d) The section continued to maintain a spot intelligence radio net. A total of 60 reports were received from inflight aircraft during the reporting period.

(3) Loss of SOI's:

(a) There were two (2) SOI's lost during the reporting period, one of which resulted in a formal investigation. The formal investigation resulted in disciplinary action being taken against the pilot. He did not have the SOI secured to his person during flight. The aircraft was forced to land in an insecure area and the pilot exited the aircraft leaving the SOI in the cockpit.

(b) The second SOI was lost due to combat and was destroyed by fire when the aircraft crashed and burned.

(4) Staff Visits, Briefings and Liaison:

(a) On a monthly basis, representatives of the section conducted staff visits with the assigned battalions. Those visits continued to provide the battalion S-2's with guidance and assistance pertaining to intelligence matters. In addition, mutual problems were discussed often resulting in changes of established policies and procedures.

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(b) In late March, the section began to present a daily intelligence briefing to the Commander and Staff. The briefing included the following:

Present weather situation
 Challenge and password
 Enemy organization and composition
 Current disposition of enemy units
 Significant enemy actions within the III CTZ for the preceding 24 hour period (2400-2400)
 Significant enemy activities within the past 6 hours (2400-0600)
 Significant activities within the other three CTZ's
 Enemy capabilities, vulnerabilities and courses of action
 Conclusions

(c) Weekly a representative of the section attended the intelligence conference at USAFV Headquarters. Information and material obtained at the conference were often used in briefings presented by the Group S-2. In addition, daily briefings were attended at II Field Force Headquarters, and liaison visits were made with Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade.

(d) Once a month, generally following the monthly commanders call, a formal intelligence briefing was held for the battalion S-2's. The briefings depicted the current enemy positions, capabilities and probable courses of action for the Republic of Vietnam. In addition, information of particular interest and significance to the Group aviators in the accomplishment of missions was discussed during the briefings.

(5) Escape and Evasion:

(a) For the reporting period, the E&E officer conducted staff visits to assigned battalions. These visits provided the battalion E&E officers with guidance and assistance pertaining to survival, escape, and evasion.

(b) In March, the Group E&E program was modified and the E&E school program became the responsibility of the Group S-3.

(6) Intelligence Summary (INTSUM). To facilitate the processing of information and preparation of reports; and to keep the group commander and higher and lower headquarters informed of significant events within the 12th Combat Aviation Group, an INTSUM was developed in March. An INTSUM is submitted daily by each battalion and then consolidated and submitted by the Group. The INTSUM was well received by all concerned.

3. Logistics:

(1) Supply:

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(a) The following items remained in critical short supply during the past ninety days: Gloves, Leather, Flying; Glasses, Sun, Flying; Ballistic Helmets; and Body Armor.

(b) Supply Directives are being prepared by the 14th ICC for subsequent issue of NOMEX Flight Suits. Receipt and issue for use of this item will be a significant progress achievement.

(c) Requirements for NOMEX Flight Gloves have been submitted through command channels and we are presently waiting for release and issue.

(d) Requirements have been submitted through command channels for the new size large Ballistic Helmet. Subsequent issue of these helmets will partially fill the existing shortage of this item. Additional quantities of size medium are required to replace losses and initial issue.

(e) CAR-15 Submachine Gun: With the two squadrons of Air Cavalry conducting combat operations in the compact LOH-6A Helicopter and the increased density and employment of AH-1G helicopter gunship, a definite requirement exists to equip the crews with a weapon capable of automatic fire. At present the aircrewmembers are armed with .38 cal and .45 cal sidearms. This has proven to be inadequate to protect the aircraft and crew when forced down in a hostile area. Due to the compact configuration of these aircraft, this submachine gun is most suited for this use. M-16 and M-14 rifles are too cumbersome - pistols are inadequate.

(2) Aircraft Maintenance:

(a) Combat damage and energy interruptions of night maintenance during the past three (3) months has strained the capability of maintenance personnel to accomplish adequate maintenance of aircraft and equipment. This has reflected in lower aircraft availability and a higher accident rate. In order to provide more time for daylight maintenance MACV has established a policy where as each aircraft with crew and each company, will be allotted a stand-down period of 24 hours. This policy has not been in effect long enough to accurately determine its overall effectiveness. However, for the month of April all aircraft showed an increase in availability except the AH-1G (Cobra) which dropped from 79.4% to 67.6%.

