

RECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NN0873541

1 MAY - 31 JULY
1967

By

JB/mg

NARA, Date

9/92

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO 96353

OPERATIONAL REPORT - LESSONS LEARNED

1 MAY - 31 JULY 1967 (v)

CONFIDENTIAL

ECCLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND873541
By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I

Significant Unit Activities

A. Significant Events.....	Page 1
B. Command.....	Page 9
C. Personnel and Administration.....	Page 11
D. Intelligence and Security.....	Page 23
E. Operations and Training.....	Page 26
F. Logistics and Maintenance.....	Page 33
G. Signal.....	Page 41
H. Aviation Safety.....	Page 45

Section II/Part I

A. Operations in Combat.....	Page 47
B. Special Topic--Smoke Ship UH-1C.....	Page 53
C. Special Topic--Employment of 20mm Cannon (BIG DADDY).....	Page 57

Section II/Part II

Commander's Recommendations

A. Personnel.....	Page 59
B. Operations, Tactical Considerations.....	Page 59
C. Training.....	Page 62

CONFIDENTIAL

Group 4; Downgraded at
3 yr. intervals, De-
classified after 12 yrs.

ECCLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND 873541
By JB/mG NARA, Date 9/92

CONFIDENTIAL

14.(v) The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion's principal operations during the quarter have been described quite briefly thus far. A more detailed and precise account follows.

By

JB/mg

NARA, Date

9/92

B. (U) Command.

1.(v) The primary mission of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Headquarters is to provide command, control, staff planning, and administrative supervision for its assigned aviation units. Subordinate assault helicopter companies have as their primary mission the airlifting of combat troops in airmobile operations, while the extension of surveillance and target acquisition capabilities of ground units is the purpose of the reconnaissance airplane company. The Battalion's assault support helicopter company provides logistical and tactical airlift for movement of troops and supplies.

2.(v) Organization.

a. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion is composed of a Headquarters and Headquarters Company, three assault helicopter companies, one reconnaissance airplane company, and one assault support helicopter company. (See Inclosure 1).

3.(v) Personalities.

a. Commander.

During the entire period covered by this report the Battalion Commander has been Lieutenant Colonel James H. Merryman, 087566, Artillery.

b. Staff. As of the close of the reporting period the principal staff officers were:

(1) Executive Officer: Lieutenant Colonel Arthur A. Malone, 094453, Infantry.

(2) S-1: Captain John B. Pearson, Jr., 05301157, Adjutant General's Corps.

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

(3) S-2: Captain Matthew R. Kambrod, 095999, Artillery.

(4) S-3: Major John F. Zugschwert, 094972, Artillery.

(5) S-4: Major George W. Moses, 073576, Infantry.

c. Unit Commanders. As of the close of the reporting period the unit commanders of subordinate units were:

(1) Headquarters Company: Major Dick E. Roach, 0996308, Artillery.

(2) 116th Assault Helicopter Company: Major Harold I. Small, 094344, Transportation Corps.

(3) 187th Assault Helicopter Company: Major William F. Bauman, 068430, Infantry.

(4) 188th Assault Helicopter Company: Major John H. McWhorter, Jr, 0F106186, Infantry.

(5) 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company: Major Ernest C. Strum, 04016954, Corps of Engineers.

(6) 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company, Major Paul L. Stansel, 01931035, Armor.

By JB/mGNARA, Date 9/92

-C. (U) Personnel and Administration.

1. (U) Maintenance of Unit Strength:

- a. Battalion strength as of 31 July 1967 (see Inclosure 2).
- b. Summary of projected gains and losses for the next 90 days (see Inclosure 3).

2. (U) Personnel Reports: Personnel reports are submitted in accordance with 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Regulation 335-1.

3. (U) Replacements: Replacements have been requisitioned in accordance with USARV Regulation 614-185 for officer personnel (5 months prior to DEROS for non-aviators, and 11 months prior to DEROS for aviators); and USARV Regulation 614-202 for enlisted personnel (8 months prior to DEROS for senior enlisted personnel, and six months prior to DEROS for grades E-1 through E-6 personnel). Replacements are requisitioned on the basis of authorized strength only.

4. (U) Personnel management:

a. Reclassification: Administrative MOS Reclassification during the Quarter totalled 226.

b. Assignments: Personnel assigned during the Quarter were as follows:

<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>ENL</u>
40	47	296 ✓

c. Promotions: Promotions during the Quarter were as follows:

OFFICERS

<u>LTC</u>	<u>MAJ</u>	<u>CPT</u>	<u>1LT</u>	<u>2LT</u>	<u>CWO</u>
0	3	2	5	1	1 ✓

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92ENLISTEDE-9E-8E-7E-6E-5E-4

d. Retirement/reversion to retired status: 1.

e. Rotation to CONUS during the Quarter:

OFFWOENL

5

5

70

✓

f. Leaves during the Quarter:

OFFWOENL

Emergency

4

3

12

Compassionate

0

0

9

Special

4

1

5

Ordinary

9

2

16

5.(v) R & R for the Quarter:

a. Forecasted/requested: 381.

b. Received: 182.

6.(v) Reenlistment program:

a. There was one reenlistment during the Quarter.

b. The reenlistment program is published in the Battalion paper

BLACK BARON RELEASE.

