

FEB-APRIL
1968

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND873541

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

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

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (8 Aug 68) FOR OT RD 682139 26 August 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 269th
Combat Aviation Battalion, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT RD, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.
2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure that the Army realizes current benefits from lessons learned during recent operations.
3. To insure that the information provided through the Lessons Learned Program is readily available on a continuous basis, a cumulative Lessons Learned Index containing alphabetical listings of items appearing in the reports is compiled and distributed periodically. Recipients of the attached report are encouraged to recommend items from it for inclusion in the Index by completing and returning the self-addressed form provided at the end of this report.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

1 Incl
as

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By

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NARA, Date

9/92

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO 96353
"DISCIPLINED PROFESSIONALS"

AVGC-F-SC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned for Period Ending
30 April 1968 (UIC WDU7TO) (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. (U) References: AR 525-15, AR 220-346, AR 380-5, AR 870-5, and USARV Regulation 525-15.
2. (U) Attached is the Operational Report - Lessons Learned covering activities of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion during the period 1 Feb-30 Apr 68.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



WILLIAM F. OSTERMEIER
Major, Armor
Adjutant

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO 96353
"DISCIPLINED PROFESSIONALS"

AVGC-F-SC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 269th Combat Aviation Battalion
for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U)

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1. Section 1. Operations: Significant Activities.

A. (C) Chronology of Significant Events.

(1) The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, composed of the three assault helicopter companies and one assault support helicopter company at the onset of this report, has decreased in size to its present composition of two assault companies and one assault support helicopter company. Since the termination of the last quarterly report, the 188th Assault Helicopter Company, formerly stationed at DAU TIENG, has been reassigned to the 10th Aviation Group in the I Corps Tactical Zone. The 361st Aviation Company (Aerial Weapons), arriving in-country during April 1968, has been assigned to DI AN, and is under the control of the 269th for training. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Headquarters, the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company, and the 116th Assault Helicopter Company remain at CU CHI, with the 187th Assault Helicopter Company continuing its support from TAY NINH.

Due to the loss of the 188th Assault Helicopter Company from DAU TIENG, the 269th has lost the capability of mission assignments of one assault helicopter company continually to each Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division. (In many instances the Battalion will provide one company for the support of two infantry battalions of separate Brigades in one day during different time periods.) Although this type support has created some minor problems in coordination between the supported units and the aviation element and their effective release times, it has in no way affected the excellent rapport now existing between the ground commanders and aviation commanders.

(2) During the quarter covered by this report the 269th again demonstrated the capability of improving and increasing the airmobile support required by all allied forces in the III Corps Tactical Zone with 152 days of combat assaults. The Battalion continued with primary support to the 25th Infantry Division in their operations against VC/NVA forces located in the III Corps Tactical Zone. During this period, the 269th worked with 25th Division in their constant offensive actions, almost

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Chronology of Significant Events

exclusively in the CU CHI - SAIGON area when the VC/NVA forces were engaged in the TET OFFENSIVE. The aviation support of this battalion was instrumental in the 25th Division's actions to open the road between SAIGON and CU CHI and the actual securing of SAIGON proper. In one operation, TAN SON NHUT airfield was the LZ used for the ground elements. As the VC/NVA TET action slowly lost its offensive punch, the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion provided support for various allied units during Operation RESOLVED TO WIN. This highly successful action was designed to remove the enemy forces that were still in positions around the SAIGON, LONG BINH, and BIEN HOA area. As a result of supporting allied units on a continued offensive action the 269th had one of its most successful actions to date. On 72 separate combat assaults, all units flew a combined total of 25,585 sorties, carried 47,123 passengers, transported 7,518 tons of cargo, for a total of 9,144 flying hours. The 269th gunships accounted for 131 confirmed enemy kills, and an estimated 104 enemy kills. In addition, the gunships destroyed 163 VC sampans and structures. The 269th suffered 9 wounded personnel and had 64 aircraft sustain combat damage. Through skill, courage and determination, the officers and men of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion provided the 25th Infantry Division and other allied units with the necessary aviation support to thwart a determined drive by the VC/NVA forces.

(3) The 116th and 187th Assault Helicopter Companies continued as the primary aviation support units for the 25th Infantry Division; however, tactical situations required their use outside the Division AO. All assault companies have conducted operations in support of the 1st and 9th Infantry Divisions, 199th Light Infantry Brigade, ARVN forces, and personnel from Civilian Irregular Defense Groups.

(4) During the period of this report, while assigned to the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, the 188th Assault Helicopter Company was to provide tactical air movement of combat troops in Operation RAPID FIRE for team B-36 of the 5th Special Forces Group. This operation was for the purpose of gathering intelligence on VC/NVA movements across the Cambodian Border northwest of TAY NINH in War Zone "C". The 188th committed 5 slicks, one Command and Control, and 3 gunships daily for this operation. Utilizing low level insertions at first light, the small detachments could be inserted into multiple LZ's to preclude the Viet Cong pinpointing their exact location and strength. By the close of RAPID FIRE, the 188th had flown 45 separate airmobile operations ranging from single ship insertions and extractions to multiple ship operations. The 188th flew a total of 1,185 sorties and 621 flying hours in support of RAPID FIRE. The 188th killed 36 VC, wounded 3, captured 3, destroyed 2 VC vehicles, and 3 bridges. The unit suffered three personnel wounded, and 11 aircraft hit by ground fire; of these, three were totally destroyed.

(5) Throughout the two previous reporting periods the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion has taken considerable pride in documenting its lessons learned with strategy and methods of employing the 269th smoke

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Chronology of Significant Events

dispensing aircraft. During this reporting period, the Battalion continued to expand and improve the tactics used with "Smokey Baron". The use of this aircraft while implementing proven methods of employment is without a doubt one of the most important steps forward, yet made, in protecting the somewhat vulnerable troop carrying helicopter.

The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion presently has converted two (2) UH-1C gunships into smoke dispensing aircraft and assigned them to the two assault helicopter companies with the Battalion. To insure that standardization and proper methods of utilization are continued, the training and qualification of aircraft commanders for this helicopter is completed at battalion level. The continued use of the smoke dispensing helicopter on daily missions has created an ever expanding need and a multitude of demands for its services. "Smokey" is used not only for screening PZ's and LZ's but also for covering the flanks of advancing troops as they move past or near a suspected enemy position. Ground commanders have also used the smoke ship as a deceptive means by placing a smoke screen on a diversionary LZ. Another means of employment is in the dispensing of riot control agents, primarily CS gas. Although this is probably the least employed technique yet applied, it has proven to be quite effective. This method of use will completely incapacitate the unprotected enemy soldier and afford the added security of restricted visibility to the entire flight of aircraft. Care must be used when employing smoke and CS together. The CS cannot be seen by the pilot and there is always the possibility of flying through your own layer of CS if smoke is not used as a marker.

The application of this smoke ship is restricted only by one's imagination and the capabilities of the aircraft itself. Thus far, the imagination has been supplied by the commanders of ground forces as well as aviation units. These new tactics are limited by the aircraft itself since the present converted UH-1C does not have the smoke oil capacity to remain on station long enough. The tanks now in use limit time on station to approximately thirty minutes, not enough time to adequately cover a large operation going into separate LZ's. The present dispensing apparatus also restricts the speed at which the smoke ship can make his pass on the LZ. A slow speed of approximately 60 knots in the UH-1C provides the most adequate coverage; however, it increases the vulnerability of aircraft and crew. A faster approach tends to disperse the smoke in lower density, thereby decreasing its effectiveness but decreasing vulnerability.

With the increased utilization of this aircraft and its proven effectiveness, research and development along these indicated shortcomings could certainly further increase its applications.

(6) The 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company maintained its high level of effective support for all allied forces in the III Corps Tactical Zone. The 242d was primarily utilized in support of the 25th Infantry Division and daily carried the load when heavy cargo lifts were needed for troops in the field. With the use of Pathfinder Detachments, the

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Chronology of Significant Events

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242d has expedited the movement of artillery batteries and large troops contingents. The Pathfinders, being more experienced in aviation operations, can assist the ground commander in rigging heavy loads, positioning troops on the ground for loading and actual radio control of aircraft in the PZ's and LZ's. A daily commitment of 6 aircraft for all units in the III Corps Tactical Zone kept the 242d at 75% over the programmed flight time.

(7) During the period 1 February to 30 April, the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion has persisted in its aggressive spirit in carrying the flight, in one of the most contested areas in Vietnam today. The efforts expended at all levels of this command are reflected by the outstanding reputation enjoyed by this Battalion. The sustained support rendered to all units in the III Corps Tactical Zone by the 269th is borne out by the statistics indicated below.

(8) From 1 February to 30 April 1968, the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion flew 71,465 sorties, logging a total of 23,336 flying hours. 116,105 passengers were carried and 23,622 tons of cargo have been moved in support of ground forces. 206 Viet Cong were killed by aircraft of this Battalion, and 53 casualties were evacuated from forward areas.

(9) During this period, the Battalion itself suffered 4 KIA and 19 WIA. 120 aircraft received combat damage from hits by enemy ground fire. Most of the hostile fire received was taken during a total of 90 days of combat assaults in support of ground forces.

(10) Aircraft status as of 30 April 1968 (Inclosure 4).

(11) The figures shown are continued evidence that the 269th is supporting forces that are among the most active offensively in Vietnam today. The Battalion takes deep pride and satisfaction in the support it has been able to give the aviation-minded ground units in the III Corps Tactical Zone. A further statistical account is in Inclosure 5.

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B (U) Command.

(1) 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 Battalion's assault support helicopter company provides a logistical and tactical airlift capability for movement of troops and supplies. There have been no changes or additions to the unit mission during the reporting period. Transfer of the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company during the last reporting period eliminated that portion of the mission which utilized the surveillance and target acquisition capabilities of that unit.

(2) Organization.

(a) The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion is presently composed of a headquarters company, two assault helicopter companies, one assault support helicopter company, and one aviation company (aerial weapons) under the Battalion's control for training. The 188th Assault Helicopter Company, located at DAU TIEG, APO 96268, was transferred from the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion and relocated in the I Corps Tactical Zone. Present organizational chart is included in Inclosure 1.

(3) Personalities.

(a) Commander: During the entire period covered by this report, the Battalion Commander has been Lieutenant Colonel EDGAR F TODD, OF105845, Artillery.

(b) Staff: At the close of this reporting period the principal staff officers were:

1 Executive Officer: Lieutenant Colonel LONNIE T HOWARD, 097922, Infantry.

2 S-1: Major WILLIAM F OSTERMEIER, OF102582, Armor.

3 S-2: Captain BILLY F DAVIS, 05321762, Infantry.

4 S-3: Major RICHARD W LUTH, 04032744, Corps of Engineers.

5 S-4: Major JOSEPH A SITES, 04004905, Corps of Engineers.

(c) Unit Commanders: At the close of the reporting period, the unit commanders of subordinate units were:

1 Headquarters Company: Captain FRANK T PETERLIN, 05207355, Artillery.

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2 116th Assault Helicopter Company: Major ALBERT R WOODRUFF, 073431, Artillery.

3 187th Assault Helicopter Company: Major RUSSEL J FOLTA, 077391, Infantry.

4 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company: Major ANDREW N ALFORD, 01939976, Infantry.

(4) Personnel changes within the command group and principal staff.

