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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 4TH AVIATION BATTALION  
4TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO San Francisco 96262

5 February 1969

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Operation Mac Arthur.

To: Commanding General  
4th Infantry Division  
ATTN: AVDDH - GC - MH  
APO San Francisco 96262

1. (U) Name and Type of Operation. Operation Mac Arthur.
2. (U) Dates of Operation.
  - a. Pre-Tet period. 2 Dec 67 thru 29 Jan 68.
  - b. Tet Offensive. 30 Jan 68 thru 10 Feb 68.
  - c. Post Tet period. 11 Feb 68 thru 20 Mar 68.
  - d. Operations in the Polei Kleng - Dak To area. 21 Mar 68 thru 18 Jul 68.
  - e. Operations in the Ban Me Thuot - Duc Lap area. 18 Jul 68 thru 31 Oct 68.
  - f. Pacification. 1 Nov 68 thru 31 Jan 69.
3. (U) Reporting Officer. Principal Commanders and staff officers participating in the operation are listed at inclosure 1.
4. (U) Task Organization. Throughout this reporting period the Battalion was intact, with no attachments of detachments.
5. (C) Intelligence. The following is a summary of the strength and locations of the enemy forces, and weather conditions during operation Mac Arthur.
  - a. Pre-Tet period. The 304th LF Bn with a strength of 500 was located North of Kontum City along with 406th Sapper Bn with 200 men. Surrounding Pleiku City were the 95B Regt, and H-15 LF Bn, with a combined strength of 1100 located to the East; the 250 man strong 408th Sapper Bn to the North-east and the 200th Arty Bn with 300 men located to the West. The 33rd Regt

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with 1200 men was located north of Ban Me Thuot along with the 401st LF Bn with a strength of 200 and K10 Bn with 400 men. To the East of Ban Me Thuot was the 300 man E 301 LF Bn. This period was during the dry season with no precipitation reported. Sky conditions were generally clear with scattered cloud decks during the late mornings and afternoons with good visibility. Fog was reported 4 days in January in the early mornings and the winds were from the ENE at about 10kts. Max temperatures were in the high 70's and lows were in the low 60's. During this period the above mentioned units were being built up and prepared for the Tet attacks in late January.

b. Tet-Offensive. On 30 January Kontum City was attacked by fire with mortars and rockets, preceding the ground assaults by units; K4, K5, K6, 304th and 406th Sapper Battalions, and the 124th Regt. were all repulsed with heavy losses to the enemy. The 407th Sapper, and 408th, H 15 LF, K-28 Sapper and 31st Battalions supported by the 40th Artillery Regiment attacked Pleiku City, the 3rd ARVN Cav, Camp Holloway, and the 71st Evac Hosp. With the enemy sustaining heavy losses. The enemy's objective in these attacks was the destruction of allied troops, installations, and government HQ, and to obtain the support of the populace in order to establish a VC controlled government. The attacks occurred during the dry season with the weather conditions remaining the same as the Pre-Tet period.

c. Post Tet period. This period saw the withdrawal from around the populated centers to remote areas. The 66th and 174th Regiments retreated from the Dak To area to base area 609. The 24th Regiment moved to the North East of Kontum City, and the 33rd Regiment moved around Ban Me Thuot avoiding allied forces and exfiltrated to Cambodia. At the same time the 32nd Regiment infiltrated from the triborder area to Dar Lac Province. The weather conditions remained the same with the wind shifting to the ESE and the temp--

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erature ranging from the mid 80's during the day and dropping to the mid 60's at night.

d. Operations in the Polei Kleng and Dak To area. During this time the enemy rebuilt its units and prepared for a new offensive against cities in the Kontum and Dak To area. The 320th moved from North Vietnam and the 174th and 66th infiltrated from base area 609, positioning themselves west and south of Polei Kleng which they planned to overrun and then seize Kontum in May and mid-June. In April 325C, 95C and 101D moved from the Khe Sahn area into position to seize Dak To. The 2nd NVA Division HQ element and the 21st Regiment moved into position to strike Dak Pek. Due to spoiling actions of the 4th Infantry Division and ARVN forces most of these units were forced to exfiltrate to Cambodia by the end of June without accomplishing their mission. The monsoon season began in April and for most of this period there was precipitation about half the days. Sky conditions were broken to overcast with the ceilings sometimes lowering to 400 feet. Fog was common and the prevailing winds were from the WSW at generally less than 10kts. Temperatures usually ranged from the low 70's to mid or high 80's.