7.(v) Casualties during the Quarter:

a. Return to duty:

OFFWOENL

5

12

42

b. Evacuated from combat zone:

OFFWOENL

0

2

3

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

c. KIA:

<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>ENL</u>
5	2	8

8.(v) Civilian Personnel. All units within the Battalion, out of necessity, employ Vietnamese nationals. There are two categories of employment, indirect and direct.

a. Indirect hires:

(1) Each unit, after submitting a request through command channels, is authorized to employ Vietnamese nationals on a permanent basis. These people are employed as kitchen police, carpenters, general handymen, and secretary/interpreters.

(2) There has not been, up to the time of this report, any serious problem in the procurement, utilization, administration, or control of local nationals.

(3) The processing time from receipt of authority to hire to actual employment is approximately 6 weeks.

(4) Indirect hire Vietnamese are employed as follows:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NUMBER OF INDIRECT HIRES PERMANENTLY EMPLOYED</u>
HHC, 269th Cbt Avn Bn	14
21st Recon	19
116th AHC	18
187th AHC	10
188th AHC	5

Total Number of indirect permanent hires: 66

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

b. Direct hires: Direct hires are employed on a daily, as needed basis. Direct hires are used primarily to fill sandbags and to perform other unskilled labor. Currently, all units employ daily hires to construct aircraft revetments. Authorization to hire daily hires is obtained from 12th Combat Aviation Group Headquarters. Funds are allocated on a quarterly basis to the Battalion. Each unit employed an average of approximately 20 daily hires per working day during the 2d quarter CY 1967. The labor wage paid varies from \$VN 70 - \$VN 85 per 8 hour day. Local agreement requires 1 Vietnamese supervisor to be employed for every 20 Vietnamese laborers employed. In addition, it is necessary to have 1 US Army individual to supervise each group employed.

9.(b) Postal Service. Postal service is provided by the 25th Infantry Division APO. Mail is delivered approximately twice daily.

10.(b) Special Services. Units have access to A & R equipment. Movies are shown daily to all companies. There is not any actual sports program due to the 24 hour operations conducted by aviation units.

11.(b) Discipline, law, and order:

a. There have been 8 Special Court Martials during the 2d quarter CY 1967. Two individuals have been court martialled twice for different violations. None of the individuals court martialled were higher in grade than E-4.

b. There have been no cases referred to General Court Martial.

c. There was one Summary Court Martial (individual refused to accept non-judicial punishment under Article 15, UCMJ).

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

d. There are two cases pending board action under the provisions of AR 635-89 (Homosexuality). Both individuals are in the grade of SSG E-6. The matters are currently awaiting administrative referral from USARV Headquarters.

12. Headquarters management. One helicopter is detailed to fly as the Battalion courier. The courier reports daily to Battalion Headquarters by 0800 hours and is usually released by 1630 hours. The courier stops at higher headquarters and each subordinate unit once prior to noon and once in the afternoon daily.

13. Publications and forms supply.

a. Subordinate units are arriving in country without sufficient blank forms and publications. This imposes the problem of lending out the Battalion reference file copies. These are often mutilated, and at best, unavailable to the Battalion Headquarters for extended periods of time while subordinate units await their individual shipments.

b. Large amounts of publications and forms, some pertaining only to operations and functions in CONUS, seldom used in Vietnam, have been brought and received by newly arriving units; while, on the other hand, publications and forms of high usage factors have been received in insufficient quantities.

14. Reproduction Activities. Each unit has its own manually operated mimeograph machine. One machine is not adequate. It is recommended that each unit have 2 mimeograph machines in the event one breaks down. Also, units would benefit if they had an electric mimeograph machine.

By

JB/mg

NARA, Date

9/92

15. Exchange activities. Adequate exchange facilities are available to all units within the command.

16. Character Guidance. We have found it very difficult to find times when men can leave their combat essential duties to attend a formal class in Character Guidance. It might be advisable for the officer charged with the Character Guidance Program to prepare a mimeographed sheet on the month's topic. This sheet would be read and initialed to signify completion of reading by each person in the command.

17. Religious services.

a. Religious services of the three major faiths are available to all personnel within the command.

b. Catholic services are provided by chaplains from other units in the areas where our units are located. Catholic personnel of the 187th Assault Helicopter Company and 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company can attend Mass at 1400 hours on Sundays in the Brigade Chapel at TAY NINH. Those of the 188th Assault Helicopter Company at DAU TIENG can attend Mass in the chapel there at 1630 hours on Sundays. Personnel of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company attend Mass in the 25th Division Chapel on Sundays at 1030 hours. HHC Catholic men attend Mass in the 2d Brigade Chapel at 0830 Or 1030 hours on Sundays.

c. Jewish personnel can attend services in the 25th Division Chapel on Fridays at 1900 hours or Saturdays at 0900 hours.

d. The Battalion Chaplain conducts Protestant services for the units as follows:

(1) 188th AHC - 1930 hours on Saturdays in the company mess hall.

By JB/mGNARA, Date 9/92

(2) 187th Assault Helicopter Company and 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company - 0830 hours on Sundays in the 187th's briefing room.

(3) HHC 269th Combat Aviation Battalion - 1100 hours on Sundays in the auxiliary mess.