(b) A look at the 12th Combat Aviation Group flying hour statistics for the third reporting period indicates three types of aircraft (UH-1A, AH-1G, UH-1B) averaged below the flying hour program; one type (UH-1C) was approximately even; and seven types (OH-1, OH-1, OH-6, UH-1D, UH-1H, CH-47, and CH-54) were above. Where the flying hour program was exceeded, experience indicated that availability will decrease due to repair parts (i.e., engines, transmissions etc.) shortages. This is due to logistical plans based on an established flying hour program. It should be noted that the program is continually changing based on past experience and projected rates. In most cases 12th Combat Aviation Group aircraft exceeded the USAF average hours flown.

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k. Signal:

(1) Command Post Communications:

(a) During this reporting period command post communications were enhanced by the completion of the 12th Combat Aviation Group Headquarters Command Bunker for use in alerts. One FM radio and one portable UHF are available for monitoring "Checkmate" control which is responsible for helicopter fire teams in defense of Bien Hoa and Long Binh. In addition, two FM radios are remoted from the 12th Group Signal Center to the bunker for use in monitoring "Base Defense" net and 12th Group Command Net. Blackjack Switchboard lines have been run in parallel to allow internal telephone communication between staff sections. A back-up AN/TSC-59, completely independent from the commercial power of the command bunker and the generator backup power for the Signal Center, provides backup communication to the overall system. There are currently a total of 30 AN/VSC-2 and 12 AN/MRC-119 assigned within the 12th Group. This equipment allows the HF Voice and Radio Teletype communication between Group, Battalion and Company Headquarters. A Voice HF Admin/Log Net was also established during the reporting period.

(b) Local "Plantation" telephone service was curtailed as all class "C" phones were restricted from dialing the operator direct for access to Long Distance trunks. A ratio of 70 percent class "C" phones to 30 percent class "A" phones was set up for each headquarters by USAFV. As the majority of routine business conducted by the 12th CAG is outside of the Plantation telephone service area this action will limit the amount of Long Distance calls placed from this location. Some relief from this restriction has been requested and action is pending.

(2) Air Traffic Control and Navigation Aids: Under the current concept of assignment of Airfield Service Detachments (ASD), for Air Traffic Control, 12th Group will have assigned four (4) teams and will be responsible for Spartan Heliport, Long Binh Heliport, Plantation Airfield, and Long Thanh North Airfield. The heliport for USAFV Headquarters, "Headshed", will also be under the control of 12th Group. A daily status report of all navigational aids has been instituted to insure reliable operational status information for MACV prior to the forthcoming rainy season.

(3) NOTAM and Weather Service: No change during the reporting period with the exception that the newly activated 58th ATC Battalion now addresses NOTAMS to the Groups and 12th Group then retransmits them on the II FFV NOTAM network.

(4) SOI: The 12th Group SOI continues to be sent to lateral and higher headquarters, however, assigned battalions now receive only a total of five complete copies with all supported units being included. The remainder of the copies are distributed with only pages for 12th Group assigned units and miscellaneous unclassified pages. Each battalion Signal Officer is then required to extract from supported Division SOI the required frequencies for their particular operational use. This technique reduces the chance of compromising all organizational frequencies within III Corps when a 12th Group SOI has been compromised by a particular company. Changes for complete copies continue to be sent twice a month. This technique will be evaluated during the next quarterly period for its effectiveness.

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(5) Avionics: The ~~shortage~~ of avionics trained personnel within 12th Group was helped by Project FIX. Avionics personnel were sent from CONUS for up to 90 days TDY. This project assisted 12th Group during a shortage period caused by closing the training centers during the past holidays.

1. Safety:

(1) The Group Aviation Safety Program has been expanded and emphasized this quarter. This program was directed by the Group Commander and given his special attention. The new approach to aviation safety which concentrates its efforts on the main accident cause factors and the AHC & Air Cav Troops with high accident rates, has resulted in an accident rate of 18.6 for the past quarter compared to 30.1 rate for the first half of fiscal year 68.

