

Jack O. Johnson
LT Col USA Ret

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Lawton, OK 73505
[REDACTED]

Honorable Tom Cole
4th District, OK
104 East 12th St
ADA, OK 74820

Dear Sir:

I am forwarding the attached documents in which I'm recommending the 188th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) and it's subordinate units for award of the Presidential Unit Citation. The 188th AHC displayed Gallantry, determination and esprit de corps with marked distinction during five specific combat actions that were conducted under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions in 1967-1968 while serving in Vietnam. I believe the documents I'm submitting substantiate that the actions described set the 188th AHC apart from and above other aviation units engaged in similar missions and is deserving of the award.

I was the commanding officer of the 188th AHC during the period covered by this submission and I am a resident of the 4th congressional district Oklahoma thus one of your constituents. Due to the time delay in making this submission such awards require a supporting congressional letter, under provisions of title 10 USC1130, as it is forwarded to the commander, US Army Resources Command. It is my hope that you will concur with my request and add the support of your office to obtain a favorable outcome from the Department Of The Army.

I stand by to be any further assistance needed to obtain the recognition this unit deserves.

Respectfully,
Jack O. Johnson
Jack O. Johnson
LT Col USA Ret

UNIT AWARD RECOMMENDATION

For use of this form, see HQDA Letter 600-06-1; the proponent agency is DCS, G-1.

1. FROM: Jack O. Johnson LTC USA Retired 6606 NW Creekside Ct. Lawton, Ok. 73505		2. TO: HQ, USA HRC ATTN: AHRC - PDO-PA 200 Stovall St. Alexandria, VA 22232		
3. RECOMMENDING COMMAND POC: NAME: Jack O. Johnson EMAIL:		4. POC PHONE: DSN: [REDACTED] COMM: [REDACTED]		
6. UIC: Unknown		7. DID 65% OF RECOMMENDED UNIT'S ASSIGNED MTOE PERSONNEL PARTICIPATE? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
9. RECOMMENDED AWARD: (PUC)		10. CAMPAIGN/OPERATION (IF APPLICABLE): see comments 16e		
12. PERIOD OF AWARD: a. FROM (YYYYMMDD): 19670401		13. RECENT AND PENDING AWARDS AND DATES RECOGNIZED: b. TO (YYYYMMDD): 19680701 None		
14a. NAME, RANK, TITLE OF RECOMMENDER: LTC (RET) Jack O. Johnson Commanding Officer 188th AHC		14b. SIGNATURE:		14c. DATE (YYYYMMDD):
15. COMMAND ENDORSEMENT				
VIA	NAME, RANK/GRADE, TITLE AND TELEPHONE NUMBER	RECOMMENDATION	SIGNATURE	DATE (YYYYMMDD)
a:				
b:				
c:				
d:				
e:				
f:				
g:				
h:				
i:				
16. APPROVAL AUTHORITY				
a. NAME, RANK/GRADE, TITLE		b. FINAL DECISION	c. SIGNATURE	d. DATE (YYYYMMDD)
16e. COMMENTS: Counter Offensive I, TET Counter Offensive, Counter Offensive III, Counter Offensive IV, See tab 1 for summary of operations in I, II and III Corps Areas. Tab 2 documents on rapid fire V. Tab 3 relief of fire support base Buet, Tab 4 operations with 101st Airbourne Division.				

17. NARRATIVE:

The 188th Assault Helicopter Company (Airmobile Light), 603rd Transportation Detachment (Cargo Helicopter Field Maintenance), 154th Medical Detachment and the 4th Signal Detachment were activated and organized as a standard non-divisional assault helicopter company on 1 November 1966 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Unit training started on 15 December 1966 after arrival of all personnel and twenty three UH-1H and eight UH1C model helicopters. The unit was organized for the purpose of combating insurgent forces engaged in guerrilla warfare in Vietnam by providing airmobile lift and armed helicopter support to **DAU TIENG, III CORPS AND 2ND BRIGADE, 101ST AIRBORNE DIV.** brigade size organizations. The 188th was colocated and provided support to the 3rd Bde, 25th Inf. Div, LZ Sally, I Corps area. It also provided support to the Republic of Korea (ROK), White Horse and Tiger Divisions during Operation Hong Kil Dong, Phu Hiep and Special Forces B 36 and A 361 during Rapid Fire V, Tay Ninh.