(4) Protestant personnel of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company also attend services at the 25th Division Chapel on Sunday mornings at 0830 hours.

e. Denominational services are available at CU CHI to Episcopalians at 1130 hours on Sundays in the 25th Division Chapel, and to Lutherans at 1300 hours on Sundays in Support Command Chapel.

18.(v)Awards and decorations.

During the period the following awards were made within the Battalion:

	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Awarded</u>
Silver Star	11	9
Bronze Star Medal (Valor)	4	6
Distinguished Flying Cross	44	44
Bronze Star Medal (Service)	9	15
Legion of Merit	4	0
Purple Heart	43	30
Air Medal (Valor)	96	81
Army Commendation Medal (Valor)	7	35
Air Medal	1340	810

In cases above where awards received exceed the number recommended, recommendations were submitted in the previous Quarter.

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

to ascertain which areas of Command Information and Public Information need more emphasis.

e. Public Information.

(1) Release of all public information is controlled by the Battalion IO. News to be released is forwarded to USARV IO through 12th Group. USARV Daily Aviation Summaries are called directly to USARV IO office, and cleared by them for release.

(2) The most effective system for reporting USARV Daily Aviation Summaries is to have the unit IO report verbally by phone each day after missions have been completed. This insures at least a factual report on statistics each day and gives the Battalion IO an opportunity to extract news for the Battalion publication.

(3) A Guideline for releasing information, and the type of news to be released, was distributed to each unit. The report is consolidated and forwarded to USARV.

(4) Unit IO are required to give a narrative report using names and home towns whenever possible.

(5) An aviation summary is extracted from USARV news releases and published in the bimonthly unit newspaper. Plans are being made to emphasize human interest and feature type stories in order to publicize the individual soldier more often. Units are encouraged to publish authorized army newspapers on a company level to enhance their own Command Information and Public Information programs.

f. Home Town News Releases.

(1) DA Form 1526, Home Town News Releases, are sometimes difficult to obtain, thus limiting the effectiveness of the Home Town

By

JB/mg

NARA, Date

9/92

News Release Program. The goal of the Information Office is to release two homeowners on each man per tour.

(2) Cover stories and photos accompany each release when possible. Unit 10 largely control the release of 1526 forms. The unit 10 are responsible for screening the releases and getting maximum coverage in this area. Plans are being made to have each individual being in-processed pick up a worksheet and a 1526 form, complete the form, and turn it in upon his arrival at his assigned unit. This will assure that 50% of the goal has been accomplished at Battalion level. Due to time limitations for forwarding the forms, the current policy is to forward directly to the ARMY HOME TOWN NEWS RELEASE CENTER in Kansas City, Missouri, unless there is significant local interest in the story to be published in any of the newspapers published within our chain of command.

(3) Unit 10 have been briefed on material which must be cleared through MACV-10. Unit 10 have been provided with sufficient instructional pamphlets describing the New Release Program.

20. Medical.

a. Treatment - Aid Station Operations. During the quarter 1 May - 30 July 1967 the following aid stations were operated within the Battalion: one at DAU TIENG in support of the 188th Assault Helicopter Company and one at CU CHI in support of HHC 269th Combat Aviation Battalion and the 116th Assault Helicopter Company. There was no aid station at TAY NINH until July when 3 medical personnel were stationed there while the flight surgeons from Battalion commuted to TAY NINH 3 days a week.

b. Preventive Medicine and Immunizations: Malaria prophylaxis was accomplished throughout the command and immunizations were maintained at 100%.

c. Flight Physical Qualifications: Flight physical qualifications were maintained and completed to 100% throughout the command.

d. Medical Evacuation: Medical evacuation means remained helicopter and are efficient and rapid.

e. Medical Training: At present we have an OJT program in conjunction with the 93rd Evacuation Hospital at LONG BINH. 3 personnel are placed on 30 days TDY for on the job training.

f. Medical Supplies and Equipment: Medical equipment and supplies were adequate.

g. Sanitation: Base camp progress brought improvements in drainage, latrines and urinals, and in mess hall operation throughout the command.

h. Public Health: Venereal disease continues to be difficult to treat because of the resistance of the Gonococcal organism in Vietnam.

By JB/mGNARA, Date 9/92

D. (U) Intelligence and Security.

1. (U) Production of Intelligence.

a. In order to establish a systematic operation of the Intelligence Section of Battalion Headquarters and the intelligence sections of all subordinate units, an SOP has been written for this command and is presently in the process of publication. The SOP will be disseminated to subordinate units not only to serve as a guide toward the establishment of their own procedures, but also to point the intelligence and security efforts of the Battalion in one common direction.

b. Essential elements of information required in the accomplishment of the Battalion's missions are provided primarily by the intelligence staffs of the 25th Infantry Division and at lower echelons, by the supported Battalion's intelligence sections.

c. Spot reporting continues to be an essential activity from which the Battalion obtains timely intelligence data. The spot report system has proven quite valuable to the operations of our supported units since these reports are rendered on sight to ground commanders for immediate action.