(2) A majority of Group Aviation Accidents for this period were a result of the following factors:

(a) Engine failure - during the dry season there has been a great increase in this area. Group Safety has produced a comprehensive engine failure survey in which a direct parallel between the dry season and engine failures is shown. This survey has been distributed throughout USAFV and safety channels in the USA. The assistance of the 34th General Support Group and Lycoming technical representatives has also been used to combat FOD, which contributes to about 20% of the failures.

(b) Loss of visual reference (IFR in Dust) and hard landing. To combat this the Group has produced a vigorous dust suppression program which includes directives from HQ, II FFORCEV to the ground commanders on selection and preparation of helicopter landing or pick up zones.

m. Chaplain Activities:

(1) A Protestant worship service was conducted each Sunday in the Group Headquarters area. Catholic Mass and Jewish Services, as well as denominational services were provided in nearby chapels.

(2) The chaplain made himself available to personnel for counseling and guidance not only in his office, but also by frequent regular visitation to duty areas, day room, mess hall, barracks, and throughout the Headquarters area.

(3) Monthly Chaplains' Training Conferences conducted by the Group Chaplain for all chaplains assigned to subordinate units of the Group, plus his frequent visits to the chaplains and to subordinate unit areas, has continued to result in increased unit, coordination, and supervision of chaplain activities throughout the Group.

(4) Chaplain activities provided in the Group Headquarters area this quarter were:

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<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>OCCASIONS</u>	<u>CHANGE FROM LAST QTR</u>	<u>ATTEND</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
Group Worship	13	-23%	122	-10%
Religious Education	9	+200%	64	+300%
Pastoral Visits (Includes Counseling)	443	-.8%	NA	NA
Civico Action	1	-200%	NA	NA

2. (C) Section 2, Lessons Learned: Commanders' Observations, Evaluations and Recommendations.

a. Personnel:

(1) Public Information:

(a) Observation: It has been found that subordinate units, especially at company level, with IO officers on extra-duty basis are hampered by both inexperience and operational commitment. On numerous occasions good stories have been passed over because inexperienced personnel in subordinate units could not recognize the publicity value of the stories.

(b) Evaluation: This headquarters receives written articles from the units under its command and has the responsibility for rewriting, sending forth for clearance, and distribution of cleared copy to approving media. The extent of distribution on any story is based on its content, its newsworthiness; and the type of audience it appeals to.

(c) Recommendations: The information office at Group Headquarters level and battalion level provide as much aid as possible to subordinate units. It is recommended that commanders at all levels from group to company level, emphasize a disciplined and widespread information program.

b. Operations: None.

c. Training:

(1) Shortage of Instructor Pilots:

(a) Observation: There exists a shortage of instructor pilots in some units. Especially those units having AH-1G, and OH-6A aircraft. Units having CH-47 aircraft are able to maintain an adequate number of instructor pilots to meet their needs. Most UH-1 units have sufficient numbers of instructor pilots to administer in-country orientation rides, periodic standardization rides, and still conduct instructor pilot training. Some units will have to conduct accelerated training programs to meet the turn over of their instructor pilot personnel due to aviator rotation.

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(b) Evaluation: As pilot experience and flight time increase in the AH-1G, and OH-6A models, an accelerated instructor pilot training program can be expected. Many returnee pilots have extensive backgrounds and experience in the CH-47, so normal aviator rotation, and a constant training program, meet the requirements. The OH-1 units are able to meet their instructor pilot needs though the time available to them for instruction is limited due to combat commitments, and the units frequently fall behind in scheduling periodic standardization rides.

(c) Recommendations: Units must realize a need for more than the minimum essential number of instructor pilots. They must also realize the importance of maintaining standardization of maneuvers as well as a frequent review of emergency procedures. To accomplish the training tasks an accelerated training program must be initiated. Units using AH-1G and OH-6A models should initiate instructor pilot training as soon as possible due to the few instructor pilots available and the amount of time available and required to train each aviator.

(2) Training Time:

(a) Observation: Combat commitments limit a unit's available time for training, standardization rides, and in-country orientation rides. The time required to cover the instruction is magnified by the need to instruct the aviators in tail rotor malfunction and emergency procedures, which are not covered during flight school instruction.