e. Ban Me Thuot and Duc Lap. The 66th Regiment moved to the North of Ban Me Thuot, while 95C positioned south of the city and 320th to the west for a coordinated attack. When they encountered US and ARVN forces they were assigned the mission of attacking Duc Lap instead. They failed in their attempt to overthrow Duc Lap and were forced to disperse. During most of this action the weather was typically a monsoonal and by the end of the period the skies were beginning to clear and the wind was again from the Northeast. Temperatures range from the mid 60's to low 80's.

f. Pacification. During this period the skies were clear with

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scattered clouds during the day. There was no precipitation and rarely any fog. The winds were from the Northeast at about 10kts and temperatures were in the low 80's falling to low 60's during the night. By the termination of Operation Mac Arthur the 95B Regiment was entrenched in VC Valley with about 1600 men, E301 LF Battalion was situated North of Ban Me Thuot at 300 strong with the 100 man K25 Sapper Battalion to the East, the 304th LF and the 406th Sapper Battalions with a total strength of 500 were positioned to the North of Kontum City, and the 408th Sapper Battalion with 300 men was Northeast of Pleiku City.

6. (U) Mission.

a. The 4th Aviation Battalion provided aviation support for the division headquarters, division support command and other units without organic aircraft. In addition, provided:

(1) General support and reinforcement to units possessing organic aircraft.

(2) An aviation special staff section for division headquarters.

b. Mission scheduling by the Army Aviation Element (AAE) for all utility and cargo aircraft, both organic and nondivisional direct support provided by 17th Aviation Group, supporting the brigades and division headquarters.

c. Provide Pathfinder support to operate brigade logistical helipads, airfields, LZ's and PZ's.

d. Support the G-5 Resettlement program with an S-5 team at Plei Phan Klan.

7. (C) Concept of Operations. To accomplish its support mission during this operation, the 4th Aviation Battalion was able to work out of the division base camp most of the time.

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The exception to this was from late July until early November, when the Battalion had 9 UH-1Hs and 3 UH-1Cs staying in Ban Me Thuot to support operations there. Unique to the Division Aviation Battalions in Vietnam the airmobile light company of the battalion was used primarily in support of a brigade for combat assaults, resupply, LERP's, medovac and similar type missions instead of a general support of the Division. This gave the brigade several advantages because the division was supporting the brigade with organic aircraft. The support came from the same company and problem areas could be worked out between the aviation battalion and the brigade.

8. (C) Execution.

d. Pre-Tet. With the conclusion of the battle of Dak To, Operation Mac Arthur entered the Pre - Tet period. As a result of the defeat of the enemy's B-3 front in the Battle of Dak To and the reluctance of other enemy units to disrupt their Tet preparations by contact with American and ARVN forces, the Pre - Tet period was one of relative quiet. Intelligence gathering was given extra emphasis during the placid period, for although there was ample intelligence as to what the enemy's intent was it was equally important to ascertain his position and keep track of his travel routes and progr. With minor threat to Ban Me Thuot arising with the presence of the 33rd NVA division, the 1/22 Infantry was sent to the Ban Me Thuot area by the 2nd Brigade. The 4th Aviation Battalion supported this operation by providing combat assault and resupply aircraft to 1/22. Frequent company size or smaller unit combat assaults were run by the Battalion, and at times aircraft would remain overnight to insure availability for required support of 1/22. The Battalion was also prominent in the 2nd Brigade area of operations, both at the Oasis and in

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the Kontum area. In addition to the normal 2nd Brigade support, 4th Aviation also assisted the 173rd Airborne Brigade in their operation in Kontum City and the mountains to the northeast of Kontum, up until they left the area of operations in the end of December.

