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Thirty-six years ago your "BLACK WIDOW" predecessors formed up at Fort Campbell before deploying to Vietnam, to fight the communists. Back then the 188<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company was flying UH-1H and UH-1C model Bell helicopters. It was the beginning of a proud Aviation heritage and tradition, which ~~today~~ is carried on by the "BLACK WIDOWS" of Alpha Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment.

During 5 years of combat operations, that included all four Corps Areas of Operation and beaucoup trips across the fence into Cambodia, Laos and North Vietnam, the "BLACK WIDOWS" earned the respect of the grunts we supported and were well known as an elite and dependable company... no matter what the mission entailed

During that period the company sustained casualties of... 40 KIA and over 100 WIA. In July of 1968 the 188<sup>th</sup>, which was instrumental in the 101<sup>st</sup>'s transition from parachutes to helicopters, was redesignated as Charlie Company, 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Battalion, making the 101<sup>st</sup> Airmobile.

Today, as you ready yourselves for deployment to Afghanistan, our nation stands united in support of your efforts to rid the world of these terrorist fanatics. I would like to say on behalf of the "BLACK WIDOWS" who have served before you, "That we're behind you 100%! Stand tall and proud my BLACK WIDOW brothers and sisters and if by chance you are able to kick some serious ass along the way... by all means make it happen".

God Bless You All...

Guns Up,

Sp/4 Dick "Cherry Boy" Detra

Door Gunner 1967-68

Air Medal with 29 OLC

188<sup>th</sup> Historian

Brisbane, California

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