(a) Battalion Commander

1 Outgoing: Lieutenant Colonel JAMES M MERNYMAN, 067566, Artillery.

2 Incoming: Lieutenant Colonel EDGAR F TODD, OF105845, Artillery.

3 Effective Date: 1 February 1968.

(b) Battalion Executive Officer

1 Outgoing: Lieutenant Colonel EDGAR F TODD, OF105845, Artillery.

2 Incoming: Lieutenant Colonel LONNIE T HOWARD, 097922, Infantry.

3 Effective Date: 1 February 1968.

(c) S-1

1 Outgoing: Major CHARLES M GRAHAM, 91846, Transportation Corps.

2 Incoming: Major WILLIAM F OSTERMEIER, OF102582, Armor.

3 Effective Date: 20 April 1968.

(d) S-2

1 Outgoing: Major LYNDON E HOLLOMAN, 05309136, Signal Corps.

2 Incoming: Captain BILLY F DAVIS, 05321762, Infantry.

3 Effective Date: 12 April 1968.

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(e) S-3

1 Outgoing: Major BILLY G SIMS, 089607, Artillery.

2 Incoming: Major RICHARD W AUTH, 04032744, Corps of

Engineers.

3 Effective Date: 26 March 1968.

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C. (C) Personnel and Administration

(1) Maintenance of unit strength.

2). (a) Battalion strength as of 30 April 1968: (See Inclosure

(b) Summary of projected gains and losses for the next 90 days: (See Inclosure 3).

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

(d) Replacements: Replacements have been requisitioned in accordance with USARV Regulation 614-185 for officer personnel (8 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 6 months prior to DEROS for grades E1 - E6 Personnel).

(e) Reenlistment program:

1 There were 5 reenlistments during the quarter.

2 The reenlistment program is published in the Battalion paper "Black Baron Release".

(2) Personnel Management:

(a) Personnel procedures.

1 Assignments: Personnel assigned during the quarter were as follows:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
42	58	232

2 Rotation to CONUS during the quarter:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
22	19	293

3 Casualties during the quarter:

a Return to Duty:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
7	8	41

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Personnel and Administration

b Evacuated from Combat Zone:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
0	7	7

c Killed in Action:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
0	3	6

4 Promotions: Promotions during the quarter were as follows:

<u>OFFICERS</u>					
<u>LTC</u>	<u>MAJ</u>	<u>CPT</u>	<u>1LT</u>	<u>2LT</u>	<u>CWO</u>
1	2	5	4	0	20

<u>ENLISTED</u>					
<u>E-9</u>	<u>E-8</u>	<u>E-7</u>	<u>E-6</u>	<u>E-5</u>	<u>E-4</u>
0	1	0	3	115	99

5 Reclassification: Administrative MOS Reclassification during the quarter - 45.

6 Retirement/Reversion to retired status: 1.

(b) Prisoners of War: Prisoners of war are turned over to the G-2 - 25th Infantry Division for collection, safeguarding, processing and evaluation.

(c) Civilian personnel: Civilian personnel are hired from the abundant resources of indigenous personnel. Local Nationals are hired in two distinct categories: permanent hire and direct daily hire.

1 Permanent hires: Each unit, submitting its current and projected civilian personnel requirements in accordance with USARV Regulation 690-7, through this headquarters to 12th Combat Aviation Group, is authorized to employ local nationals on a permanent basis. The spaces are allocated to Battalion through 12th Combat Aviation Group from USARV. The payroll for permanent hires is distributed directly to each unit from USARV on a bi-weekly basis. The local nationals are employed in numerous positions to include Kitchen Police, Carpenters, Handyman, Exterminators, and Secretarie Permanent hires are employed as follows:

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Personnel and Administration

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PERMANENT HIRES EMPLOYED</u>
HHC, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion	7
116th Assault Helicopter Company	9
187th Assault Helicopter Company	8
188th Assault Helicopter Company	17*
242d Assault Support Helicopter Company	<u>8</u>
TOTAL	49

*This is the last reporting period for the 188th since they have been reassigned to another Combat Aviation Group.

2 Direct Daily Hires: Direct daily hires employed on a daily, as needed basis. They are used primarily for unskilled labor such as filling sandbags, general police, etc. Currently most units employ daily hires to aid in constructing bunkers and digging drainage ditches in preparation for the oncoming Monsoon Season. Funds are allocated to the Battalion from 12th Combat Aviation Group on a Quarterly basis and disbursed monthly. Each unit employed an average of 22 direct hires each working day during the first quarter of 1968. The wages paid vary from VN\$80 to \$100 per 8 hour work day. There is a study underway to determine the feasibility of a piece rate pay schedule for sandbaggers in order to obtain a more productive work force. Local agreement requires 1 Vietnamese supervisor to be employed for each 20 Vietnamese laborers employed. In addition, it is necessary to have one (1) U.S. Army individual to supervise each group employed.

(3) Morale and Personnel Services.

(a) Leaves during the quarter were as follows:

	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
Emergency	1	0	5
Compassionate	0	0	5
Special	0	0	15
Ordinary	0	0	10

(b) R&R for the quarter:

Forecast/Requested: 338

Received: 338

(c) Character Guidance: The Character Guidance Program is supervised by the Battalion Chaplain. Classes are scheduled with the Chaplain by the companies' training officer or NCO. The Chaplain also prepares a supplementary written briefing on each month's topic. This briefing sheet is provided to the companies in sufficient numbers for coverage of all

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Personnel and Administration

officers and NCO's. Enlisted personnel unable to attend a class because of their duties also read this briefing sheet. In this manner all personnel within the command are able to participate in the Character Guidance Program.

(d) Postal Service: Postal Service has continued to be excellent, thereby greatly assisting the morale of the Battalion personnel.

(e) Religious Services: Religious Services of the three major faiths are available to all personnel within the command. Denominational Services are also available to certain Protestant personnel. Services for Catholic personnel are provided by Chaplains from adjacent units. Catholics in HHC and 116th AHC attend Mass in the 2d Brigade Chapel at 0830 hours or in the 25th Division Memorial Chapel at 1030 and 1900 hours on Sundays. Those in the 242d ASHC may attend at the Tomahawk Chapel at 1000 hours. There are several other Masses held in the various chapels at CU CHI Base Camp. Masses are held at 1000 and 1400 hours in the Memorial Chapel at TAY NINH and are attended by Catholic personnel of the 187th AHC. The Catholics in the 361st Aviation Company (Escort) attend Mass at 0830 and 1115 hours in the 1st Division Support Command Chapel at DI AN.

Jewish personnel in the units located at CU CHI Base Camp may attend services in the 25th Division Memorial Chapel on Fridays at 1900 hours and Saturdays at 0900 hours. Special arrangements are made for all Jewish personnel to attend days of special obligation such as Passover.

The Battalion Chaplain conducts Protestant Worship for the units as follows:

242d ASHC - 0900 hours on Sundays in the Company Dayroom.
HHC, 269th CAB - 1100 hours on Sundays in the Conference Room.
187th AHC - 1930 hours on Sundays in the Company Briefing Room.

Personnel of the 116th AHC attend services at the 25th Division Memorial Chapel at 0830 hours on Sundays, or may attend with HHC. 361st Aviation Company (Escort) personnel may worship in the 1st Division Support Command Chapel at 1000 hours in DI AN.

Due to the continuous preparation of meals in the unit mess halls, we have found it more advantageous to conduct religious services in briefing rooms or dayrooms.

Special services were conducted on Good Friday and a Sunrise Service held on Easter Sunday at CU CHI.

Protestant denominational services available are:

Episcopal Morning Prayers or Holy Communion are held at 0830 hours on

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Sunday at the 25th DISCOM Chapel for personnel at CU CHI; at 1000 hours in the Memorial Chapel at TAY NINH; and 0900 hours in Memorial Chapel or at 2000 hours in 2nd Brigade Chapel at DI AN.

Lutheran Worship is conducted at 1300 hours on Sundays in the 25th DISCOM Chapel at CU CHI.

The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints holds service at CU CHI: 1300 hours - Priesthood and 1400 hours - Sacrament in the 25th Division Memorial Chapel. LDS services in TAY NINH are at 1800 hours in Memorial Chapel, and at 1330 hours in the Memorial Chapel at DI AN.

Memorial Services are held for all personnel who give their lives while in the Command. These services are usually conducted by the battalion chaplain and are held either in the company area or the nearest available chapel. It has been our experience that the maximum number of personnel who wish to attend such services are available in the evening; therefore, Memorial Services are usually scheduled between 1700 and 1930 hours.

(4) Discipline Law and Order:

(a) During the past quarter there were no cases tried by General Court Martial.

(b) There was one case tried by Special Court Martial.

(c) There were two cases tried by Summary Court Martial.

(d) There has been one case of confinement which was suspended after completion of one month of the sentence.

(5) Headquarters Management:

(a) Message Center and Courier Operations. The Battalion operates a message center which is the nerve center of all distribution from and between our companies and higher headquarters. To assist the Message Center and to provide the Battalion with the much needed ability to transport personnel of the Battalion between their units, the Battalion maintains a daily courier aircraft, utilizing a UH-1 helicopter. Its normal schedule is 0800 to 1700 hours daily. Its route of flight includes three stops daily at 12th Combat Aviation Group and at each of our subordinate units, once before and twice after noon.

(b) Administrative Support. There has been quite an improvement in the regularity of receipt of regulations and blank forms. We are still in need of specific regulations, but constant checking and re-checking of requisitions has alleviated most of the problems.

(c) This quarter the Battalion experienced reproduction

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Personnel and Administration

problems in only one company, but the Battalion Message Center was able to provide it with its' own back up and there was no loss in efficiency noted. We have on order two more electric reproduction machines. Upon arrival of these machines, the battalion should be in excellent position in this area.

(6) Miscellaneous:

(a) The Battalion experienced three motor vehicle accidents. The only other accidents have been associated with evasive action taken during mortar and rocket attacks.

(b) General Education Development. There was a pause in the normal scheduling of classes during the past quarter due to the TET Aggression. However, the program has returned to normal and is operating effectively again.

(c) Visitors. This past quarter was marked with a paucity of visitors, including many Senators, Representatives, and Entertainers.

(d) Marriage to Foreign Nationals. There were no marriages to foreign nationals this past quarter.

(e) Ceremonies. On 1 February 1968 LTC Edgar F. Todd assumed command of the Black Barons. On hand were representatives of all assigned companies as well as the Group Commander and distinguished guests including the 25th Infantry Division Commanding General.

(f) Exchange Facilities. Due to the TET Aggression, supplies at the PX's have been quite lacking. Even now, they have not as yet recovered. The exchanges have undergone quite a face lifting, but the supplies have not been at all adequate.

(g) Clubs and Messes. All units have their own messing facilities. Each of the companies have EM, NCO, and Officer Club; all of which are experiencing an excellent financial position.

(7) Information

(a) Command Information. Command Information at the battalion level is the responsibility of the Information Office. The mission at this headquarters is accomplished primarily through the use of a battalion newspaper, the "Black Baron Release", bulletins, and periodic briefing. Because there are no regularly scheduled classes, and the prospect of being able to hold classes in the future is dim, the present method is considered the most practical as well as efficient. The prime source of distribution of Command Information is through the Battalion newspaper. The program thus far has evidenced a great degree of success, and there are no plans to change any portion of it at present.

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Personnel and Administration

(b) Public Information. The public information program is divided into several distinct categories, and will be treated individually in this report.

1 Aviation Summary. The present system of having the unit IO's call in nightly between the hours of 1930 and 2130 has proven moderately successful. There has been little problem in submitting the reports to USARV IO on time, and unit IO's seem to understand what is required of them in this field.