(b) Evaluation: With a shortage of instructor pilots, coupled with insufficient training time for each aviator, there exists a lack of standardization of maneuvers and a need for more aviator proficiency in all emergency procedures.

(c) Recommendation: Units could better utilize a training schedule to govern their available training time. A periodic review of maneuvers and emergency procedures is necessary to maintain aviator proficiency, regardless of prior flight school instruction; though instruction in tail rotor malfunction procedures, while an aviator is at flight school would assist in relieving some of the training burden.

(3) Instrument Proficiency:

(a) Observation: Bad weather, rain, periods of reduced visibility, low ceilings and fog, are all common characteristics of the monsoon season, with which an aviator must contend in the performance of his mission. Though most aviators are not fully instrument rated, and do not intentionally attempt instrument flight conditions, they are often subjected to such conditions, and their proficiency at instrument flight determines their safety.

(b) Evaluation: The importance for aviators to practice and maintain proficiency at instrument flight is not stressed, nor is time made available to the aviator for instruction.

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(a) Recommendation: A separate program should be utilized by all units to assure that their aviators maintain a high proficiency at instrument flight, and this time need not come from time allotted for other phases of instruction. The time enroute during a day's mission could suffice for such training and be designated as such.

d. Intelligence: None.

e. Logistics:

(1) Initial Support Packages for New Aircraft (i.e., AH-1G)

(a) Observation: The initial support packages (Pouch Packages) for new aircraft (i.e., AH-1G) have in the past been issued directly to the unit from CONUS.

(b) Evaluation: Information received indicates losses, partial receipts and late arrivals of these support packages were effected when delivery was made to the using unit. Also an excessive amount of time transpired before the support packages reached their destination.

(c) Recommendation: Distribution will be made by AMMC to the gaining unit's liaison officer or if no liaison officer is maintained at AMMC, distribution will be made to representatives of the supporting transportation battalion. In addition, some aircraft special tools in those packages are non-expendable items and records required by AR 735-35 must be completed upon their receipt. Utilization of the procedures as above should preclude further difficulties as closer control over the initial support packages will be maintained.

(2) Dirty Turbine Engine Compressors:

(a) Observation: Unnecessary engine changes due to poor preventive maintenance.

(b) Evaluation: Due to the ever increasing turbine engine shortage all unit maintenance officers should ensure that proper maintenance is being performed. The first indications of a restricted (Dirty) compressor section are: (1) high EGT (2) low power. As dirt and grease accumulate in the compressor section it continues to harden until eventually the compressor section must be separated in order that the compressor blades may be cleaned.

(c) Recommendation: Regular engine cleaning with solvent and water is the best preventive maintenance. Procedures are outlined in 12th CAG Maintenance and Supply Letter 68-11, dated 19 Apr 68.

(3) Particle Separator Kit:

(a) Observation: 100% Compliance Goal of MWO 55-1520-211-30/5 UH-1B/C and MWO 55-1520-210-30/17 UH-1D/H (Particle Separator Kit) would aid in prolonging turbine engine life.

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(b) Evaluation: ~~Most~~ problems arising with the compressor section to T53-L9/11/13 engines are caused by an excessive amount of dirt, sand, grease etc. building up on the stator vanes and compressor blades. The end result is low engine life. A survey of UH-1B/C and UH-1D/H helicopters is being conducted in an effort to ascertain the number of helicopters on which the MWOs have not been complied with. As this information is compiled, a thorough search will be conducted and a strenuous effort made to get the necessary kits to the DS units for installation. Upon completion of modification, engine life will invariably be prolonged and a more effective overall helicopter capability will be realized.

(c) Recommendation: That all units program their assigned UH-1 aircraft into the DSU for modification after receipt of required MWO kits.

(4) UH-1C M/R Head:

(a) Observation: Continuous problems at M/R yoke extension sleeves and M/R trunion sleeve.