The 188th completed its preparation and started its movement to Vietnam in April 1967. The unit was fully operational in Vietnam by 15 June 1967. Assigned to the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, Cu Chi. The 188th was colocated with the 3rd Bde, 25 Inf. Div, Dau Tieng. The unit remained at Dau Tieng until March 1968 when it was ordered to relocate under the command of the 308th Combat Aviation Battalion to support the 101st Airborne Div in I Corps area. The 308th CAB was located at Camp Eagle and the 188th AHC was colocated with the 2nd Bde, 101st Airborne Div at LZ Sally. The 188 AHC with its detachments, the 308th and its subordinant units were all deactivated on 1 July 1968 and reorganized as part of the 101st Airborne Div. The 188th AHC as an independent unit existed for only 21 months in the US Army. During this period of time the unit experienced significant traumatic events that could have caused any unit to disintegrate and become ineffective. It also survived these events and by the mid to late 1967 time period transformed itself into a unit that produced extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy. The 188th AHC displayed gallantry, determination and Esprit De Corps with marked distinction during five specific combat actions that were conducted under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions. Documents submitted in support of this recommendation clearly set this unit apart from and above other units with similar missions and substantiates that this unit deserves recognition of its record through the award of the Presidential Unit Citation.

17. NARRATIVE: (continuation):

The 188th did not arrive in Vietnam and start its transition into a unit ready to fight without some traumatic events as previously mentioned. During May 1967 the unit was arriving in country and was preparing to move to its base camp. On May 17 the unit was linking up with a convoy in Long Binn when the unit suffered its first casualty when a soldier was crushed to death when a trailer he was seated under collapsed. On 19 May while under mortar attack a friendly fire 155mm round fell short and hit a 188th defensive bunker, killing three soldiers and wounding several more very seriously. On the 24th of June the airfield at Dau Tieng was attacked by mortar rounds damaging 29 of 31 helicopters assigned to the unit. The commanding officer was relieved for not dispersing the helicopters as he had been ordered to do. In July the unit was deployed to Phu Hiep to support the ROK divisions. During the night of 31 July two armed helicopters lost visual contact with each other and had a mid air collision killing all eight crew members. The first unit members to be kia due to direct enemy action occurred in August and September. Even though had been several unit members wounded in combat operations all deaths up to August 1967 were due to accidents/incidents which could have been prevented. The next two deaths were again the result of a preventable situation when the unit maintenance officer and the chief technical inspector were killed in October when they crashed during a night test flight in full view of the unit maintenance facility. The next non-combat related death occurred in November when an aircraft departed Nha Be and for unknown reasons crashed into the Mecong River. At this point it was obvious that change had to occur. That change consisted of a complete change of the command group. The new commander, an experienced aviator on his second tour overhauled the units operating procedures and December 1967 to July 1968 the unit participated in some of the most intense and significant battles of the war with only two deaths. Summaries of the units statistics and actions are included at tab 1.

Starting on or about December 8, the 188th was fully committed to the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) supporting Operation Rapid Fire V. The operation was staged out of Tay Ninh east airfield, inserting teams of six to twentyfive soldiers into single ship 1z's adjacent to and over the illdefined border with Cambodia North and West of Tay Nihn. B-36 with A-361/A362 and indiginous Cambodian personnel made up the strike force units into single ship 1z's at first light to perform various recon/amb/mobile strike missions, armed helicopter fire support and extraction of the force sometimes while engaged in close combat with the enemy. During the period 8 December 1967 to 24 January 1968 Rapid Fire V accomplished 45 missions, most all of which produced outstanding results, however not without loses. The mission conducted on 7 January 1968 produced unbelievable intelligence information when over eighty pounds of enemy documents were captured consisting of SOI, crypto, base camp location and order of battle data. In the words of CSM Bernie Newman " It was sad that B-36, project Rapid Fire, was the last bare knuckle outfit in the army", if that was the case, then the 188th was the last bare knuckle aviation unit the army had. Following the termination of Rapid Fire V there were indications that the task force commander, Major James G. "Bo" Gritz, was going to submit several recommendations for individual awards for valor for the 188th personnel.

17. NARRATIVE: (continuation):

However due to several events, change of command for B-36, Tet-68, move of the 188th from III corps to I corps area of action, and classification of the mission itself, there were no awards made to anyone for valor only purple hearts for wounds suffered by unit members. Documents describing rapid fire, comments from those who were there and after action reports are at tab 2.