d. During the quarter covered one problem area has been realized in the acquisition of photo intelligence from outside sources. In planning for weekly operations a necessity exists for accurate and timely photo coverage of the designated area of operations, specifically pick up zones and landing zones. This coverage is available, but to a quite limited extent. The procedure presently followed to obtain the desired photo coverage consists of submitting a request to G-2 Air at 25th Infantry Division level. This request is then submitted to the

By J3/mg NARA, Date 9/92

Division photo section which in turn requests support from either Army OV-1 unit equipped for such a mission, or Air Force reconnaissance elements. Once a request is submitted by this Battalion, should photo coverage not be immediately available from access files at Division level, an estimated 3 to 5 days are required before a return can be expected unless a high priority is granted by G-2. Since airmobile operations are planned most frequently two to three days prior to an operation, insufficient time exists to obtain photo coverage in many cases. Such coverage has proven to be a most desirable function, the lack of which results in a necessity to resort to extensive drawings which invariably lend to an inaccuracy hardly tolerable in combat operations. A possible solution would lie in the stationing of an OV-1 unit at CU CHI, in direct support of the 25th Infantry Division.

e. Weather data is presently obtained by this Headquarters through multiple channels. A daily distribution is made to all units at this location by supporting Air Force elements. In addition, signal channels provide sequence reports at six hour interval for the major areas of South Vietnam. A final source of weather information is the Air Force Detachment's duty forecaster whose information bears directly on the planning and preparation of each operation.

2.(v) Use of Intelligence Information.

a. The intelligence information available to this Headquarters has been of moderate benefit. Photo coverage of selected landing zones has afforded the luxury of choosing a formation best suited to terrain and man-made obstacles. Knowledge of these often dictates the direction of approach and formation on entry. Intelligence data confirming the

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

positive occupation of a landing zone by enemy forces is still rarely available. The first aircraft flown into the area of operations remains the best intelligence source for obtaining the enemy situation at the time of the operation.

c. Intelligence compilation. Intelligence data has been compiled by USARV agencies and has been made available to this Headquarters. This data has been in various forms to include sophisticated photo studies, intelligence overlays, etc. In conjunction with data acquired from supported units this information is compiled prior to each operation and disseminated to all commanders at tactical briefings.

3.(v) Counterintelligence.

a. National agency checks are continually being requested for newly assigned personnel requiring security clearances. An active control is maintained to insure clearances are granted on a strictly need to know basis.

b. To assure strict compliance with the requirements of counterintelligence directives, a CI inspection was held on the 28th of June by members from the 25th Division M. I. Detachment. No deficiencies were noted.

4.(v) Miscellaneous.

The Battalion S-2 has assumed the duties of the Escape and Evasion Officer. To obtain maximum experience in this capacity the Battalion S-2 will attend the Jungle Survival School instituted by the Navy Department in the Phillipines. The Escape and Evasion Officer was previously the unit Safety Officer. Predicated on the obvious association of intelligence and security and escape and evasion, additional duty was transferred.

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

E. (U) Operations and Training.

1. Organization.

a. Recommendations for organization and equipment.

(1) Preparation of draft MTOE for all elements of the Battalion continued during the reporting period; however, submission of the formal requests for MTOE are being held in abeyance pending receipt of further instructions from higher headquarters. Requests for assignment/attachments of teams were submitted for the augmentation of the Battalion by two cellular teams. A Quartermaster Petroleum Bulk Storage and Issue Detachment (semi-mobile) (Team KD, TOE 10-500) was requested to provide refueling facilities necessary to support operations throughout the Battalion's primary area of responsibility. A Medical Detachment (Team OA, TOE 8-500) was requested to provide medical support to the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company and the 187th Assault Helicopter Company, both of which are stationed at TAY NINH, presently without primary medical service. As of the end of the reporting period no answer had been received to either request.

(2) Requests for emergency authorization of several items of equipment, communications items for command and control, and automatic weapons required by base camp security commitments, were acted upon expeditiously, thus relieving critical situations in these areas.

2. Operations.

a. Operations plans and orders. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion has settled on the use of a standard 5 paragraph OPLAN/OPORD for all Battalion controlled operations. Standardization of annexes and of the distribution system has facilitated preparation, reproduction, and

By JB/mG NARA, Date 9/92

distribution of plans and orders which have been published in as short a time as 90 minutes. The habitual use of complete written orders for multi-company operations greatly simplifies the integration of nonorganic aviation elements in an operation and ensures the closest coordination of the aviation plan with that of the ground commander.

b. Supervision and coordination of tactical operations. In addition to the normal command, control, and coordination facilities found in all battalions, the 269th employs, as do many battalions in Vietnam, a permanent Battalion Operations Center (BOC) and a battalion command and control helicopter. The command and control helicopter, commonly referred to as the "C & C ship," is a UH-1H helicopter modified by the addition of a commander's console, AN/ASC-10, which provides one additional UHF and two additional FM transceivers. This system affords commanders the luxury of much greater control through a selection of added communications channels.

c. Planning and Integrating.

(1) Fire support in all airmobile operations conducted by this Battalion is coordinated through the ground commander in the planning phase of an airmobile operation. Most expeditious control of artillery support has been found to be maintained through direct contact with the supporting artillery unit and the ground commander aloft in the C & C aircraft which is normally in orbit over the area of operations. This unit has found also that to insure continuity in command the use of an alternate C & C ship is imperative.