(b) Evaluation: At the teardown inspection of the main rotor hub as directed by TM 55-1520-220-20, it was noted the teflon sleeve bearings in the M/R yoke extension and M/R trunion sleeve were excessively worn. The teflon bearings are supposedly manufactured to withstand long periods of use with little or no wear; however, the inspections revealed abnormal wear versus relatively short time period in operation. It was determined by close examination that the cause was dirt and sand working its way into those areas and setting up an abrasive action between the bearing and sleeves resulting in an abnormal wear condition.

(c) Recommendation: That units begin performing the teardown inspections during every other Aircraft Periodic Inspection, (every 200 hours), cleaning the affected areas mentioned and reassembling component for installation. This action has notably increased the helicopter units capability in that the life of the teflon bearings were greatly extended by this action.

f. Organization: None.

g. Signal:

(1) AN/VRC-24 Radio Set:

(a) Observation: The AN/VRC-24 Radio Set is capable of receiving or transmitting in 100 KHZ steps only.

(b) Evaluation: Current airborne UHF sets are capable of tuning 50 KHZ steps for a total of 3500 channels. Current UHF frequency congestion could be partially eliminated if ground to air could use all 3500 available channels.

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(c) Recommendation: That a compatible ground UHF set be developed, using the present airborne receiver-transmitter unit for issue to aviation units requiring ground to air UHF capabilities.

(2) Avionics Direct Support Units:

(a) Observation: Air Cavalry Squadrons are being deployed to RVN without avionics direct support units attached.

(b) Evaluation: Due to employment and stationing of air cavalry squadron avionics, direct support is usually not available. This requires the General Support units to provide direct support on location. With shortages to test equipment, personnel, and float assets, this action results in poor avionics support.

(c) Recommendation: Any unit that has a large quantity of organic aircraft must deploy with a direct support avionics team attached. This unit must also have on hand all necessary test equipment and float items.

h. Safety:

(1) Accident Prevention Program:

(a) Observation: Problems at Battalion Level - the relatively low accident experience does not permit the development of a comprehensive accident program as trends are hard to detect.

(b) Evaluation: The relatively low accident experience in any one month coupled with rapid turnover of personnel makes it difficult for battalion size units to recognize problems. They become complacent and non-aggressive in working on potential accident problem areas far enough in advance to develop appropriate correction action.

(c) Recommendation: It is recommended that at organizational level accident prevention programs be based primarily on incident experience which are numerous enough for the unit to forecast problem areas and indicate corrective action before accidents occur.

(2) Safety of Flight Messages:

(a) Observation: This group has experienced a communications problem in getting safety of flight messages distributed down to the air crew level where they will do the most good.

(b) Evaluation: To resolve this problem area, the following action was required: All safety of flight messages are compiled each quarter and distributed to battalion size organization aviation safety officers. The organizations have experienced difficulty in the reproducing of these messages for various reasons. To alleviate the problem, a sufficient quantity of these messages are reproduced at Group Level to insure that enough copies reach company size units for insertion in pilot reading files and placement on safety and maintenance bulletin boards as indicated by the content of the message.

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(c) Recommendations: It is recommended that this approach be incorporated by all middle headquarters in the area of safety of flight messages. This will insure that the people who need to know are getting the word.

R.O. Lambert

4 Incl

Incl 1-Special ORLL-TET Offensive

~~Incl 2-Stationing List~~

~~Incl 3-Organization Chart~~

~~Incl 4-Aircraft Status~~

R.O. LAMBERT

Colonel, Infantry

Commanding

Withdrawn, Hq, DA

DISTRIBUTION:

3-CG, II Field Force V, ATTN: G-3, APO 96266

3-CG, USARV, ATTN: AVHGC-DST, APO 96375

2-CINCUSARPAC, ATTN: GPOP-DT, APO 96558

2-INFO CG, 1st Avn Bde, ATTN: S-3, APO 96384

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AVFBC-RE-H (14 May 68) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group
for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) (U)

DA, HQ II FFORCEV, APO San Francisco 96266 8 JUN 1968

THRU: Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade, ATTN: AVBA-C, APO 96307

Commanding General, US Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHQC(DST), APO 96375

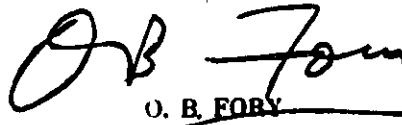
Commander, US Army Pacific, ATTN: GPDP-OT, APO 96558

