

E. (U) COMMAND AND CONTROL

1. Source: Lessons Learned - 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Headquarters

Item: Responsibilities within the C & C party

Discussion: Responsibilities within the C & C aircraft necessarily must be delineated. During the course of controlling an assault, numerous questions arise and numerous decisions must be made. To enter lengthy discussions takes time which neither the AMTF Commander nor the Air Mission Commander can afford.

Observation: A delineation of responsibilities within the command and control aircraft has been found a definite requirement to conduct an assault efficiently. All procedure problems are handled by the S-3 in the left seat of the aircraft. For example, discussions concerning the dropping of the mark, control of gunships, etc., should be handled by the S-3. Policy decisions, on the other hand, are the responsibility of the Air Mission Commander, since decisions of a more serious nature, certainly, should rest with higher authority. In addition, since the control of lift aircraft during an assault is basically a procedural function, all aircraft control should be in the hands of the S-3. This leaves the physical flying of the aircraft and direct consultation with the AMTF Commander in the hands of the Air Mission Commander. This assignment of duties within the aircraft has proven itself both successful and extremely effective.

2. Source: Lessons Learned - 188th Assault Helicopter Company

Item: Utilization of a C & C aircraft during tactical emergencies at night

Discussion: At 0400 on 2 January 1968, the 188th Assault Helicopter Company was scrambled on an emergency resupply mission. The aircraft departed in flights of five, one flight from DAU TIENG, the other from TAY NINH, where half the company was working on an operation.

The two flights arrived over KATUM, the pick-up point, a few minutes apart. They were unable to land immediately, however, due to the large amount of traffic in the area. After orbiting for about 15 minutes, they were finally able to land, with four ships, at one of the two pick-up areas to be utilized. The flight identified the PZ with the help of flashing vehicle headlights and flares dropped by one of the company's aircraft.

The situation at the LZ (Fire Support Base BURT), while not quite as hectic, traffic-wise, also presented problems. On final approach the aircraft were confronted by an unannounced airstrike just outside the fire support base perimeter (the base was still under attack). It was later learned that the jets putting in the strike were making their passes from WEST to EAST, while approach was from SOUTH to NORTH.

Observation: Confusion and delay at the PZ resulted when three helicopter companies arrived in the area at approximately the same time. All were working on different frequencies and contacting different units on the ground. A C &



ship, briefed on the ground situation; and in control could have eliminated most of the confusion and greatly reduced the risk of mid-air collisions in this type operation. It is recommended that a Command and Control ship be utilized for all night operations, of an emergency nature, requiring one or more helicopter companies.

3. Source: Dobriefing - Operation 42-67, in support of 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

Item: Ground C & C party

Discussion: The ground force C & C party consisted only of the Battalion Commander and an RTO during the conduct of this operation. Consequently, questions submitted to the Infantry Commander by the Air Mission Commander, which required immediate answers, went unanswered until the Infantry Commander established communications with the responsible elements. This time lag in such a complex and fluctuating tactical situation is unacceptable. Such questions as, "Do we have full suppression?", or, "Is the artillery preparation complete?", require immediate response.

Observation: Experience gained through the conduct of numerous airmobile assaults indicates that the optimum number of representatives comprising the ground C & C party consists of four personnel. Included in the party should be the Battalion Commander, the Battalion S-3, the Artillery Liaison Officer and an RTO. It has been proven that these four individuals are required to control an airmobile operation effectively and efficiently.