(2) The use of chemicals has most recently been extended to the employment of a UH-1C helicopter as a smoke ship. The employment of

By JB/mg

NARA, Date

9/92

Division Tactical Operations Center (TOC). Communications with the 25th Cavalry Division is by sole-user telephone. Missions are received from AAE and assigned to the units by the BOC. Daily operations are monitored by the BOC, thus insuring that all necessary action to coordinate activities, react to emergencies, and submit required reports, is, in fact, taken. The BOC:

- a. Coordinates the efforts of resources of the Battalion to insure accomplishment of assigned missions.
- b. Maintains a current aircraft status chart and keeps AAE informed of any changes.
- c. Receives, checks, consolidates, and forwards to higher headquarters all information required to be reported as an integral part of the OPREP/5 report.
- d. Maintains a NOTAM file, artillery fire support base file, and insures dissemination of these to subordinate elements.
- e. Initiates necessary action to recall appropriate aircraft in the event of a Tactical Emergency.
- f. Coordinates and notifies appropriate elements in the event of a mortar attack on any location where elements of this command are located.
- g. Coordinates the search, rescue, protection, and recovery of downed aircraft.
- h. Maintains a log of all events that transpire over a 24 hour period.
 - i. Flight follows assigned Battalion aircraft to include maintaining flight plans, and issuing SOI and survival kits.

c. Schools.

(1) Throughout the period of interest personnel of this Battalion have attended supply, signal, maintenance, and weapons courses, whenever this unit has been in receipt of allocations. During the period, also, three officers were sent to Jungle Environment Survival Training, a 4 day course held by the Navy Department at Manila, in the Phillipines. The last course is primarily in the interest of furthering the Battalion's individual aviator's escape and evasion capabilities.

(2) The following quotas were received during the period:

- (a) Aircraft Maintenance School--9.
- (b) Aircraft Weapons Systems School--2.
- (c) Supply School--3.
- (d) Jungle Environment Survival Training (JEST)--3.

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

F. (1) Logistics.

Supply.

a. Classes I, III, and IIIa supplies are drawn through the 25th Infantry Division at CU CHI for units located at this station. The 187th Assault Helicopter Company with all attachments, and 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company draw their rations and fuel at supply points in TAY NINH. The 188th Assault Helicopter Company normally draws its supplies from a supply point at DAU TIENG. The 188th is presently operating at PHU HIEP and draws its classes I, III, and IIIa at PHU HIEP. During tactical operations class IIIa is drawn from SKYBOLT facilities located at four points within the normal area of operations. These points are the responsibility of the 25th Infantry Division. When units operate out of the 25th Division area, class I support during operations usually consists of one "C" ration meal, since very few operations prevent unit personnel from eating two meals a day at home station. On extended operations out of the 25th Division, coordination is made for class I support from the unit being supported. During the reporting period none of the units of the Battalion have conducted intense field operations requiring displacement of the company base to a field site.

b. Units of the Battalion maintain their own property accounts and are satellited onto DSC and depot units of the 1st Logistical Command for class II and class IV items. HHC and the 116th Assault Helicopter Company have accounts with the 506th depot in SAIGON. The 187th and the 188th Assault Helicopter Companies and the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company draw their supplies from the 228th DSU at TAY NINH. Barrier materials and construction materials can be drawn from supporting engineer units at each unit's location. Free road travel between SAIGON

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

armament wiring installations. UH-1B 63-8558, 63-8639, 63-8695, and 63-8721, issued to the 116th Assault Helicopter Company were not wired for M-16 or M-5 armament systems which were essential to mission accomplishment. Aircraft were either equipped only for M-3 or for nothing at all. Considerable time (36 days) was lost in general support maintenance locating and installing necessary wiring and mounting fixtures for the above armament systems on the first two aircraft requiring the work. The second two ships are not yet mission ready because of armament problems. All four ships exchanged were received with ARC-44 radios installed. This FM radio does not include proper frequencies for communications with supported ground units; and for that reason aircraft equipped with the ARC-44 cannot serve as lead aircraft for fire teams. Ships equipped with the ARC-44 can be used only in a secondary role with another ship equipped with the ARC-54 FM radio. MWO should be procured as soon as possible for all UH-1B aircraft to be used as gunships.

5. Maintenance and Repair (Less Aircraft).

a. Vehicle and equipment maintenance has been complicated by the arrival of the rainy season. Proper lubrication and prevention of rust and mildew are major problem areas. Maintenance facilities for all units meet the minimum specified requirements except for the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company. Hardstand for vehicles and aircraft maintenance for this unit has not been completed. Adverse weather has delayed filling, compacting, and surfacing operations at TAY NINH for this unit.

b. Tool and repair parts supply has not seriously impaired operations.

By JB/mgNARA, Date 9/92

c. Vehicle direct support maintenance is provided by 5 units of the 1st Logistical Command located at TAY NINH, CU CHI, and DAU TIENG. This has proven adequate to date. Support maintenance for generators and office machines is provided by the 1st Logistical Command facilities located in SAIGON and LONG BINH. The principal problem encountered has been transportation of the items to and from SAIGON, since the various repair shops are widely dispersed throughout SAIGON and LONG BINH.