	Co A	Co B	HHD	TOTAL
HOURS FLOWN	4,207	423		4,630
SORTIES	10,476	2,702		13,178
PASSENGERS CARRIED	20,177	307		20,484
TONS OF CARGO	408	0		408
AMMUNITION EXPENDED				
7.62	68,000	156,500		224,500
2.75	0	467		467
FLARES	408	0		408
SMOKE	0	56		56
AVERAGE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT USED DAILY	14	12		26
AVIATION PERSONNEL KHA	3	0	1	4
AVIATION PERSONNEL WHA	1	6	4	11
AIRCRAFT DESTROYED	1	0		1
AIRCRAFT DAMAGED	0	1		1

b. Tet Offensive. The 4th Aviation was able to accomplish its mission from Base Camp during the Tet Offensive. At the outbreak of the Tet offensive the 4th Aviation Battalion was still in support of the 2nd Brigade. The 4th Division recognizing the need to rapidly counter the sudden violent attacks that characterized Tet, called on the 4th Aviation Battalion to combat assault troops of 1/22 Infantry into Kontum airstrip to help neutralize the attack of the 24th NVA Regiment and 304th NVA

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Battalion. The following day we assaulted 1/69th Artillery, which was to be deployed strictly as an Infantry unit, into the southwestern corner of Pleiku City. Beside supporting the two Infantry units that were CA'd at the onset of the Tet offensive, we supported efforts of 2/8 Infantry to suppress an enemy attack aimed at destroying the Republic of Vietnam relocation village at Edap Enang. During the Tet period, the Nighthawk mission had its most prominent role. Two ships were used as well as a flare ship in an effort to spot night movement by the enemy. In addition to these ships, the Battalion went on total 24 hour standby in order to rapidly neutralize any enemy attack. 4th Infantry Division base camp, particularly the airfield and 4th Aviation Battalion area came under enemy 122mm rocket attack for the first time during the Tet offensive on the night of February 10th. In an effort to get a flare ship into the air, two A Company personnel, while running to their aircraft in the heat of the battle, were struck by flying shrapnel. One aviator was seriously wounded and later medevaced, the second individual a crew chief was mortally wounded and during the attack. One other A Company member was killed during the Tet offensive, the crew chief received a fatal wound while on a combat assault just to the south of base camp. The 4th Aviation's quick reaction to any emergency, from combat assault to medevac, was instrumental in the defeat of the enemy during the Tet offensive.

	Co A	Co B	HHD	TOTAL
HOURS FLOWN	559	197		756
SORTIES	1837	294		2131
PASSENGERS CARRIED	3340	573		3913
TONS OF CARGO	75	0		75

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AMMUNITION EXPENDED

7.62	5,000	81,800	86,800
2.75	0	1,204	1,204
FLARES	108	0	108
SMOKE	0	20	20
AVERAGE NUMBER OF A/C USED	14	12	26
AVIATION PERSONNEL KHA	2	0	2
AVIATION PERSONNEL WHA	3	0	3
AIRCRAFT DESTROYED	0	0	0
AIRCRAFT DAMAGED	1	2	3

c. Post Tet. The post tet period like the pre-tet period was marked by relative tranquility. The enemy, having been severely beaten in every one of his offensive efforts, retreated to the tri-border area where he could lick his wounds. A Company again concentrated its efforts to intelligence gathering, support of the 2nd Brigade and general division support. In actions concerning the second Brigade, A Company's support consisted mainly of resupply to the units, battalions and the conducting of small combat assaults. The 1/12 Infantry was moved to Ban Me Thuot by C-123's and assaulted into strategic company positions. A Company also handled the resupply of 1/12, occasionally remaining over night in Ban Me Thuot to insure proper support. We furnished resupply and visual reconnaissance facilities to 2/8 Infantry in the Oasis area and to 1/22 Infantry in the Plei Mrong area. We also provided the Brigade commander with a ship. In addition to supporting the second Brigade, we provided our normal division support and night capabilities. Since the

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majority of the enemy's activities consisted of harassing type encounters at night, nocturnal missions such as Nighthawk and flare, took on an added significance. On 3 March 1968, 4th Aviation Battalion was instrumental in neutralizing an enemy 122mm rocket attack on base camp. Although the rockets were falling within the confines of the division base camp, and more specifically within A Company's quarters area, both the Nighthawk and flare ships were able to take off, locate the enemy's position and illuminate the area so that B Company gunships could silence the 122 rocket positions. Snoopy and Project Left Bank, as in the pre-tet period were run on almost a daily basis. It was largely through the efforts of these intelligence gathering facilities that accurate accounts were kept on the enemy, and much of the information gathered during the post-tet period was instrumental in determining what actions would be taken by the 4th Infantry Division in its next time period of operation Mac Arthur.