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D.C. 20310

1. Subject report is forwarded.

2. This command has reviewed the attached Operational Report-Lessons
Learned of the 12th Combat Aviation Group and concurs with it.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


O. B. FORBY
1LT, AGC
Asst AG

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AVBA-C (14 May 68) 2d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group,
for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE, APO 96384 JUN 27 1968

THRU: Commanding General, US Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DST, APO 96375
Commander in Chief, US Army Pacific, ATTN: GPDP-OT, APO 96558

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

1. (U) This headquarters has reviewed subject report, considers it to be adequate, and concurs with the contents as indorsed except for the following:

Paragraph 2e (3) (c), page 12. The installation of particle separators is not considered a job for a DSU. Accomplishment can be done by the supporting KD team at the next scheduled inspection.

2. (C) The following additional comments are considered pertinent:

a. Paragraph 1j (a), page 6. Gloves and glasses are under strict control by USARV but issues are being made. Ballistic helmets, also under USARV control, will become available by the end of June 1968.

b. Paragraph 1j (e), page 6. Available CAR-15's have been redistributed to meet this requirement.

c. Paragraph 2c (1), page 9. A reply to this comment was submitted to USARV on the last 12th Combat Aviation Group Operation Report. USARV in turn queried DA. The results are that second tour warrant officers will be sent TDY to the USAAVNS for UH-1 and AH-1G IP training or CH-47 IP training. These two courses previously had no input from COMARC. The OV-1 and U-21 IP courses are being expanded. At this time no IP course is being conducted for the OH-6A at Ft. Rucker.

d. Paragraph 2c (2), page 10. At the present time no allocation of a training aircraft is authorized. Some units are committed daily beyond their capability. Training and standardization rides are conducted in conjunction with mission requirements and very little training is effected. Assault Helicopter Companies should be allocated one training aircraft per day and Assault Support Helicopter Companies one every other day when operational commitments will permit. This aircraft allocation for training will assist in reducing the number of pilot induced accidents.

e. Paragraph 2e (4), page 12. This problem has been recognized and unit maintenance officers have the authority to increase the frequency of maintenance inspections as they deem necessary. It is not recommended that all units adopt the action suggested since there is a great dissimilarity of conditions encountered and not all of them would require the

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AVBA-C (14 May 68) 2d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group,
for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (P1) (U)

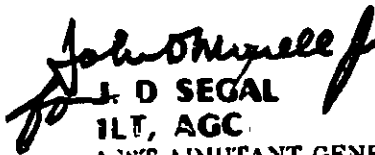
increased frequency of teardown. This headquarters has reminded all units that premature failure of aircraft components requires an Equipment Improvement Report to be submitted.

f. Paragraph 2g (1), page 12. Until a compatible ground UHF set is developed the AN/VRC-24 Radio Set should continue to be used instead of replacing it with the airborne receiver-transmitter unit. Sufficient frequencies are available to be allocated to aviation units for the air to ground requirement.

g. Paragraph 2g (2), page 13. Both avionics and maintenance direct support units for all incountry squadrons are programmed for arrival during June and July 1968.

h. Paragraph 2h (1), page 13. It is recognized that at battalion level and lower, accident experience does not lend itself to analysis to detect accident trends and develop a comprehensive accident prevention program. One point of the 1st Aviation Brigade eleven point accident prevention program outlined by the Brigade Commander on 29 November 1967 was "Unit Analysis of Aviation Accident Prevention Program". This requires the analysis of all phases of flight operations to insure a sound, responsive accident prevention program at the small unit level.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


J. D. SEGAL
1LT, AGC
ASST ADJUTANT GENERAL

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AVHGC-DST (14 May 68) 3d Ind (C) CPT Arnold/dls/LBN 4485
 SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group
 for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) (U)

HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 5 JUL 1968

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT,
 APO 96558

1. (U) This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group.