6.(v) Services.

a. Local Vietnamese employees have been authorized for mess hall employment. In addition special funds were allocated to hire personnel to fill sandbags for aircraft revetments. The hiring of mess hall help has been a positive morale factor.

b. Construction and coordination has been made with Base Development Offices at CU CHI, TAY NINH, and DAU TIENG to establish requirements for permanent construction. Unit permanent construction is completed. Those permanent buildings which have been constructed have been accepted by the engineers. Maintenance of these facilities is now furnished by PA & E.

c. All troop and officer billets are of temporary construction. Personnel bunkers have been constructed.

d. Except for loss of weapons from helicopters in flight, loss or damage to equipment has been exceptionally low. Command emphasis has been placed on securing weapons and equipment during flight, and losses have been reduced during the later portion of the reporting period. Action has been taken to obtain a weapon mount used to secure

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

rifles in 1/4 ton trucks. The intent here is to determine whether [redacted] can be mounted in UH-1 helicopters for security of crew-members weapons.

e. The quality of food service support has been excellent throughout the Battalion.

f. Fire protection is furnished through the use of fire extinguishers or water drums as outlined by USARV and installation directives. PA & E, in conjunction with local engineers, has established fire stations at each installation.

7(v) Miscellaneous.

a. Battalion level planning for logistical support is minimal because of decentralization of supply to unit level. Administrative orders are not issued for most operations away from base camps since units themselves conduct most operations. The majority of support is furnished by SKYBOLT refueling and rearming points within the 25th Infantry Division area. Rear area security and damage control planning is done at the installation level.

b. The logistics and maintenance organization at Battalion level is shown in Inclosure 4. The construction office has been added to coordinate the planning of facilities for incoming units as well as preparation of permanent construction plans for all units.

By JB/mGNARA, Date 9/92

G. (U) Signal.

1 (v) Aviation installation and operations.

a. FM radio.

(1) The following radio nets are operated by the Battalion.

(a) Battalion Command Net: This net is established between the BOC (NCS) and all subordinate aviation companies. The net operates 24 hours daily and is tuned to allow aircraft radios to enter the net when key personnel are operating away from the Battalion area. The net is used for normal command and operational control in coordinating missions assigned to this Battalion.

(b) Battalion Courier Net: This net is established between the Battalion S-1 and the helicopter designated as the daily courier. The net is used for the sole purpose of controlling the courier aircraft.

(2) The Battalion operates in the following nets:

(a) 12th Combat Aviation Group Command FM Net for command and administrative traffic. This net is available for key personnel to enter, via aircraft radio, when operating away from the respective Headquarters.

(b) II FFV-AAE Operation Net: This net is established utilizing the KY-8, an encryptive machine, to allow CONFIDENTIAL traffic to be passed. This secure net has provided invaluable results.

(c) The 25th Infantry Division Command Net for tactical information.

b. AM radio.

(1) UHF Battalion Command Net. The Battalion Operation

By JB/MG NARA, Date 9/92

Center, as well as aircraft radios within Battalion, is in this net.

The net is used primarily as the Battalion Command Net during Battalion operations.

c. RATT: Recently the Battalion was issued the VSC-21 Single Sideband Radio. The Battalion communication section operates the radio and enters a 12th Combat Aviation Group Administrative and Logistics net at prescribed times. Teletype traffic is passed, but the secure equipment has not been installed. Installation date for the secure crypto equipment is 1 September 1967. A net has also been established between the Battalion Headquarters and the 188th Assault Helicopter Company. This is only a temporary net and will be discontinued when the 188th returns to its home station. The doublet antenna provides the best results for this radio.

d. The land line teletype circuit has operated at maximum efficiency. Due to the increase in traffic the Battalion Communication Center operates 24 hours daily. The patching capability at 12th Group to obtain direct teletype lines from one battalion to another continues to be very useful.

e. Telephone Communication.

(1) A SB-86 switchboard has been installed to replace the SB-22's operating in the stacked position. The new system provides common battery Signalling, thus rendering more efficient service.

(2) Sole-user circuits providing direct communication between the BOC and the Headquarters listed below:

- (a) AAE, II FFV TOC.
- (b) ADAO, 25th Infantry Division DTOC.

By

JB/mg

NARA, Date

9/92

(c) 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company.

(d) 116th Assault Helicopter Company.

(e) 187th Assault Helicopter Company.

(f) 188th Assault Helicopter Company.

(2) Common-user trunks have been established between the Battalion switchboard and the switchboards listed below.

(a) CU CHI.

(b) LIGHTNING.

(c) 25th Aviation Battalion.

(d) 116th Assault Helicopter Company.

(e) 188th Assault Helicopter Company.

(f) The 187th Assault Helicopter Company and the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company are utilizing the same circuit.

(3) There are eight trunks which terminate in the Battalion switchboard.

(4) A direct line has been installed from the CU CHI switchboard to the Battalion Commander with extensions to the Executive Officer and S-1.

(5) The Battalion Headquarters and HHC has a total of 30 field type telephones installed within the area. The SB-86 has the capability of connecting 30 lines into the board. Of these 30 connections, eight are used for trunk lines, leaving a total of 22 connections for the Battalion Headquarters area. In order to install the desired number of telephones, the party system has been developed, wherein two telephones were put on the same line and each assigned a certain number of rings. This system has proven to be effective.