2 News Release. There is no significant change in the news release policies, however, as a control measure, the distribution scheme is noted on every file copy by the individual making that distribution.

3 News Paper. A new heading was developed for the "Black Baron Release." There has also been an increase in the number of cartoon and Armed Forces Press Service cuts utilized in the mimeographed reproduction. The purpose was to enhance the paper and increase the interest of individual soldier. An increase in the amount of human interest and Home Town News type stories utilized in the paper has caused greater reader interest.

4 Photo Element. There has been a decrease in the amount of photographic missions undertaken by this headquarters. The reason for this is that there is a shortage of film and camera equipment. There have been no resources allocated for the purchase of camera equipment, and there has been no supply of film made available. The film and developing has been supplied by the 125th Signal Detachment at Cu Chi.

5 Hometown News Release Program. The Hometown News Release Program has shown a definite increase during the past quarter. The amount of DA 1526 forms dispatched by the Battalion Information Office has nearly doubled. The interest in the program has been kindled by a letter to the Company Commanders indicating the poor status of the program, and urging personnel to participate in the program. The steady increase indicated there is no need to revamp this program.

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D. (U) Intelligence and Security

(1) Production of Intelligence. The Battalion Intelligence Section maintains frequent daily liaison with the Intelligence Staff of the 25th Infantry Division. This close personal liaison is a must if timely accurate information is to be properly distributed to the assigned companies and Battalion Staff. It has been found that personal contact with the companies produces the best results. The companies have a desire to be kept up to date on "the situation", but have little time to spend gathering intelligence information and are not properly staffed for such operations. Therefore, this is one of the Battalion Intelligence sections primary duties and a large portion of its time is spent insuring all subordinate units are properly briefed on the latest intelligence data. There are, at times, problems in communicating with two distant companies. The lack of a secure radio net also hampers effort in this area. Therefore, it is this Battalion's policy that each Staff Section make personal liaison with each company once weekly. These weekly visits offer the Battalion Intelligence Section an excellent opportunity to thoroughly brief, discuss, and disseminate intelligence data. In addition to this, each unit is furnished ample copies of all available INTSUMS from both aviation and ground channels.

(b) Spot Reports of Visual Sightings concerning enemy activity, rendered by aviation personnel, continues to provide timely intelligence information. This capability definitely assists the 25th Infantry Division in that the time elapsed between the sighting and their receiving the report is a matter of minutes.

(c) The photo coverage of the 25th Infantry Division has improved immensely. A complete mosaic map of the intended LZ plus an area study can be acquired in a very short time. The area study is particularly important as it includes all visual sightings, agent reports, and image interpretary that can divulge such things as bunker complexes, storage areas, automatic weapons positions, etc. A multitude of information can be made available to the commanders prior to a combat assault into an area.

(d) Precise Weather data continues to be a problem. The Air Force weather station at CU CHI is the most common source of weather information; however, the weather aircraft dispatched specifically to check the weather in the AO is the most precise and accurate measure of the existing weather. This is particularly true during the Monsoon Season when thunderstorms cover large part of the DTAO daily.

(2) Enemy capabilities, vulnerabilities and likely courses of action.

(a) A report is made on each aircraft that is hit by enemy fire. These reports are kept on file and studies are made to indicate trends in the enemy's anti-aircraft capability. The most common tactic

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is engaging an aircraft on take-off or landing. An enemy soldier will normally position himself close to the outer perimeter of the friendly ground unit and fire on the aircraft as it passes over. The enemy realizes, being in this low and slow configuration, the aircraft is very vulnerable. He also realizes the Door guns, (particularly the CH-47 Chinook carry a sling load) offer little threat to him when the aircraft is directly overhead.

(b) The Intelligence Section maintains an up-to-date intelligence map in the Battalion Operations Center. It contains all known enemy locations, routes of travel, agent reports, visual sightings, and significant activity within the 24 hour period. The map is posted three times daily after liaison with the 25th Infantry Division Intelligence Staff. Battalion Staff members and unit commanders may acquire intelligence when needed from this source.

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E. (U) Operations and Training

(1) Operations.

(a) Operations plans and orders. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion fully employs the standard five paragraph OPLAN/OPORD to disseminate the plans and coordination for all Battalion-controlled operations. Standardization of annexes and of the distribution system has facilitated preparation, reproduction, and distribution of plans and orders in as short a time as 60 minutes. Specific annexes have been added in the form of sketches of the pick-up and landing zones, which were determined necessary to be inserted in the OPORD from lessons learned. The habitual use of complete written orders for multi-company operations greatly simplifies the intergration of non-organic aviation elements into an operations and insures 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 a permanent Battalion Operations Center (BOC) and a Battalion Command and Control Helicopter. The Command and Control aircraft, commonly referred to as the "C&C Ship", is a UH-1D modified by the addition of a commanders console, AN/ASC-10, providing one additional UHF and two additional FM transceivers. The system affords the commanders the luxury of much greater control through a selection of added communication channels.

(c) Planning and Integrating.

1 Fire support in all airmobile operations conducted by this Battalion is coordinated through the ground commander and his Artillery Liaison Officer in the planning phase of an airmobile operation. Most expeditious control of artillery support has been found to be maintained through direct contact between the supporting artillery FDC and the ground commander aloft in the C&C ship. Also, it has been found that to insure continuity in command, the use of an alternate C&C is imperative.

2 Pathfinder operations have continued on a basis consistent with the tactical operation. Pathfinders continue to organize pick-up zones for airmobile operations and maintain constant liaison between ground elements in the PZ and the command and control personnel. Pathfinders have been found to insure a more successful operation in the PZ when they have been inserted into ground elements position at D-1. This affords the Pathfinder personnel sufficient time to brief ground forces on the location of loads, number of loads, pick up formations, etc. This also insures that an aviation representative is present should any change arise affecting the tactical plan within the 12-24 hour period preceding the scheduled assault.

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(d) Overall command security. The physical security plans of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion and all subordinate units are integrated within the base camp defense plans of the major units garrisoned at CU CHI, DI AN, and TAY NINH. Within the company areas themselves, bunker complexes are constantly improved, as are revetments for aircraft.

(2) Battalion Operations Center (BOC). The BOC operates on a continuous 24 hour per day basis. One officer and one enlisted man is on duty at all times during this period. The BOC is provided with FM-AM-UHF-HF radio communications. The transceivers are the direct link to the Battalion's subordinate units, the Army Aviation Element (AAE), to II Field Forces Vietnam Tactical Operations Center, and the Assistant Division Aviation Officer (ADAO), at the 25th Infantry Division's Tactical Operations Center (TOC). Communication with the 25th Infantry Division and the subordinate units in the Battalion also has a sole-user telephone system as back-up. Missions are received from AAE and assigned to the units by BOC. Daily operations are constantly monitored by the BOC, insuring that all necessary action to coordinate activities, react to emergencies, and submit reports is, in fact, taken.

(3) Training Program.

(a) The training of Battalion personnel is in keeping with the operational requirements continually arising in an aviation unit. During the past three month time frame, the Battalion received 22 AAMTAP quotas for courses in the B, C, D models of the UH-1 helicopter, 5 quotas for the CH-47 aircraft, and 9 quotas for instruction in aircraft engine maintenance to include T-53, T-53-L-13, and T-55 engines. Two (2) quotas were also allocated for instruction in technical supply.

(b) Nine (9) Jungle Environmental Survival Training class allocations were charged to subordinate units of the Battalion and were attended as follows: 116th - 2, 187th - 3, 361st - 1, 242nd - 2, Bn Hqs - 1. This course is conducted in the Phillipines.

(c) The 269th has also received instruction on the new VT fused, 2.75 inch rocket from a Department of the Army, New Equipment Training Team (NETT). Each company sent representatives from its armed helicopter platoon to include aircraft commanders, pilots, platoon sergeants, crew chiefs, gunners, and armorers. This training included instruction on weapon characteristics, arming, and actual firing of the rockets.

(d) Aviation Training and Standardization.

1 Primary training to newly assigned aviators is given at subordinate unit level. In-country orientations are given by company level instructor pilot, as are the various stages of training

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required to insure an aviator's proficiency in the techniques peculiar to combat operations in Vietnam.

2 Standardization is maintained throughout the Battalion through 90 day standardization checkrides. These rides are given by battalion and company instructor pilots who insure adherence to the Battalion flight policies. Battalion standardization pilots continually monitor the standardization program with an aggressive policy of frequent flying with subordinate units.

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F. (C) Logistics

(1) Supply

(a) Class of Supply

1 The TET OFFENSIVE had a large impact on the supply of Class I to all the units at CU CHI, TAY NINH, and DAU TIENG, since the bulk of these supplies are delivered by motor convoy and the MSR's were under Viet Cong Control. The supply of B rations provided were adequate precluding the need for the units to consume C rations. The delivery of perishables almost came to a halt during the month of February and did not improve until mid March. This had the biggest impact on the units at TAY NINH and DAU TIENG. Preliminary investigation revealed that not only was the ration breakdown point at TAY NINH receiving limited amounts of perishables, but also that they also were suffering approximately thirty percent spoilage on what they did receive. The reason apparently stemmed from a shortage of refrigerated transportation, which resulted in perishables, other than meat, being carried in open trucks. This has caused our units to commit a portion of unit resources to the task of obtaining and transporting suitable produce.

2 Class II and IV supplies are handled by 1st Log Command and 25th Infantry Division. Units at CU CHI are now supported by DISCOM 25th Infantry Division and the unit at TAY NINH is supported by 1st Log Command through a Supply and Service Battalion. During this period sandbags and bunker material were critically short and became a command controlled item. This resulted in slow progress in repairing and constructing aircraft revetments and personnel shelters.

3 Class III and V support is obtained through 25th Infantry Division or 1st Log Command units at the respective base camps. During the TET OFFENSIVE both classes became critical for a brief period of time because air resupply was limited. As the convoys were able to resume normal travel, the level returned to normal. At no time did the shortage of these supplies hamper our unit's capabilities. This was accomplished through careful planning and by using resources at other locations nearer to the supply points.

4 The availability of covered storage facilities is still at a minimal level for all of our units. Due to the command emphasis being exerted to reduce the level of CONEX containers being retained, a self-help construction program has become more intense in order to provide a substitute for the CONEX. At TAY NINH, construction according to the master plan has started in the cantonment area that will further assist in releasing CONEX'S back to the system.

(b) Two more items were added under regulated distribution: NOMEX flight suit and NOMEX flight gloves. To date neither of these items have been issued to this organization. Two other items which have become critical are ballistic helmets and aircrewman body armor. Presently, we

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(4) Services.

(a) Construction at CU CHI and TAY NINH commenced in February with the major emphasis being placed on airfield facilities and aircraft revetments. Battalion Headquarters helipad was renovated, surfaced and two revetments were constructed by the Engineers. The USARV Ad Hoc Committee completed its findings and issued their guidance to the 25th Division Installation Coordinator. Even though facilities were approved and allocated for both the 116th AHC and the 242d ASHC, all existing facilities were given to Divisional units. As a result, paper work had to be submitted to get additional hangar space authorized and approved for Camp CU CHI so that the 116th would have a hangar. While awaiting the processing of the paperwork and the project directive to be issued, the Engineers devoted most of their effort to developing the Divisional Aviation units areas. Once these areas were completed, the 116th was required to move into the area that 4 Co, 25th Avn Bn, vacated so that the Engineers could start tearing down their old revetments and preparing the earthwork for the new construction. This project was opened 8 April 1968. However, work could only be done during the night since the Engineers had been assigned a high priority project which required a battalion effort during daylight hours on the MSR. During the first week of the project there were two nights that rained and a third night on which Camp CU CHI came under mortar/rocket attack. As a result, progress has been slow and at the present rate, it is doubtful that the critical portion of the project, earthwork and pouring of concrete pads, will be completed prior to the arrival of the Monsoon Season. This could result in up to a six month delay in the project. In the meantime, the 116th is forced to operate in substandard maintenance and revetment areas which are located on the opposite side of the airfield from their cantonment area.