During the 8 December 1967 - 24 February 1968 time frame while the 188th was committed to Rapid Fire V the 25th Inf. Div. conducted operation "Yellow Stone" which was the largest air ~~moto~~ operation of its type in aviation history. The division was moved to an area of operations centered on the city of Katum, north of Tay Ninh and adjacent to the famous Pares Beak, next to the border with Cambodia. The 188th provided airlift and armed helicopter support to the operation while continuing to perform operations for Rapid Fire V. The 188th received a tactical emergency (TAC-E) mission at approximately 0130hrs, 1 January 1968, to provide all available aircraft to deliver ammunition and back haul wounded from Fire Support Base (FSB) Burt, which was under attack at the time and in jeopardy of being overrun. The 188th put every aircraft available into the air and since this was the ~~AO~~ of the 188th and the 25th had been operating in the 188th was the first aviation unit to arrive at the division main location at Katum. The commanding officer of the 188th flying the lead aircraft was directed to contact the logistical pad and initiate emergency ammunition/medical evacuation to FSB Burt. The area inside the perimeter at FSB Burt was extremely restricted, had been partially over run by the enemy and was under continuous enemy automatic weapons/anti aircraft fire at the time. The situation dictated that only two aircraft approach the base at a time with full blackout lights and no suppressive fire from the door gunners. The commanding officer made the first approach into the base, under constant anti aircraft fire following directions from the ground RTO who was flat on his back in a depression beside the landing pad. There were dark ~~shad~~ ^{area} that looked like logs around and in the landing pad area. The emergency resupply and med evac operations continued throughout the night until approximately 0500hrs when the sun started to come up and the nva/vc broke off the attack. Daylight revealed nva/vc bodies throughout the area adjacent to the landing pad used by the 188th which were the objects that looked like logs. The number of enemy kia confirmed that the base was indeed in jeopardy of being overrun and the resupply of ammo/med evac provided by the 188th was significant to the defense of FSB Burt, Tab 3 has letters from the brigade commander, battalion commander and the after action report covering the operation.

The 188th returned to its home base of Dau Tieng following Rapid Fire V, Yellowstone and the Soui Cut (FSB Burt) battles only to come under almost daily rocket/mortar attacks which proved to be the lead up enemy operations prior to the launch of the Tet-68 Offensive. When Tet broke out the 188th flew night and day moving units of the 25th Div, executing combat assault and armed helicopter support while battling nva/vc units from Saigon to Tay Ninh. There are no particularly significant documents available to support and verify the events that the 188th participated in during Tet other than flight logs and daily reports that substantiate full commitment of the unit. History verifies that the Tet-68 engaged all units in the ~~AO~~ of the 25th Div. and the 188th to the maximum. Operational statistics at tab 1 show an increase in almost every operational area by a third to a half factor during Tet.

17. NARRATIVE:

Following the conclusion of Tet-68 operations the 188th was ordered to relocate from III Corps area to I Corps area where under command of the 308th Combat Aviation Battalion the unit would be collocated with and provide direct support to the 2nd Bde, 101st Airborne Div. The move started in mid March and by the second week of April the unit was moved and fully operational in I Corps based at LZ Sally north of the city of Hue. The 188th for all intents and purposes was the direct daily aviation support for the 2nd Bde and its warrior Commander, Col John H. (Jack) Cushman, later to be LTG Cushman. From March 68 to June 68 the 188th would support the 101st almost exclusively. The 2nd Bde was famous for circling an enemy unit when contact was made by using helicopter support of the 188th to move all available troops in and then jumping on them with everything available. Two of the most famous operations were the battles at Than Hoa and Phuoc Yen conducted by the 1st Bn, 501st Inf. The 188th provided airlift, gun ship support and night illumination for both battles. Gen Cushman has provided documentation for these battles in a letter to the commanding officer supporting his induction into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame and excerpts from the draft of a book he has penned covering the 2nd Bde operations. Tab 4 has the letter from the commanding officer, 269th CAB, as the unit moved to I Corps, letter from Gen Cushman and excerpts from his draft book on the 2nd Bde.

On the 1st of July 1968 the 188th Assault Helicopter Company was deactivated with its units and assets to be reorganized and distributed within the 101st Airborne Div. The 188th after having arraigned in country barely one year earlier with high expectations, suffered through a traumatic entry into operations. The unit had ample opportunity to fall apart but it emerged to perform with courage, valor and dedication to duty fully deserving of recognition through award of the Presidential Unit Citation.