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

2. SOI are published by the Signal Officer, 12th Combat Aviation Group. Ten SOI are issued to Battalion Headquarters and twenty-five to each assigned company. Changes are published as required by Group. SSI and KAC Codes are received from Group. Battalion distributes these items to the companies.

3. The Signal detachments attached to the companies possess the necessary facilities and equipment to maintain the avionics equipment in the aircraft. A shortage of personnel exists in all detachments which have severely affected the overall maintenance. Some detachments have test equipment to repair radar equipment. The need does not exist for these items and permission has been obtained to turn in the unneeded items. An MTOE is being developed and should be submitted in the very near future.

4. The 94th Maintenance Company has replaced the 61st Maintenance Company and is providing excellent maintenance in minimum time. A DX system has been established providing a minimum loss of equipment for the Battalion. Signal supply is adequate on the existing equipment.

5. Communication Security is practiced throughout the Battalion and adequate results are obtained.

6. Crypto facilities are only available at the Battalion Headquarters. Crypto equipment will, however, be issued in the near future in secure FM nets. On line crypto facilities are not planned to the subordinate companies.

By JB/mG NARA, Date 9/92

1. (v) Aviation Safety.

1.(v)Places and Programs.

- a. Each unit now has a full time primary duty Aviation Safety Officer.
- b. Aviation safety meetings are held monthly in each unit.
- c. Unit Aviation Safety Officers are making periodic inspection of facilities, parking procedures, and taxiing procedures. Reports are being rendered to Battalion Aviation Safety.
- d. Units are making safety bulletin boards.
- e. Safety is being allotted time at all mission briefings.
- f. Visits to all units are being conducted by the Battalion Aviation Safety Officer.

2.(v)Procedures.

- a. Use of Force Trim, clear visors down, shoulder harness locked and Pilot and/or Aircraft Commander near the controls to safely take control in case of emergency during all combat assaults, extractions, and combat resupply missions, are now Battalion SOP.

- b. During administrative flights, upon landing, the crew chief and gunner will exit the aircraft and insure that personnel do not get close to the tail rotor and that vehicles approaching the aircraft do not come within the radius of the main rotor blades.

3.(v)Publications.

- a. A Battalion Aviation Safety SOP has been published.
- b. The receiving and disseminating of weekly and monthly accident summaries is being accomplished.

4.(v)Training.

- a. Units are now entering safety meetings on training schedules.

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

b. Standardization rides are given to all aviators every 90 days.

5.(v) Inspections. The Battalion Aviation Safety Officer spends a minimum of 2 days each month with subordinate units. During this time he reviews the USABAAR Safety Summary with the unit Safety Officer.

6.(v) Accident Investigations (Summary). During the period of interest, units of the Battalion had 4 precautionary landings, two of which were attributed to combat damage. Of 12 forced landings, 6 were attributed to combat damage. Of 8 aircraft incidents, 1 was attributed to combat damage. One minor accident was attributed to combat damage; and of 10 major accidents, 1 was attributed to combat damage. For a summary of major accidents, see Inclosure 5.

By JB/mG NARA, Date 9/92

SECTION II

COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PART I

OBSERVATIONS—LESSONS LEARNED (u)

A. (U) Operations 1 May through 31 July 1967.

1(u) Item: Aircraft in operational area.

Discussion: Operation 4-67, 2 May 1967. This operation was in support of the 1st Australian Task Force in the ~~BA RIA~~ area SOUTHEAST of SAIGON. A number of unidentified aircraft were operating in the area, causing considerable concern to the air mission commander.

Several calls on the emergency frequency failed to clear the area. Contact with the artillery controlling agency (KANGAROO CONTROL) did result in two of the three aircrafts' leaving. The third aircraft, an OH-13, proceeded low level through the area, still in interference of the air-mobile force.

Observation: If flight control agencies are notified at co-ordination meetings of an impending operation, aircraft can be advised to remain clear of the operational area during the time frame of the assault.

2(u) Item: Alternate Command & Control aircraft.

Discussion: Operation 5-67, 14 May 1967. In support of the 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, the requirement existed for the C & C helicopter to perform liaison and reconnaissance of a desired LZ while the movement of troops from CU CHI to DUC HOA was performed in two lifts. A refueling of the supporting companies was also a requirement during the troop movement. A second C & C ship was utilized to

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

coordinate not only the troop movement, but also the refueling, and positioning of aircraft and troops to insure the proper posture for the initial assault. This was accomplished while the primary C & C ship was performing the reconnaissance of a possible landing zone.

Observation: The procedure of using an alternate C & C ship, saved approximately 45 minutes on two occasions during the exercise and eliminated untold confusion that may well have existed. The subsequent result was the continued use of an alternate C & C aircraft on all Battalion size operations.

3(v) Item: Operating in vicinity of TAN SON NHUT.

Discussion: During the operations discussed in Item 2 above, the assault force was in the vicinity of BEN LUC, which is in line with TAN SON NHUT Air Base runway 07. This caused an additional flight hazard in the area.

Observation: TAN SON NHUT tower should be advised when units conduct activities in area interfering with VFR, and especially IFR traffic. The stress on IFR traffic is so placed because of the length or distance of the inbound approach course from the actual runway end itself.