(b) Construction has resumed at the TAY NINH base camp, and project directives have been issued for airfield facilities for the 187th AHC. This includes a hangar, tech supply building, and a control tower. The cantonment area is nearly completed lacking only one BOQ, Orderly Room, and Supply Room. All these projects are presently in progress. The 242d ASHC was authorized a 15,000 square foot hangar. This hangar is of metal construction and it was reported that there were none presently in-country. They are scheduled to arrive in-country some time in June 1968 and, upon arrival, the company is to receive one. There was no available substitute due to the space requirement to support CH-47's.

(c) Camp CU CHI has been forced to go on an austere power program because the resupply of 100 KW or 60 KW generators has virtually come to a halt. This has been accomplished by classifying each unit residing on post as to their operational requirements. If a unit with a high operational requirement loses a generator, it is immediately replaced by taking it from another unit with a lower priority. At this time our units have been given a good operational priority because of our flight following requirements. However, if the situation develops to the critical

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stage and the organizational units lose their power source, this would have a serious impact on the Battalion's mission.

(d) Laundry service for all units came to a temporary halt during the month of February. At the time, most laundry was being contracted out to the local villages and the Quartermaster Laundry employed mostly Vietnamese personnel. When the TET OFFENSIVE commenced, the local towns received heavy damage and no local personnel were allowed on the installation. This created two immediate problems. All laundry that was in the establishments off-post was not available and assumed destroyed. The Quartermaster Laundry was working with available GI labor and, due to the increased demand, service was extremely slow. Our units established individual laundry points utilizing 55 gallon drums and immersion heater; and regular laundry soap was rapidly depleted from the PX supplies so the units reverted to using GI soap. This method proved satisfactory on a temporary basis, until the normal laundry service resumed, and uniforms were available for reissue. In mid-March, laundry which had been assumed lost, began being returned by the local people. By the end of March laundry operations were again normal.

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G. (U) Signal

(1) Communication 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 is operational 24 hours daily. Aircraft radios will net with the Battalion FM Net.

b Battalion Courier net: This net is established between the Pathfinders, who control the courier, and 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 FM Net: This net is used to pass command and administrative traffic. Key personnel can enter the net, via aircraft radio, when operating away from the respective headquarters. The operating hours are controlled by 12th Group (NCS).

b II FFV-AAE Secure Operation Net: This net is established utilizing the KY-8, an encryptive machine, to allow classified traffic to be passed. This secure net has provided invaluable results, however many maintenance problems have developed with the equipment installed in this net. Very often problems were corrected without determining the cause of the trouble. The RT 524 unit provides the best service when operating the 50 MC band width in lieu of the 100 MC band width as prescribed in the FM, (Field Manual).

c 25th Infantry Division Command Net: This net is used to monitor the Division actions and to provide tactical information.

(b) AM Radio Net: UHF Battalion Command Net: The Battalion Operations Center and Battalion UHF radio can operate in this net. The net is used primarily as the Battalion Command Net during Battalion Operations. To preclude the excessive noise generated by the VRC-24, an aircraft UHF radio (providing excellent results) has been installed in the BOC. The VRC-24 is maintained for back up and any contingency plans the Battalion may become involved in.

(c) HF Radio Net: An AN/TRC-146 BF/SSB ground radio set has been issued to the Battalion and operated as required in the Battalion Operations Center. This well-designed, versatile radio set is ideal for fixed station requirement. The radio has improved the communication capability of this headquarters considerably allowing aircraft equipped with HF capability operating great distances from this headquarters to maintain contact with the Battalion. Telephone patches can be made with this set; however, to date this service has not been provided.

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(d) RATT: The Battalion has two VSC-2 single side band radios. Personnel assigned the Battalion Communication section operate the radio and enter the 12th Combat Aviation Group administrative and logistics net as directed by 12th Group (NCS). Secure teletype message can be transmitted. The doublet antenna provides the best results for this radio. In-country maintenance facilities for this VSC-2 is almost non-existent and long deadline periods can be expected if maintenance problems develop.

(e) One land line teletype circuit is installed between the communication centers at 12th Group and Battalion. The circuit operates at maximum efficiency experiencing minimum outage. The communication center is operational 24 hours daily. The Group communication center will, providing traffic flow is low, patch one battalion communication with another, thus establishing a direct circuit. This system has proven to be very helpful.

(f) Telephone Communications:

1 A SB-86 has been installed as the Black Baron Switchboard, and provides telephone service to 34 local subscribers and 8 common user trunks to other tributary or long distance switchboards. Common user trunks are:

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
Cu Chi	3
Assistant Division Aviation Office	1
116th Assault Helicopter Company	1
187th Assault Helicopter Company	1
242d Assault Support Helicopter Company	1

The sole user telephone circuits between the Battalion Operations Center and the operations center of higher headquarters and each assigned company has been terminated in a SB-22. The installation of this system eliminates five telephones in the Battalion Operations Center, thereby providing telephones for installation elsewhere. A constant visual and audible signal exists on the switchboard until the call is answered. The new systems provide greater efficiency and flexibility.

2 The Battalion Commander, S3 and S4 have local telephones off the CU CHI switchboard. To gain maximum benefit from the three lines several extensions have been installed.

3 Although not completed, CU CHI base camp is presently being equipped with a new dial telephone system. This equipment is used in conjunction with the separate switchboards now in operation. This new equipment enhances telephonic communication not only at CU CHI base camp but also in calling long distances. It is much more simple to operate, faster, and provides the user with a much better connection.

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(2) SOI's are published by the Signal Officer, 12th Combat Aviation Group. Changes are published as they occur and made available to the Group Signal Officer. However, the Infantry Division normally does not notify Group of changes. Many problems have been created by having incorrect frequencies of supported units listed in the SOI. A possible solution would be for each aviation battalion to report all frequencies changed by units operating in its area immediately to 12th Group. A time delay of two or three days will be experienced before the published changes could be issued and entered into all SOI's. One hundred and ten SOI's are issued to Battalion Headquarters with 10 remaining here and twenty-five being issued to each assigned company.

(3) The Signal Detachments attached to the companies continue to progress and improve the maintenance facilities, and are providing excellent service to the aviation companies. Many defects within the avionics supply system have been corrected, thus making more readily available required maintenance items. The personnel strength of the detachments has improved; however, a shortage of qualified repairmen still exists.

(4) CRYPTO facilities are available only at the Battalion Headquarters. CRYPTO equipment is available for issue to the companies, and will be used in a Battalion secure FM net. CRYPTO accounts have been established in each company, with each appointed company CRYPTO Custodian reporting directly to the Battalion CRYPTO Custodian, in lieu of the local CRYPTO distributing agency in this area. On line CRYPTO facilities are not planned to the subordinate companies.

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(1) Treatment-Aid Station Operations. The 431st Medical Detachment (OA) dispensary which became operational on 9 November 1966 continues to function well at CU CHI, RVN. Two new dispensaries became operational during the last quarter of 1967. The 541st Medical Detachment (OA) became operational on 14 December 1967. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Surgeon's Office and Dispensary became operational on 10 December 1967. The 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company now receives its medical support from the 431st Medical Detachment (OA).

(2) Preventive Medicine and Immunization. Immunizations have been brought very near the 100% level throughout the Battalion. This has been accomplished by establishing a "shot" line at the pay line each pay-day, and has proved to be very effective. The weekly program of malaria chemoprophylaxis of USARV has been complied with. Venereal disease remains at a moderate level. A news-letter education program on VD and other preventive medicine subjects has been initiated by one of the battalion flight surgeons. Aviator flying fatigue continues to be a significant problem. It is the opinion of the present incumbent of the Battalion Surgeon's Office that the total number of hours flown is not the significant factor in the control of fatigue. Aviator fatigue is dependent upon such factors as mission type consecutive flying hours, hours waiting, and a period of rest. The aviator fatigue problem could be alleviated somewhat by adding a goal directed rest period with the control of the number of hours flown.

(3) Flight Physical Qualification. Annual physicals continues to be waived throughout USARV. Initial Class II and III flight physicals are accomplished on individuals entering flight status for the first time. The accomplishment of these examinations is difficult because of the lack of centralized equipment in the supporting medical facilities, i.e., the audiometer examination must be accomplished at LONG BINH, RVN, the Chest X-Ray and laboratory examinations must be accomplished at CU CHI, RVN, at the 12th Evacuation Hospital and Dispensary of the 25th Medical Battalion.

(4) Medical Evacuation. Aeromedical evacuation continues to be the primary evacuation means of wounded personnel in this Battalion.

(5) Training. Airplane aid kits and individual survival kits are displayed in the operations of most companies of the Battalion. A monthly news-letter concerning preventive medicine concepts written for the men of the battalion by one of the flight surgeons is being increased in the near future with each flight surgeon of the battalion going to each medical unit and giving instruction periods in medical subjects on a bi-monthly basis. All personnel are licensed ambulance drivers.

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(6) Medical supplies and equipment. All standard, expendable medical supplies are readily available throughout either the 25th DMSO or the 32d Medical Depot at LONG BINH. The Depot is programmed to consolidate supply requests through the Battalion Surgeon's office to cut down on needless travel to LONG BINH and facilitate distribution of the supplies throughout the Battalion.

(7) Sanitation. Each unit's medical support is still required to be responsible for the disposal of human waste. Supervision of Vietnamese nationals who perform the labor is carried out by each medical detachment. All companies have been making improvements in their mess operations, latrines, urinals, drainage, and living quarters. Inspections are carried out monthly, informally, and recommendations are made for continuous improvements.

(8) Public Health. Aviation personnel going on R&R or DEROS are checked to be free of communicable disease and issued chemoprophylactic malaria tablets. General procedures of public health are outlined by the Preventive Medicine Officer of the 25th Infantry Division.

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2.(c) Section 2, Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations, and Recommendations.a. Personnel: Noneb. Operations:(1) Use of Smoke Aircraft on Night Combat Assaults.

(a) OBSERVATION: Smoke aircraft have been used successfully during night operations and serve as a method to orient lift aircraft.

(b) EVALUATION: The value of the smoke aircraft used on combat assaults during day light hours has been proven in the past. Recently the 269th developed a technique that proved to be highly effective on several night combat assaults. The procedure used by this unit follows. The smoke ship precedes the flight by 2-3 minutes and lays smoke parallel to the correct landing azimuth, approximately 75-100 meters to one side or the other of the landing zone. Used in this manner the smoke not only provides a screen from possible enemy emplacements, but also provides the flight leader with a visible path in the dark to follow into the landing zone, for the smoke can be seen for miles. This allows the flight leader to assure that he is aligned with the LZ and on the proper landing azimuth prior to departing the vicinity of the RP, thereby preventing any hazardous last minute changes in flight path on short final approach. Although this procedure is effective without flare illumination it is more effective when used with flare illumination.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That units explore the use of the smoke aircraft during night operations and further evaluation of such employment be made.

(2) Smoke Ship Employment.

(a) OBSERVATION: From Operation 68-4 in support of the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division it has been proven that two (2) smoke passes is sufficient to provide the necessary smoke coverage for one LZ.