18. PUNISHMENTS UNDER THE UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE DURING THE PERIOD OF RECOMMENDED AWARD (FOR MUC AND ASUA RECOMMENDATIONS ONLY):

a. # ARTICLE 15: Unknown	b. # ABSENCE WITHOUT LEAVE: unknown	c. # COURT MARTIAL: unknown
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19. PROPOSED CITATION:

See Attachment

PROPOSED CITATION:

THE 188TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY (AHC), 603RD TRANSPORTATION DETACHMENT, CARGO HELICOPTER FIELD MAINTENANCE (CHFM), 154TH MEDICAL DETACHMENT, AND 4TH SIGNAL DETACHMENT WERE ACTIVATED ON 1 NOVEMBER 1966 AT FORT CAMPBELL, KENTUCKY. IT WAS DEACTIVATED ON 1 JULY 1968 AT LZ SALLY, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, WITH ITS PERSONNEL AND ASSETS BEING REORGANIZED AND DISTRIBUTED INTO SEVERAL UNITS OF THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION. DURING THE 21 MONTHS THE UNIT EXISTED AS THE 188TH AHC THE UNIT WAS IN COMBAT APPROXIMATELY 14 MONTHS SERVING IN THREE CORPS AREAS OF OPERATIONS.

DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM THE UNIT SUFFERED EXTENSIVE TRAUMATIC, MOSTLY NON-COMBAT, LOSS OF LIFE AND EQUIPMENT SUFFICIENT TO CAUSE THE UNIT TO DISINTEGRATE AND BECOME NONOPERATIONAL, FOLLOWING A COMPLETE CHANGE OF COMMAND THE UNIT EMBARKED ON A SIX MONTH PERIOD OF EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM AND PERFORMANCE OF DUTY DISPLAYING GALLANTRY, DETERMINATION AND ESPRIT DE CORPS MARKED WITH DISTINCTION UNDER EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS.

THE 188TH STARTED THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 1967 BY PROVIDING DIRECT SUPPORT TO B-36, SPECIAL FORCES, EXECUTING THIRTY PLUS

DAYS OF RAPID FIRE ALONG AND OVER THE BOARDER OF CAMBODIA, UNDER EXTREME CONDITIONS OF COMBAT THE OPERATION SUCCEEDED IN GATHERING SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT INTELLIGENCE CAPTURED IN VIETNAM. DURING THE NIGHT OF 1-2 JANUARY 1968, WHILE STILL FULLY ENGAGED IN RAPID FIRE V, THE 188TH RESPONDED TO A TAC-E MISSION TO COME TO THE AID OF FIRE SUPPORT BASE BURT, ABOUT TO BE OVERRUN, AND UNDER ATTACK FROM A SUPERIOR NVA/VC FORCE. THE 188TH ARRIVED AT THE HEIGHT OF THE BATTLE, RECEIVING INTENSIVE ANTI AIRCRAFT FIRE, FLYING IN GROUPS OF TWO AIRCRAFT AT A TIME RESUPPLIED THE BASE WITH AMMUNITION AND MADE CRITICAL MEDICAL EVALUATIONS UNTIL DAWN WHEN THE NVA/VC FORCE BROKE OFF THE ATTACK.

FEBRUARY 1968 EXPLODED WITH THE FAMOUS TET OFFENSIVE AND THE 188TH WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MOST INTENSIVE FIGHTING AROUND SAIGON, CHU CHI, DAUTIENG AND TAY NINH. THE 188TH FLEW NIGHT AND DAY MOVING UNITS OF THE 25TH DIVISION AS THE NVA/VC FORCES WERE DEFEATED AND CHASED OUT OF THE AREA. WHEN THE FIGHTING STARTED TO SUBSIDE IN III CORPS AREA THE 188TH WAS ORDERED IN MARCH 68 TO MOVE TO I CORPS AREA TO SUPPORT THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION AS IT CONTINUED TO FIGHT AGAINST THE REMINENTS OF THE NVA/VC FORCES THAT HAD ATTACKED AND OCCUPIED THE IMPERIAL CITY OF HUE. THE 188TH AND THE 2ND BRIGADE TASK FORCE COMBINED TO

CONDUCT SOME OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL COMBAT OPERATIONS TO CLEAR AND DEFEAT THE NVA/VC FORCES FROM HUE TO THE DMZ. TWO OF THESE ACTIONS, THE FIGHTS AT THUAN HOA AND PHUOC YEN, ARE DETAILED IN A BOOK WRITTEN BY THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE 2ND BRIDGADE, COL JOHN H. (JACK) CUSHMAN, NOW LT GENERAL RETIRED.

ON 1 JULY 1968 THE 188TH AHC WITH ITS SUBORDINANT UNITS WAS DEACTIVATED WITH ITS PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTED TO OTHER UNITS WITHIN THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION. THIS ENDED 21 MONTHS OF TRAUMA AND SUCCESS AS THE 188TH AHC DISPLAYED EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM IN ACTION AGAINST AN ARMED ENEMY IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.

20. UNITS INCLUDED IN THIS RECOMMENDATION