2. (C) Comments follow:

a. Reference item concerning training time, page 10, paragraph 2c(2): Concur. Where combat commitments permit, each unit must effectively program its available training time to maintain aviator standardization and proficiency. Current standardization of maneuvers guides are available for all the 12th Combat Aviation Group's aircraft. A message was dispatched to DA on 15 June 1968 requesting additional school trained instructor pilots for all aircraft.

b. Reference item concerning initial support packages for new aircraft (i.e., AH-1G), page 11, paragraph 2e(1): Concur. All support packages are now being shipped to AT 8889 (AMMC) so that distribution of these packages can be according to the latest aircraft distribution plan, as changed. The procedure recommended has already been adopted for use.

c. Reference item concerning AN/VRC-24 radio set, page 12, paragraph 2g(1): Concur. Immediate inquiry will be made by this headquarters to determine the practicality of modifying AN/VRC-24 radios. If modification is impractical, a request will be made to develop a UHF ground station radio that will be compatible with the airborne sets.

d. Reference item concerning avionics direct support units, page 13, paragraph 2g(2): Concur. Force packages were developed to include direct support avionics teams for deploying avionics units; however, in most cases, the aviation units were deployed before these avionics support elements could be formed and trained. Avionics teams are scheduled to arrive in RVN for these units.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

G. S. Nakatsukasa
 G. S. NAKATSUKASA
 Captain, AGC
 Assistant Adjutant General

Cy furn:
 HQ 12th Cbt Avn Gp
 HQ 1st Avn Bde

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GPOP-DT (14 May 68) 4th Ind (C)
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 12th Combat Aviation
Gp, for Period Ending 30 Apr 68, RCS CSFOM-65 (R1)

HQ, US Arrv, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 12 AUG 1968

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development,
Department of the Army, Washington, D.C. 20310

1. (U) This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorsements and concurs in the report as indorsed.

2. (C) Reference 3d Indorsement, paragraph 2a: Complementing the unit program to train instructor pilots there should be a like program within the aviation training base in CONUS, particularly in the case of new equipment such as an OH-6A and the AH-1G. To require the tactical unit to train the majority of instructor pilots places an unrealistic burden upon these units and seriously detracts from accomplishment of the tactical mission.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:



C.L. SHORTT
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 12TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP
APO 96266

AVOC-SC

21 February 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned, VC/NVA TET Offensive (U)

SECTION I

PLANNING AND PREPARATION WHICH AFFECTED THE COMMAND'S READINESS POSTURE
UPON INITIATION OF THE TET OFFENSIVE:

A. (C) Problem: To determine the best method of countering an attack on the Bien Hoa - Long Binh complex, primarily relying upon the utilization of those aviation resources readily available and under the control of 12th Combat Aviation Group.

B. (C) Discussion:

1. The possibility of an attack on the Bien Hoa - Long Binh complex was recognized in November 1967, and a plan (OPERATION CHECKMATE) was developed which would most effectively counter such an attack.

2. The resources available consisted of command and control helicopters, light fire teams, and flare or "Firefly" light ships under the control of "CHECKMATE CONTROL" (Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group.) These aircraft are primarily located at Bien Hoa Airbase and in the immediate Long Binh area. These aircraft can react as rapidly as desired depending upon the state of alert that the crews are placed on. The time required to become airborne can be less than two minutes when crews are required to remain with the aircraft.

3. The plan was developed in the following manner: A command and control (C&C) helicopter is designated nightly and remains on five minute stand-by. The C&C ship carries a detailed map of the Bien Hoa - Long Binh area which has air-control points, artillery concentrations, and surveillance zones plotted which are necessary to control aircraft allocated by CHECKMATE CONTROL. The same information, less artillery concentrations, is plotted on maps carried by the light fire teams. The C&C ship is airborne upon notification from A&E and begins surveillance in suspected areas. As light fire teams get airborne, they report the composition of the team, status of fuel and type armament carried to the C&C ship. The C&C ship then directs the fire teams to orbit at designated air-control points. From this point, as targets become available and are reported, the C&C ship directs the closest light fire team to attack the target.

C. (C) Conclusions: The plan was considered feasible and proven effective on two occasions in December 1967 prior to the TET Offensive. The first was an enemy attack conducted against an RVN compound Southeast of the Honour-Smith Compound. The plan was put into effect and

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proved successful. The second test of the plan occurred when Honour-Smith Compound received small arms fire. Again the plan was implemented and proven successful.