4(v) Item: Location of friendly elements.

Discussion: Operation 6-67, 24 May 1967. In operations supporting 1-27th Infantry Battalion of the 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, information received from the ground commander indicated that no friendly elements were operating WEST of the Oriental River, a river in the WESTERN zone of the Brigade's Area of Operations. Artillery and gunship preparation of the LZ was planned and executed. Full suppression by outside door gunners for a 20 ship simultaneous

By JB/mG NARA, Date 9/92

insertion was planned and executed. After the insertion of the initial element, an ARVN company size force was observed approximately 2000 meters SOUTH of the LZ. The company was displaying air to ground panels and was standing in the middle of rice paddies to preclude misidentification as Viet Cong.

Observation: Coordination problems in this area are sometimes existent. This incident was discussed with the 2d Brigade and 1-27th Infantry Battalion Commander. No similar incident has occurred since.

5.(v) Item: Multiple battalion operation.

Discussion: Operation 9-67, 18 June 1967. A two-battalion operation was conducted by the 269th and the 25th Aviation Battalion. Results indicated that excessive coordination was required to accomplish the assault.

Observation: This operation was used as a concept vehicle to determine the feasibility of two battalion headquarters conducting operations in support of one infantry brigade on one objective. The concept was considered feasible providing the following prerequisites were met:

- (a) Sufficient planning time was available for detailed coordination.
- (b) The mission of each aviation battalion can be specifically delineated.
- (c) Enemy action is expected to be minimal or non-existent.

6(v) Item: Weather delays.

Discussion: Operation 10-67, 25 June 1967. This operation in support of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, was scheduled to start at 0704 hours on 25 June 1967. Monsoon weather had set in and

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

extreme weather conditions prevented the take off of the assault force.

Prior commitment from II FFV required a release time of both assault helicopter companies by 0900. Some confusion ensued from a responsibility standpoint.

Observation: It is essential that a firm commitment be established on weather delays due to bad weather encountered during the rainy season. It is felt that AAE, II FFV, and the unit supported, establish one of the following courses of action:

(a) The combat aviation battalion supporting the ground element be allowed a definite number of weather delays or a specific cancellation time. This would allow the aviation element planning time to fulfill other missions assigned to the Battalion.

(b) A firm commitment be established to accomplish the mission regardless of the time involved in weather delays.

7.(v)Item: Reconnaissance flight.

Discussion: Operation 12-67, 11 July 1967. A reconnaissance was conducted 9 July 1967 in support of the 3d Infantry Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. S-3, 3-22d Infantry and the Asst S-3, 2-12th Infantry were both present. The landing zones and the flight formations were agreed upon. The 2-12th Infantry, however, the unit whose coordination representative was the assistant S-3, changed the flight formations at 1900 hours, 10 July 1967. This caused considerable alteration of flight plans at a critical time in the final planning phases of the operation.

Observation: It is recommended that an individual authorized to make the final decision on all aspects of an operation be present at the coordination meeting and conjunctive reconnaissance flights.

By

JB/mG

NARA, Date

9/92

B. (U) Miscellaneous Lessons Learned.

1. (v) Item: Auxiliary fuel tank for C & C aircraft.

Discussion: A requirement for a longer on station time exists for the C & C aircraft on larger battalion size operations. One solution to increase the time aloft is the installation of a 55 gallon auxiliary fuel tank beneath the rear seating row on the UH-1 helicopter.

Observation: The weight factor involving a commander's console, all personnel on board, and the additional 55 gallons fuel and container, is worth noting. It is recommended that the additional fuel tank be placed on board aircraft equipped with -13 engines.

2. (v) Item: BOC Operations.

Discussion: In certain instances during the quarter supported units inquired of the status of the aircraft assigned in their support. In other instances aircraft on single ship missions were downed for engine failures, bullet damage, etc. To expedite the obtaining of critical information in emergency situations, the BOC includes the call sign of the aircraft supporting the mission in question, and posts this information on the daily mission sheet.

Observation: This policy, since instated, has proven of considerable value in emergency situations.

3. (v) Item: BOC Operations.

Discussion: For a period of time there appeared to be a definite lack in continuity of effort whenever shifts were changed. To preclude a slip or failure in effort, the shifts in enlisted personnel and officers have been staggered with a one and one-half hour separation in the times the personnel assume their duties.

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

Observation: This system has definitely improved the situation which existed early in BOC operations. The flow of information from shift to shift is now smooth and unaltered.

5(v) Item: Medical Assistance;

Discussion: In the movement of our units it has come to the attention of medical personnel that medical support to units in the field is not completely satisfactory.

Observation: An aviation company should have an OA Medical Detachment and doctor in its support when located away from its base camp. Otherwise medical problems arise which cannot be handled by the commanding officer.

6(v) Item: Publications and Forms Supply.

Discussion: Numerous publications and forms, some inapplicable in Vietnam, others seldom used in country, have been brought by and received by newly arriving units. At the same time, other publications and forms essential to operations and functions in Vietnam have been available to newly arriving units in insufficient quantities.

Observation: Some kind of check list should be established to denote which forms and publications are required in country; and these forms and publications should be made readily available to deploying units.