(b) EVALUATION: While supporting the 3rd Bde, 25th Infantry Division the Battalion smoke ship made a "smoke run" on each successive lift of four lifts into the same LZ. The first and second layers of smoke were sufficient to provide concealment for the approaching troop carrying helicopters. As the initial assault troops off-load they provide the necessary security for the LZ negating any necessity for additional smoke. Further use of smoke in an LZ only increases the exposure time this aircraft must fly between the troop carriers and the suspected enemy positions with very limited beneficial results. Additional smoke also creates a considerable safety hazard in that the smoke slowly rises and it tends to form a thin cloud through which all aircraft operating in the LZ must pass. The smoke

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ship must also fly along this route again with limited vision, while operating in close proximity of the helicopter gunships as they make their protective sweeps of the area.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Unless the intended landing zone is under unusually heavy enemy ground fire, the use of a smoke dispensing helicopter should be limited to a maximum of two "passes" along or around the area.

(3) Verification of Smoke Grenade.

(a) OBSERVATION: The marker, (colored smoke grenade) placed on the LZ by the gunship, must be verified by the Command and Control aircraft.

(b) EVALUATION: On a recent combat assault in support of the 25th Infantry Division the mark thrown by the lead gunship was 700 meters off the LZ. Command and Control did not verify that the smoke was on the wrong LZ. The smoke ship completed his run along the intended LZ, and the flight leader brought his entire flight to the mark. Before it was realized that this was not the correct LZ, the troop carriers had departed the area and the ground troops had moved away from the touchdown point. Considerable confusion was caused by this mistake in getting the troops back for pick-up and rerouting the aircraft. This action could have caused a high number of casualties had the VC engaged them or had they been needed to reinforce other elements.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: The gunship going in for the marks calls to the flight leader his distance from the LZ beginning at approximately 1000 meters out of the LZ. When the mark is thrown, he also transmits "Smoke is Out". The C&C aircraft will verify that the mark is good or give directions from the smoke as soon as it is visible. Flight lead will then notify the C&C that he has the smoke in sight by color. New commanders must be instructed in this procedure to preclude the possibility of landing anywhere other than the correct LZ.

(4) Use of Flare Ships.

(a) OBSERVATION: A two fold problem exists with the use of flare ships during night operations:

1 It is often difficult for the Air Mission Commander to direct the flare ship into the right area so that his flares will light over the target.

2 With the flare ship dropping the flares from a greater altitude than the other aircraft in the area of operation, the hazard of the flare canister falling on another aircraft exists.

(b) EVALUATION: The best method to control the flare ship is to have the Assistant Air Mission Commander assume the responsibility for directing and adjusting the flare ship on the Airmobile unit's primary FM

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frequency. This allows the Air Mission Commander to apply his attention to the primary mission of his flight and the Ground Commander's requirements. By controlling the flare ship on the primary FM this alerts all the aircraft in the A/O to the location of where the flares are being dropped.

(c) RECOMMENDATION:

1 When tactically feasible control of the flare ship should be given to the Assistant Air Mission Commander, or some individual other than the Air Mission Commander.

2 That it be made Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that the flare ship give a warning call of "Flare out in 15 seconds," 15 seconds prior to discharging the flare so as to allow other aircraft to clear the drop zone if necessary.

(5) Organic Flare Ship.

(a) OBSERVATION: An organic capability for dropping flares is required in each assault helicopter company.

(b) EVALUATION: On numerous occasions this unit has been involved in operations requiring either the insertion or extraction of ground elements during periods of darkness. It has been established policy to request a flare-drop aircraft through channels from either the Air Force or another assault helicopter company. When available, organic flare ships and crew have been used to cover that period of time prior to the arrival of the requested flare ship, to provide a larger area of coverage with flares, and to act as a standby in the event of possible delays or mishaps. In one typical case, an Air Force "Spooky" was requested by the ground commander through his channels. At the same time, the air mission commander placed one of his aircraft on immediate standby with a load of 30 M-24 aircraft flares. As darkness began to fall, the Air Force ship had not arrived and the standby UH-1D was called out. Due to the foresight of the air mission commander, the organic flare ship was able to provide enough light for an insertion of Pathfinders into the PZ and LZ, the extraction of three-ten ship lifts from a PZ to a night location, the extraction of the Pathfinders, and the return of ground commander and his party to the night location by the C&C ship. The Air Force aircraft never reported on station.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: An organic flare ship be utilized only if all aviators and crews are trained in the proper operation and use of flares, because it is not feasible to set aside one aircraft and crew on a permanent basis.

(6) Suppressive Fire.

(a) OBSERVATION: Ground Commanders must not allow their troops to aid in suppression while aboard troop carrying helicopters.

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(b) EVALUATION: One accident has been attributed to this type incident in the past. An infantryman suppressing out of the cargo door distracted the aircraft commander who turned to tell him to cease fire and this moment of distraction caused him to crash land in the LZ. Infantry troops are not totally aware of the friendly troops in the area and they have no direct communication with the aircraft commander. They have no static stops on their weapons that will prevent damaging the helicopter through uncontrolled movements of their weapons.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: The crew chief and gunner are the only personnel aboard the aircraft that may use suppressive fires. When tactically feasible, the aircraft commanders should brief all infantry personnel to be airlifted of the responsibilities of the crew in the use of suppressive fires and that passengers will not aid in any manner. Because this briefing is not always possible, all ground commanders must impress upon all personnel within their command that circumstances prohibit their aid in suppressive fires and the possible results of uncontrolled firing from helicopters.

(7) Counter-Mortar Light Fire Team.

(a) OBSERVATION: A high percentage of the time the gunships are sent out during or after a mortar attack, they have not been given permission to fire on the suspected mortar positions. Instead, the gunships fly an hour of orbit time in a quadrant that is normally 180 degrees from the suspected mortar positions to stay clear of counter-mortar artillery fire.

(b) EVALUATION: Due to heavy jungle terrain, it is felt heavy artillery put into the suspected mortar position is the most effective means to counter enemy fire. In the event of a ground attack a fire team with a flare ship is considered the most effective reaction force because the enemy ground forces normally will fire at an attacking gunship which will give away their general position. In the case of a mortar position, the enemy generally will not fire while the team is trying to spot this location in the dark. It is felt a better use of this team would be as a counter-ground attack light fire team.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Counter-mortar gunships be utilized primarily in defense against enemy ground attack with artillery as the prime counter-mortar means and the counter-mortar role for the light fire teams be discouraged.

(8) Low Level Navigation for Troop Carrying Helicopters.

(a) OBSERVATION: One half of the missions flown for Operation RAPID FIRE were low level insertions at first light. The Command and Control aircraft from altitude, was required to direct the troop carriers into the LZ's. Several other methods were tried in early stages of the operation without success.

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(b) EVALUATION: The successful method of directing a low level approach was to continually tell the lead aircraft his distance from the LZ as he approached from the RP. Also, corrections in headings from the RP to the LZ must be given in degrees. Example: "Turn left 10 degrees". It is also beneficial to inform lead when he is lined up on the correct landing heading into the LZ.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Use C&C aircraft to direct flight into LZs during low level insertions.

(9) Selection of Landing Zones in Heavily Forested Areas.

(a) OBSERVATION: Large landing zones have been heavily fortified by the Viet Cong.

(b) EVALUATION: In War Zone C, as in most heavily wooded areas, large open fields acceptable for use as a ten ship Landing Zone are limited in number. This scarcity makes tentative ten ship Landing Zones a matter of tactical importance to the Viet Cong. During recent operations in War Zone C, most of those areas appeared to have numerous enemy fortifications, i.e., bunkers and trench lines in close proximity to the landing zone. In most cases smaller open areas which were unsuitable as ten ship landing zones were located near the larger, more suitable areas. On several of the operations the flight was broken into flights of 3-5 ships and inserted in the smaller open areas to preclude landing in fortified areas.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Selection of Landing Zones in War Zone C and similar areas should be thoroughly discussed with the Airmobile Task Force (AMTF) Commander and the smaller, more secure areas used when practical.

(10) Security of Staging Areas.

(a) OBSERVATION: With the ever increasing intensity and accuracy of enemy mortar and rocket fire, time on the ground in Pick-up Zones should be held to a minimum.

(b) EVALUATION: In the area of operation (AO) that the 269th habitually operates, many of the staging areas utilized are adjacent to runways constructed at permanent, fixed installations, i.e., CU CHI, TAY NINH, DAU TIENG, and DUC HOA. To preclude the possibility of an attack during a combat operation, the 269th plans all arrival times to precede expected take-off time by 2-5 minutes. Even hastily selected Pick-up Zones in the field can be brought under fire almost immediately and are not immune to rocket and mortar fire. Normally, these Pick-up Zones are set up for the movement of large elements of troops and require several flights into and out of the area which increases the possibility of an attack. Also, at their own home base of operations, helicopters no longer line up in chalk number while on the ground. All aircraft depart from their individual revetments and link-up in the air.

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(c) RECOMMENDATION: Ground commanders should continually be reminded of the importance of expeditious positioning of troops for pick-up. Planning on all operations must consider the possibility of mortar/rocket attack and limit the time span on the ground.

(11) Carrying of Lights by Infantry Units on All Combat Assaults.

(a) OBSERVATION: Infantry units require lighting devices on all combat assaults.

(b) EVALUATION: It has been noted by this unit during recent months that some infantry units habitually carry some sort of lighting device on all combat assault operations, i.e., flashlight, SE-11 light gun, etc., while other infantry units habitually carry no lighting equipment at all unless it has been planned for them to remain away from their base camp over night. Experience has shown that, regardless of tactical places, infantry units frequently become engaged with the enemy and consequently remain at a maneuver location overnight. The units that habitually carry no lighting devices definitely find themselves at a loss at night for guiding in helicopters with much needed ammunition, for medical evacuations, etc. In some cases, pilots have had to resort to having the ground unit start a fire with dry straw, etc, to mark their location. In other instances when dry materials and matches or cigarette lighters were not available the helicopter crew has had to actually hover around a hot landing zone and search for the ground unit. While this type of improvising speaks well for the ingenuity and courage of the personnel involved, there is definitely a better way of getting the job done. It is obvious that those units that habitually carry lighting devices do not encounter problems of this nature. Experience gained by this organization that the added weight, approximately one (1) lb for a flashlight and/or 3 lbs for a SE-11 light gun, is well worth carrying on all combat operations.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Ground units have in their possession on the ground some sort of lighting device to guide helicopters during night resupply, medical evacuation operations, etc. Recommend consideration be given to the possibility of issuing the SE-11 light gun to all infantry units down to individual platoons.

(12) Use of Luminous Helmet Liners in a Pick-Up Zone.

(a) OBSERVATION: Luminous helmet liners mark helicopter loads.

(b) EVALUATION: On numerous occasions, this unit has had an opportunity to work with new Infantry units on their in-country introduction to airmobile operations. One unit in particular came up with the idea of having one man per chalk equipped with a luminous type, orange colored helmet liner which he at most times wore under his steel pot. Whenever the particular unit was prepared for pick up, the individual would remove his steel pot and stand in a spot close to where he wanted the aircraft for his chalk to land. By employing this method of identification each pilot found it much

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easier to pick out and land to his assigned chalk. With employment of brightly colored helmet liners, the pick up of ground elements is made easier and the process is expedited. The most ideal use of this technique is in secured staging areas, etc. These helmet liners would be unacceptable when working in and out of an unsecured area. Obviously they would make an excellent target for sniper fire.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Infantry units which regularly participate in airmobile operations consider the use of brightly colored helmet liners as one method for marking helicopter loads.