SECTION IICONDUCT OF OPERATIONS DURING THE VC/NVA TET OFFENSIVE:

A. (C) Situation: On 30 January 1968, reliable intelligence was received that the VC would conduct an attack in force in the Bien Hoa - Long Binh area.

B. (C) Discussion:

1. As a result of this intelligence it was directed that three C&C ships be airborne from 302000 January 1968, until 310600 January 1968. Two light fire teams were placed on ramp alert with one minute reaction time. At 0248 on 31 January 1968, rockets and mortars began falling on the Plantation area. The two light fire teams launched within 30 seconds, and proceeded to the area from which the mortars and rockets were fired. A Spooky aircraft was positioned over the area and took the VC firing sites under fire with Gatling guns. Several secondary explosions were noted, followed by fires in the area. This completely stopped the rocket and mortar attack from this position. At 0300 a ground attack was started on the West side of Plantation in conjunction with a ground attack on Bien Hoa Airbase. Initial attacks were repulsed at Plantation, however, the enemy successfully penetrated the Bien Hoa perimeter. Light fire teams, under direction of the C&C ships, took the enemy under fire. During the next eight hours, light fire teams were constantly hitting the enemy. At 0430, 31 January 1968, there were indications that the VC were attempting to break contact. The C&C ships maintained visual contact with the VC at all times using flares and the light ship from the "Firefly Team." Light fire teams were continuously on station to hit the VC. This close, continuous fire support prevented the withdrawal of the enemy, broke him into small groups before dawn and consequently he was caught during daylight hours and destroyed. Considerable difficulty was encountered by Headquarters Company, 12th Combat Aviation Group, in obtaining permission to employ light fire teams in front of the Group's perimeter. It took approximately four hours to gain this permission, and during this time the perimeter was under constant small arms, automatic weapons, and RPG fire. Army aviation is only as responsive to the tactical situation as is the ground commander. OPERATION CHECKMATE was then expanded and dispatched light fire teams to Saigon, My Tho, Lai Khe, and several other areas. MAE, II FFORCEV, received these missions and passed them onto CHECKMATE CONTROL. In turn, by maintaining an accurate up to date picture of all gunships and light fire teams in the area, CHECKMATE CONTROL was able to dispatch light fire teams to affected areas almost immediately. Centralized control of gunships and light fire teams in an emergency situation has proven to be feasible, valuable, and productive. At present, OPERATION COUNTERPOINT is being developed to provide the same type reaction plan throughout III CTZ for such areas as Saigon, Tay Ninh, Dau Tieng,

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Cu Chi, Phu Loi, and Phouc Vinh. OPERATION CHECKMATE has been in effect nightly since 30 January 1968 and has proven to be a deterrent to the VC effort in the Bien Hoa - Long Binh area.

2. The following is a summary of statistical data accumulated during OPERATION CHECKMATE:

- a. Aircraft flying hours: UH-1C - 139
UH-1D - 82
AH-1G - 76
- b. VC KBAA: 57 confirmed, 408 estimated
- c. Structures destroyed: 135
- d. Aircraft damaged by GNF: 15
- e. Ammunition expended: 7.62 - 815,000
40mm - 2,500
2.75 - 2,620
Flares - 104

C. (C) Lessons Learned:

1. Rapid response of the light fire teams is effective not only in the light of punishment inflicted on the enemy, but also the shock and amazement expressed by VC prisoners to this rapid reaction. (RE: page 11, USARV Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review dated 6 February 1968.)

2. The rapid response and tremendous volume of fire placed on the VC by light fire teams materially assisted in breaking the VC into small groups, creating confusion, loss of control, and a severe blow to the enemy morale.

3. The timely and accurate accounting and employment of light fire teams prevented the VC from breaking contact.

4. The centralized control of light fire teams in an emergency situation has proven to be feasible, valuable, and productive.

5. Army aviation, again, is only as responsive to the tactical situation as is the ground commander.

D. (C) Recommendations:

1. Employ a similar plan at all other bases in RVN where similar situations and resources exist.

2. That similar plans be prepared in other CTZ's to take advantage of the flexibility and fire power of Army gunships.

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NICHOLAS C. PSATKI
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

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