(13) Internal Loading of Water Trailers.

(a) OBSERVATION: Internal loading of water trailers is a definite safety of flight item.

(b) EVALUATION: A safety of flight condition exists if water trailers are loaded internally because of the 3 point suspension of the water trailer. If the front tie down failed while the aircraft was in flight the tongue of the trailer can move upwards and interfere with the transmission drive train. Also, when unloading the trailer, as the rear wheels are on the sloped ramp the trailer tongue may move upward and puncture a hole in the aft transmission. These have been rare instances of internal loading of water trailers; however, these instances create a safety of flight condition.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That Unit Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) be published that prohibits the internal loading of water trailers, and that ground commanders be informed of the prohibition. If rigging material is not available, the supported unit must coordinate with other units to obtain the material, and rig the load.

(14) UHF Control for Air Mission Commander (CH-47 Operations).

(a) OBSERVATION: A common UHF frequency is necessary when assets of more than one CH-47 company are used on one mission.

(b) EVALUATION: The subject of the use of UHF frequencies was discussed during the recent Chinook symposium and the following was proposed. If more than one CH-47 company is involved all companies will operate on their own UHF frequencies, the Air Mission Commander must then come up the companies UHF frequency to contact them. It is more desirable to maintain one common UHF frequency for control by the AMC. If an individual company flight leader needs to contact his aircraft he can utilize the one common UHF to tell his aircraft to tune their own company UHF. When doing this he must also notify the AMC of the frequency change and the period of time he will remain off the AMC UHF frequency.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That all elements under the control of one Air Mission Commander utilize one UHF control frequency.

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(15) Simultaneous Combat Assault and Resupply.

(a) OBSERVATION: Combat Assaults and resupply have been conducted in the same LZ on separate radio frequencies.

(b) EVALUATION: Numerous times the 2nd and 3rd lift combat assaults are being conducted at the same time resupply is initiated by CH-47's. Resupply utilizes the logistical net while combat assault aircraft are utilizing the command net. A hazardous situation exists while the two are on separate frequencies. The rotorwash from the CH-47 can also create a dangerous landing condition for the troop carrying aircraft, therefore the two type aircraft should not be landing simultaneously.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: The troop carrying aircraft must complete their lift prior to CH-47 resupply. If the resupply and troops are delivered simultaneously, both need to be on the same frequency. The C&C aircraft must take control of the situation and establish priorities for landing or affect control over both resupply and troop delivery if the two are to work together.

c. Training.

(1) The Use of General Support Missions to Aid in Aviation Training.

(a) OBSERVATION: General support missions can be extremely beneficial as a training device for newly graduated aviators.

(b) EVALUATION: General support missions provide a variety of benefits to the newly graduated aviator that can never be gained from daily flights of combat assaults. General support missions are normally assigned on a single ship basis thereby making each aircraft commander responsible for his actions and decisions. The aircraft commander must do his own flight planning, taking into consideration latest intelligence, weather, most advisable routes, radio frequencies, take off times, and crew briefings. Also, if special equipment is required, he is responsible for its procurement and loading. Once the mission is in progress, radio procedures of calling the supported units, enroute flight following, artillery clearance, and notifying his own operations of his progress must be effected. The aircraft commander must be dependent on himself to navigate cross-country without benefit of following the aircraft in front of him. The aircraft commander is also responsible for making his own decisions with respect to fuel load necessary and the allowable cargo and/or troop load he can safely carry.

The above mentioned requirements are used to train the new aviator by requiring him to act in the capacity of aircraft commander under supervision of the pilot. In effect, he will carry out the duties of aircraft commander under the scrutiny and supervision of the aircraft commander. In opposition to the above training policy, daily combat assaults add little in beneficial training. Requirements for planning each mission will be placed on the same individuals daily, i.e., Operations Officer, and Platoon Leaders. This will often place the junior officers in a position of doing nothing but following

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the aircraft in front of him. Frequent exposure to general support missions can give not only commissioned officers but also Warrant Officers as well the opportunity and responsibility of making his own decisions and being accountable for them.

(c) **RECOMMENDATION:** General support missions be assigned to assault helicopter companies on a recurring basis, preferably one time each two week.

d. Intelligence: None

e. Logistics:

(1) Distribution of Electrical Power.

(a) **OBSERVATION:** Poor distribution of electrical power has created potential fire hazards and unnecessarily over worked power plants which are in critical shortage.

(b) **EVALUATION:** Construction at Camp Cu Chi has been in progress for a couple of years. Part of it has been accomplished by the Engineers and a majority by the units themselves. As a result, there is a mixture of WABTOC type construction and standard temporary construction; internal wiring of buildings falls under the responsibility of the Engineer Battalion doing the construction. This wiring then must be accepted by P&E. The wiring in the generator shed falls under the responsibility of P&E. However, the running of distribution lines from the generator shed through the cantonment area is an area of responsibility not covered by either agency. The project directives are issued piecemeal to the Engineers and normally are built with priorities established by Installation Coordinator. For an example, a mess hall and orderly room are built for all units on high priorities. Then as resources are available, troop billets are constructed. At no time did either of the two project directives include the installation of an electrical distribution system. Therefore, the material was neither funded nor made available. In the meantime, the unit has power available but was unable to utilize it. As a result, the unit utilizes whatever material is available to carry the power from the generator to the buildings. The results are directly proportional to the material obtained and quality of the personnel installing it. This situation is exemplified in our Battalion Headquarters area. The power source is a 100 KW generator housed in a generator shed which is properly wired. However, the cantonment area consists of both WABTOC and standard temporary construction. The electrical distribution system consists of three or four different types of wire, as high as thirteen wires on one pole leading into the generator shed, and a majority of the wires are not properly mounted on insulators at the poles because proper equipment and materials were not available. The generator log reveals that the daily power requirement varies from 55 KW to 97 KW; however, upon checking the usage of the power, only two phases are being utilized. In order to rectify this problem, the area needs to be rewired with the proper size wire and the phases tapped so as to utilize all phases and keep the load balanced; however,

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the unit lacks the material and trained personnel to accomplish this task. Due to the improper wiring a definite fire hazard exists and the generator is being needlessly overloaded. This could result in the loss of the generator and thereby create an obstacle to performing our mission efficiently. Paperwork has been submitted to both P&E and the Engineer Battalion, but they both still disclaim any responsibility for correcting the problems.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: This area of responsibility needs to be included under either the P&E or the Engineer Battalion responsibilities. Installation should be accomplished as soon as the power source is available. If improper materials and unskilled personnel are utilized, the results create an unnecessary hazard and poor utilization of power which is critically short at this time. If it is done properly the first time, manpower and materials would not be wasted.

(2) New Port/Saigon Operations.

(a) OBSERVATION: Improper port operations causes unnecessary damage and slows down the flow of cargo and traffic in the port area.

(b) EVALUATION: The general cargo of the 361st Aviation Company arrived at New Port on 14 April 1968 aboard the USMS Pendelton. The general cargo consisted of 34 conex containers and 30 vehicles and prime movers with various trailers. All vehicles and trailers were pre-loaded by the unit before shipment. During the off-loading of vehicles, all nine 2½ ton cargo, tanker, and van trucks were damaged on the sides because a spreader bar and eye hooks were not used; rather, chain was wrapped around the front axles, causing the sides to be crushed as the vehicles were hoisted over the sides. Undue delay was encountered (a minimum of two hours) before the unit could depart from the docks because the working copies (pink) of the transportation documents, utilized during the off-loading, were lost and mixed up with other documents.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Proper off-loading procedures for vehicles and equipment should be used at all times by assigned cargo handlers to minimize unnecessary damage. To expedite the flow of traffic and cargo through the port area, cargo checkers should be thoroughly trained in the use of and disposition of all documentation required to properly account for cargo.

(3) Appointment of a Sponsoring Unit for An Inbound Unit.

(a) OBSERVATION: New units arriving in-country should have its sponsoring unit located in the same divisional area of operations (AO).

(b) EVALUATION: This headquarters, stationed at Camp Cu Chi, in the 25th Infantry Division AO, was appointed sponsoring unit for the 361st Aviation Company (Escort), arriving in-country 8 April 1968. The 361st was moved to Camp Di An, which is 36 KM distance from Cu Chi and located in the 1st Infantry Division AO. This situation required the new unit to draw its supplies and support from the 1st Division supply channels while the Battalion Headquarters works through the 25th Infantry Division supply channels.

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Because of these separate channels, logistical support and supply accounts had to be established at Di An and Long Binh, outside the 25th Division, creating some difficulties in accounting procedures.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: All new aviation units arriving in-country should be assigned to a location within the same operational area as the sponsoring unit for ease of establishment.

(4) "Y" Cord Mike Switches.

(a) OBSERVATION: Many malfunctions of the mike switch which is a part of the U-944 Connector (FSN 5935-553-9352) have been noted. There is a shortage of the connector in the supply system.

(b) EVALUATION: A search for switches which might take the place of the regular switch was started. It has been found that 2 out of 3 of the push-button switches on the UH-1 cyclic grip could be used to replace the switch in the U-944 Connector. These switches have FSN 5930-621-2206.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Grip assemblies should not be discarded until all serviceable switches have been removed.

f. Organization: None

g. Other:

(1) 140 Aviator Flying Hour Policy.

(a) OBSERVATION: The 140 hour aviator flying policy as presently established does not produce its desired result - reduction of aviation accidents by reducing aviator fatigue.

(b) EVALUATION: In a study conducted by the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, it has been determined that the regulation of aviator flying hours does not significantly affect aviator fatigue. Aviator fatigue is not a simple matter revolving about the number of hours the aviator is in the aircraft flying. There are many other factors that must be taken into consideration. Information concerning these factors was obtained from a questionnaire completed by 73.2% of all aviators with the Battalion. These factors arranged in their subjective numerical rank are as follows.

- 1 Number of flying hours and length of flying day.
- 2 Number of consecutive days flown.
- 3 Hazardous conditions, weather, dust, haze, etc.
- 4 Type mission, CL, DCS, VIP, etc.
- 5 Individual physical and mental stamina.

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6 Arrival date in Vietnam and days flown since arrival.

7 Additional duties.

These factors indicate that there is much more information to be weighed than presently taken into consideration. The factors, (1) Number of flying hours, (2) Length of flying day, (3) Number of consecutive days flown as a new aviator are malleable; and can be directly affected by the change from numerical quantitation of flying hours in a 30 day period to a goal-directed rest program. Unprogrammed physical disability and its effect on aviation can be materially affected if a more rapid program can be developed to fill unprogrammed losses. Individual physical and mental stamina factors of fatigue will be altered if the aviator has a day, regularly scheduled, in which he can catch up with sleep lost as a result of additional duties or harrassment of noise during sleeping hours.

(c) **RECOMMENDATION:** Command emphasis should be placed on this program to adopt a means of goal-directed rest periods, rather than the restrictions of the aviator flying hours per thirty (30) day period. A program can be adopted setting up a 6/1 work/rest program in the assault helicopter companies and a 4/1 work/rest program in the assault support helicopter companies. The 140 hour program could be continued and used as a monitoring guide for number of hours flown but it must be expected that certain individuals, i.e., aircraft commanders, platoon leaders, etc., will exceed 140 hours.

(2) Treatment of Intertrigo in the Tropical Environment.

(a) **OBSERVATION:** In the hot, humid tropical atmosphere, fungal infections of the skin are a major cause of non-effectiveness.

(b) **EVALUATION:** These fungal infections can be a difficult therapeutic problem especially when these infections are localized in the intertriginous areas and the groin. Often these infections will not succumb to the application of antifungal ointments only. The effects of the antifungal ointment can be greatly enhanced by the use of soap, surgical (FSN 6505-141-1900) which contains hexachlorophene. Also, if the patient will discontinue wearing shorts during the period of treatment, this allows more ventilation and drying to occur.

(c) **RECOMMENDATION:** The treatment of intertrigo in the tropical environment can be enhanced by discontinuing the use of undershorts and by using surgical soap when showering. Recommend personnel working in the field on a daily basis discontinue the wearing of undershorts.

(3) Maintenance of Aircraft - Cleaning and Washing.

(a) **OBSERVATION:** While operating out of FOB TAY NINH EAST, this unit was without facilities to wash aircraft or to clean and flush turbine engines. There were no water mains near the maintenance area and

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our aircraft were dispersed all around post (some as far as one and one half miles away).

(b) EVALUATION: It was decided the best solution to the problem would be a mobile trailer which could be towed to each aircraft revetment. The following equipment was used to construct the trailer:

1. One each trailer - Type ETV-5/E.
2. Two each 250 gallon rubber bladders.
3. One each 100 GPM pump.
4. Two each 50 foot hoses connected together.
5. One 12 foot section of PSP mounted in bottom of trailer to support the pump and rubber bladders.
6. One riot control disperser nozzle.
7. A restrictor was made to fit the end of the riot control gun to gain the desired spray pattern.

NOTE: The two bladders are each connected to the pump. This has proven to be a very satisfactory piece of equipment. It was easy to construct and all equipment for construction was available within the unit.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: None, this is mentioned only as a suggestion in the event other units encounter the same situation.

(4) Security of Frequency Changes.

(a) OBSERVATION: Utilizing radio and telephonic communications, the situation often arises when it is necessary to relay coordinating instructions requiring radio contact with a supported unit. In some instances, the unit receiving the instructions will not know the new frequencies and they are not contained in the SOI. The common method presently utilized is to relay the new frequency by addition or subtraction from a base frequency. This is normally the frequency being used at that time or a different frequency is referred to, i.e., up or down from Black Baron Command FM.

(b) EVALUATION: Any station monitoring the transmission, including the enemy, can also follow these instructions. This method offers absolutely no security thus the frequency may as well be given in the clear. A more feasible and secure means would require the publication of a base frequency in the SOI. (Example, FM 50.00, UHF 220.0) Thus by instructing the receiving station to add or subtract from "BASE", only units with access to the SOI could comply.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: A base frequency be published throughout the Republic of Vietnam for use in determining new or unknown frequencies.

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(5) Use of Alcohol for Cleaning Any Type of Toggle Switch.

(a) OBSERVATION: A high percentage of aircraft radio maintenance difficulties can be directly attributed to the continued operation in extremely dusty areas. This is particularly true of so-called bad contacts in the toggle switches that cause broken or garbled reception. Dust enters the toggle switches and covers the contacts thus giving the impression of a short in the switch.

(b) EVALUATION: The method most effective for cleaning these switches is the use of a hypodermic syringe and needle to inject about 200 of alcohol into the switch. To inject the alcohol the repairman must fit the needle between the base of the toggle and the outer case of the switch. The repairman must flick the switch on and off several times so as to let the alcohol flow throughout the switch. To test the switch, the piece of equipment may be plugged into the test set right after injecting the alcohol into the switch. If the switch then operates but will not turn off completely, the switch is good for the alcohol is completing the circuit. If the switch does not operate, then repeat the process. Usually the repairman will be able to tell when the switch is clean for it will make a positive clicking sound.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: For a field expedient, the above means is an acceptable solution for cleaning toggle switches.

(6) Fires in External CH-47 Loads.

(a) OBSERVATION: During the time frame of this reporting period there have been instances of external loads bursting into flame after lift off, necessitating jettisoning of the load.

(b) EVALUATION: A complete assessment of the incidents indicate that the loads were smoldering prior to pick up. The use of smoke grenades in marking the PZ's had started grass fires in the loading areas and burning embers had, in some cases, ignited the canvas wrapping material and/or sling material. These small areas of smoldering material were fanned by the rotor wash from the CH-47 resulting in combustion setting the load on fire. This created a very hazardous situation to the aircraft, flight crew and ground personnel, therefore the load had to be jettisoned immediately.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: In all instances where smoke grenades are to be utilized in the marking of CH-47 supply points, a container partially buried in the ground should be provided where ignited smoke grenades can be placed. This in no way impairs the effectiveness of the smoke as a visual reference. In any situation where a fire near the pick up site or where there exists any indications there has previously been a fire, the aircraft commander must request ground control to re-check all loads for indications of fire.

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(7) Use of CH-47 Aircraft on Combat Assaults.

(a) OBSERVATION: The CH-47 can be successfully employed with UH-1 troop carriers on combat assaults or during the extraction phase of an operation.

(b) EVALUATION: During recent combat assaults conducted by this Battalion, (Including Operation YELLOWSTONE) CH-47's were used in conjunction with the UH-1's to successfully complete troop insertions. The CH-47's are not engaged in the initial movement of troops, but are employed after the initial assault by the UH-1's has been completed providing security for the landing zone. Conversely, the CH-47's would not make any final extractions, but accomplish only initial troop lifts, while adequate security remains in the pick-up zone. This method of employment enhances the speed in completing the build-up phase to provide the ground forces with necessary reinforcements to initiate offensive movements and also allows the ground commander to extract his force in minimum time. Another distinct advantage in employing CH-47's on combat assaults is the reduction of critical flying time on the UH-1 troop carriers. When used in this manner two CH-47's can replace a company of ten (10) UH-1's. One factor that requires close examination is the tactical situation in the landing zone. If the landing zone is under enemy ground fire or if the ground troops make contact on the initial insertions, the Air Mission Commander must discontinue employing CH-47's and continue the build-up with his available UH-1 assets.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: The utilization of CH-47's be expanded in the build-up phase of combat assaults in future operations and during extractions that require haste due to the tactical situation.

Edgar F. Todd

EDGAR F. TODD
LTC, Artillery
Commanding

- 5 Incl
1. The 269th Cbt Avn Bn
 2. Unit Strength
 3. Summary of Gains and Losses for Next 90 Day Period
 4. Aircraft Status
 5. Operational Statistics

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By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

AVGC-SC (13 May 68) 1st Ind (U)

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion for Period Ending 30 April 1968 RCS CSFOR - 65 (RI)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 12TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP, APO 96266 22 MAY 1968

TO: Commanding General, II FFORCEV, APO 96266

1. In compliance with AR 525-15 and USARV Regulation 525-15, one copy of subject report is forwarded.

2. This headquarters has reviewed subject report and the following comments are made:

a. Ref: Page 20, item F (c) Logistics 1b. Protective equipment for aircrewmembers remains in short supply. Quantities of ballistic helmets and flight gloves are programmed for issue in Vietnam. Requirements have been submitted to USARV but at this time no issues have been received. Some quantities of the NOMEX flight uniforms were received and distributed during the month of May 1968. The quantities which were received are for use by aircrewmembers in helicopters. Uniforms for fixedwing aviators will be issued after the helicopter crewmembers have received two uniforms.

b. Ref: Page 21, item 2(a). Maintenance has been completed at the 20th TC and the aircraft has been picked up by the 188th.

c. Ref: Page 32, item (5). Presently, the M19 flare dispenser and M182 flare are being tested and evaluated by the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion. If this item proves as simple to operate as advertised, a minimum of crew training will be necessary. The installation time has not been evaluated, but it appears to be easily installed and removed. This should somewhat alleviate this problem.

d. Ref: Page 33, para 7(a). When an installation comes under rocket/mortar attack, every available counter measure must be utilized to seek out and destroy this threat. Gunships are only as effective as the person that controls their use. If the gunship is not permitted to fire upon a suspected target within a reasonable time its usefulness is negated. When artillery has picked up targets, the gunships should be permitted to return to their bases so as to be employed as a counter measure for possible ground attack. Gunships should not be required or permitted to orbit or remain in the air when maximum effectiveness cannot be gained.

e. Ref: Page 38, sec 2,e, (1) Distribution of Electrical Power. The electrical distribution system for cantonment areas should be planned for and requested as a part of the overall MCA construction request. In this manner the constructing engineer unit will be authorized necessary funds to install an adequate, safe electrical distribution system during initial construction. It must be recognized that

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

AVGC-SC (13 May 68) 1st Ind 22 May 68
SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 269th Combat Aviation
Battalion for Period Ending 30 April 1968 RCS CSFOR - 65 (RI)

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construction of billets has lower priority than construction of operational support facilities. In many cases billet construction lags many months behind construction of other facilities. To preclude installation of inadequate "self help" electrical distribution systems. It is recommended that installation of an adequate system be authorized during the initial construction period. This system should be planned to serve both the temporary "WABTOC" cantonment area and the final field standard cantonment area to be completed at a later date.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

James E. Lybrand
JAMES E. LYBRAND
Major, Infantry
Asst Adjutant

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

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AVFBC-RE-H (1 May 68) 2nd Ind (U)

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned for Period Ending
30 April 1968 (UIC WDU7TO) (U)

DA, HQ II FFORCEV, APO San Francisco 96266 12 JUN 1968

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

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

Commander, US Army Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-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 269th Combat Aviation Battalion and concurs with the report,
subject to the comments in the 1st Indorsement.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

O. B. Fory
O. B. FORY
1LT, AGC
Asst AG

AVBA-C (1 May 68) 3d Ind (U)

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion for
Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U)

Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade, APO 96384 JUN 25 1968

THRU: Commanding General, US Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVAGC-DST, APO 96375
Commander in Chief, US Army Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-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 this report, considers it to be adequate, and concurs with the contents as indorsed.

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

a. Paragraph 1f(1)(b), page 20. All units have requested the NOMEX flight suits and gloves. First priority has been given to 12th Combat Aviation Group for flight suits less some sizes. Gloves are in-country and release is imminent. Body armor continues in short supply.

b. Paragraph 1g(1)(d), page 26. The 610th Maintenance Battalion supports the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion on repairs for the radio set AN/VSC-2 at Cu Chi. Tech reps are available for any unit upon request for problems encountered with the VSC-2. This headquarters and the 1st Logistic Cnd monitor the deadline rate of the AN/VSC-2 very closely.

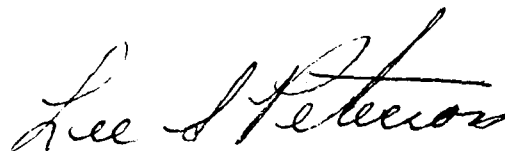
c. Paragraph 2b(3), page 31. This is a standard procedure used by most units and explained in detail in 1st Aviation Brigade Operations Manual.

d. Paragraph 2b(8), page 33. This is a standard procedure used by most units.

e. Paragraph 2g(1), page 40. The proposal of the Flight Surgeon has merit however, manpower resources are not sufficient to put such a plan into operation.

f. Paragraph 2g(4)(c), page 42. Even the establishment of a "base frequency" is not a secure method. The only proven secure method is through the SOI.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



LEE S. PETERSON
1LT, AGC
ASST ADJ GEN

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

55

AVHGC-DST (1 May 68) 4th Ind (U) CPT Arnold/dls/LBN 4485
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 269th Combat Aviation Battalion for
Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U)

HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 11 JUL 1968

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

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion.

2. Comments follow:

a. Reference item concerning carrying of lights by infantry units on combat assaults, page 35, paragraph 2b(11). Signal lamp equipment SE-11, TM 11-5850-201-12, FSN 5850-407-6671, is a communications device used to transmit international morse code by white or red light flashes. It is powered by BA-30 batteries and is operated from either a gunstock or tripod. The SE-11 has certain advantages over a flashlight. It has a narrow angle of intercept and provides the ground unit with a capability to transmit coded identifying signals. These codes could be a locally produced SOT item.

b. Reference item concerning distribution of electrical power, page 38, paragraph 2e(1); and 1st Indorsement, paragraph 2e: Concur. To preclude construction of inadequate and unsafe electrical distribution systems through the self-help effort, an adequate distribution system will be designed and authorized for construction which will adequately serve subsequent improvement of cantonment areas to whatever standard is planned. It should be noted, however, that the construction of an MCA-funded electrical distribution system solely for WABTOC structures is neither authorized nor feasible. With respect to the reported problem at Camp Cu Chi, USAECVAV will survey the electrical distribution system and initiate appropriate corrective action.

c. Reference item concerning Newport/Saigon operations, page 39, paragraph 2e(2): Concur. Action has been taken by this headquarters to ascertain that vehicle spreader slings are available and being used at Newport and whether proper documentation procedures are being practiced.

d. Reference item concerning appointment of a sponsoring unit for an inbound unit, page 39, paragraph 2e(3). This headquarters appoints major subordinate commands as a sponsoring unit. Major subordinate

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

AVHGC-DST (1 May 68) 4th Ind (U)

11 JUL 1968

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of 269th Combat Aviation Battalion for
Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U)

commands may delegate this requirement if desired. The USARV appointed sponsor for this unit was the 1st Aviation Brigade who in turn delegated the requirement to a brigade unit. The recommendation that deploying units be assigned to a location within same operational area as the sponsoring unit has considerable merit. In this case, however, the deployment destination was changed late in the deployment cycle and it is felt that considerable confusion would have arisen had the 1st Aviation Brigade appointed a new sponsoring unit.

e. Reference item concerning treatment of intertrigo in the tropical environment, page 41, paragraph 2g(2): Concur. The use of surgical soap when showering does help to reduce the microbial flora of the skin; however, any germicidal soap of a brand name company is satisfactory. USARV Regulation 40-29, paragraph 5f, states that troops should be discouraged, but not prohibited, from wearing underclothes while on operations in the field.

f. Reference item concerning security of frequency change, page 42, paragraph 2g(4); and 3d Indorsement, paragraph 2f. Nonconcur in publishing base frequency for use in coordinating frequencies. Recommend all frequencies be listed in SOI with randomly assigned designators or use of numerical code KAC-Q ().

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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

Cy furn:
HQ 1st Avn Bde
HQ 269th Cbt Avn Bn

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

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GPOP-DT (1 May 68) 5th Ind (U)
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 269th Cbt Avn Bn for
Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 26 JUL 1968

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

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding
indorsements and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

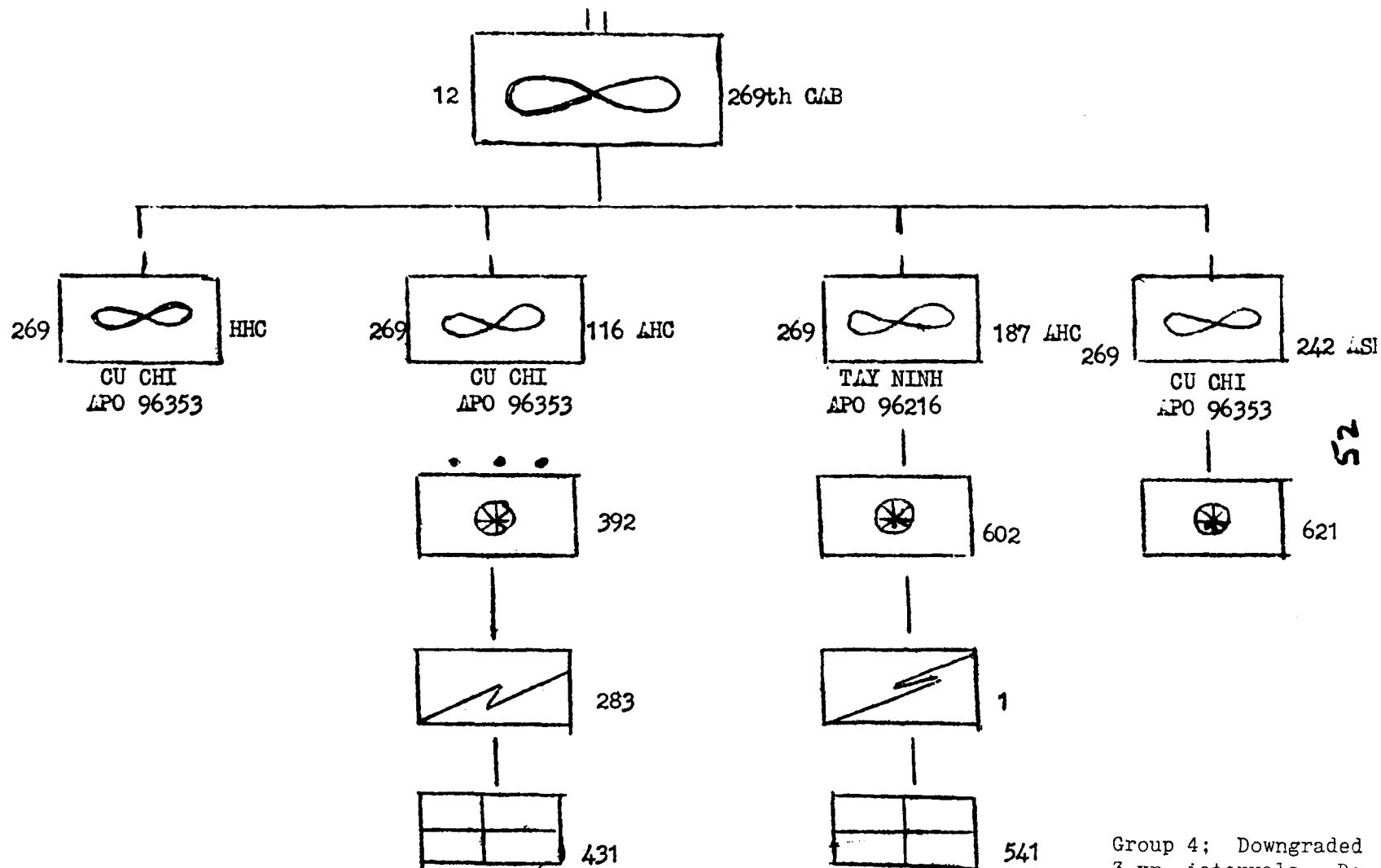


C.L. SHORTT
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ORGANIZATION CHART



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INCLOSURE 1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

(3a) UNIT STRENGTHS as of 30 April 1968

MILITARY

<u>SUBORDINATE UNIT</u>	<u>OFFICER</u>		<u>WO</u>		<u>EM</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>O/H</u>	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>O/H</u>	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>O/H</u>	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>O/H</u>
116th Aslt Hel Co	15	17	52	38	152	161	219	216
392d Maint Det	1	1	1	1	70	68	72	70
283rd Sig Det	1	0	0	1	9	10	10	11
431st Med Det	1	1	0	0	8	9	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
TOTAL							310	307
187th Aslt Hel Co	15	16	52	37	152	159	219	212
602d Maint Det	1	1	1	1	70	67	72	69
1st Sig Det	0	0	1	1	8	5	9	6
541st Med Det	1	1	0	0	8	6	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>
TOTAL							309	294
242d Aslt Spt Hel Co	13	8	25	14	143	146	181	168
621st Maint Det	1	1	1	1	80	76	<u>82</u>	<u>78</u>
TOTAL							263	246
HHC 269 Cbt Avn Bn	21	25	2	2	86	152	109	179
269th CAB	70	71	135	96	786	859	991	1026

CIVILIAN

<u>SUBORDINATE UNIT</u>	<u>DAC</u>		<u>VN</u>		<u>3RD NATL</u>	
	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>O/H</u>	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>O/H</u>	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>O/H</u>
116th Aslt Hel Co	0	0			0	0
187th Aslt Hel Co	0	0			0	0
242d Aslt Spt Hel Co	0	0			0	0
HHC, 269 Cbt Avn Bn	0	0			0	0
269th CAB	0	0			0	0

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

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NN0873541

By AB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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SUMMARY OF GAINS AND LOSSES FOR THE NEXT 90 DAY PERIOD

<u>LOSSES</u>	<u>30 DAY</u>	<u>60 DAY</u>	<u>90 DAY</u>
Officers	5	6	6
Warrant Officers	4	6	5
Enlisted	83	86	55

<u>GAINS</u>	<u>30 DAY</u>	<u>60 DAY</u>	<u>90 DAY</u>
Officers	1	2	2
Warrant Officers	3	4	6
Enlisted	76	85	52

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

INCLOSURE 3

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

AIRCRAFT STATUS
Headquarters 269th Combat Aviation Battalion
30 April 1968

SUBORDINATE UNIT	AH-1B		UH-1C		UH-1D		U-6		CH-47		OH-23	
	AUTH	O/H	AUTH	O/H	AUTH	O/H	AUTH	O/H	AUTH	O/H	AUTH	O/H
116th Aslt Hel Co	8	4	0	3	23	17						
187th Aslt Hel Co	8	0	0	7	23	23						
242d Aslt Spt Hel Co									16	16	2	0
HHC 269th Cbt Avn Bn					0	1	0	1				
269th Cbt Avn Bn												

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INCLOSURE 4

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

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OPERATIONAL STATISTICS
269th Combat Aviation Battalion
Quarter Ending 30 April 1968

SUBORDINATE UNIT	SORTIES FLOWN	TROOPS LIFTED	CARGO LIFTED (TONS)	ENEMY KIA	STRUCTURE		SAMPLANS		AIRCRAFT		HRS
					D/M	DES	D/M	DES	CONFIRM	LOSS	
116th AHC	25481	46281	749	125		109		2	3	49	8128
187th AHC	25163	40136	815	34		33		38	4	30	7935
188th AHC (Through 10 May 68)	9754	14418	169	47		34		2	1	21	3785
242d ASHC	11067	15320	21889	0		0		0	0	14	3488
HHC											
269th CAE	71465	116105	23622	206		166		42	8	120	23336

INCLOSURE 5

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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

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BY 1252 JF NARA, DATE 10/27/88

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

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HQ, OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310		Confidential
		2b. GROUP
		4
3. REPORT TITLE		
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4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)		
Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations, 1 Feb - 30 Apr 68		
5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)		
CO, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion		
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N/A	OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310	
13. ABSTRACT		

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By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

65 The following items are recommended for inclusion in the Lessons Learned Index:

ITEM 1

* SUBJECT TITLE _____

** FOR OT RD # _____

***PAGE # _____

ITEM 2

SUBJECT TITLE _____

FOR OT RD # _____

PAGE # _____

ITEM 3

SUBJECT TITLE _____

FOR OT RD # _____

PAGE # _____

ITEM 4

SUBJECT TITLE _____

FOR OT RD # _____

PAGE # _____

ITEM 5

SUBJECT TITLE _____

FOR OT RD # _____

PAGE # _____

* Subject Title: A short (one sentence or phrase) description of the item of interest.

** FOR OT RD # : Appears in the Reply Reference line of the Letter of Transmittal. This number must be accurately stated.

***Page # : That page on which the item of interest is located.

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By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

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