	A	E	TOTAL
HOURS FLOWN	2586	520	3106
SORTIES	10460	3023	13483
PASSENGERS CARRIED	12068	697	12765
TONS OF CARGO	320	0	320
AMMUNITION EXPENDED			
7.62	35000	140600	175600
40MM	0	1590	1590
2.75	0	6000	6000
FLARE	567	0	567
AVERAGE NUMBER OF A/C USED	14	10	24
AVIATION PERSONNEL KHA	0	0	0
AVIATION PERSONNEL WHA	0	6	10
AIRCRAFT DESTROYED	2	0	2
AIRCRAFT DAMAGED	1	0	1

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d. Polei Kleng - Dak To. The 4th Aviation Battalion was able to accomplish its mission from Base Camp during the Operations in the Polei Kleng and Dak To Area. The next two months found the 4th Aviation Battalion in a relatively calm period. Then came the communist spring offensive. Task Force Matthews was formed to counter the offensive. North Vietnamese troops were massed in western Kontum Province along the cities of Kontum and Dak To and the mountain villages of Dak Pek and Dak Seang. 4th Aviation's intelligence assets, which included A Company's Snoopy and Left Bank, indicated that the 325C and 1st NVA divisions did move from southern III Corps by way of Cambodia with the intention of taking Kontum and Dak To. We were given the mission of inserting two Infantry Battalions, 1/12 Infantry and 1/22 Infantry onto a series of ridge lines and mountain tops, located approximately 20 miles to the west of Kontum. The two Battalions were inserted, and firebases Mile High, Alamo, Roberts, Swinger and Brillo Pad became permanent fixtures in the defense posture of Task Force Matthews. Once these fire support bases were established, we were given the mission of resupplying them. Two Distinguished Flying Crosses and two Air Medals with V device were awarded to A Company Aviators for heroism. During this time frame, our support and resupply efforts, despite the advent of the monsoon season were instrumental in protecting Kontum from communist attack. Air support at this time was aided greatly by our Pathfinder Detachment, which ran refueling points at Polei Kleng as well as air traffic control and advisory stations. The pathfinders were also helpful in combat assaults as they would organize troops to be lifted in the pick up zones. Usually pathfinders would be inserted with the first assault into the landing zones, and would serve as ground guides for

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approaching aircraft for the operation of a lift. The NVA soon realized that they would not be able to take Kontum, and switched their concentration to Dak To. Once again we were given the mission of inserting troops by combat assault. Using key terrain features such as ridge lines and mountain tops to the south of Dak To, we assaulted 1/8 Infantry, 3/12 Infantry and a battalion of the 101st Airborne Division, to what was to become known as Rocket Ridge. For three weeks we supported operations around Dak To by providing combat assault and resupply aircraft. An air movement control center was established as a branch of our S-3 section, and functioned as a controlling center, not only for 4th Aviation Battalion aircraft, but also for supplemental aircraft from the 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion. While fighting was raging at Dak To, a new communist force was pushing down from the north. The 2nd NVA division which was involved in the battle of Khe Sanh moved southward along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, attacking Special Forces Camps along the way toward the isolated outpost of Dak Pek. Our aircraft again provided vital intelligence information concerning the location and direction of travel of the 2nd NVA Division largely through Snoopy and Left Bank, both of which went past our northern division area of operations in order to obtain intelligence information. With the 1st NVA Division beaten and retreating to the confines of the Cambodian border, Task Force Matthews was able to concentrate the majority of its efforts to the Dak Pek area. In an effort to restrict the activities of the 2nd NVA Division, a battalion of the 101st Airborne Division was inserted in strategic positions to the West and North-west of Dak Pek. Although operating under adverse weather conditions, terrain features, and despite frequent hostile fire from the enemy, 4th Aviation

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relentlessly carried on combat assault and resupply for the 101st and 4th Infantry Division troops. When requests were called for reinforcements, we moved 1/22 Infantry to unoccupied hilltops. Our pathfinders were very helpful in the operations as they helped run a POL point at Dak Pek and an air control station as well. Pathfinders also served as loadmasters and ground troop coordinators in pick up zones and as ground guides in the landing zone. All the operations at Dak Pek were very hazardous for both ground and air operations. The enemy was so well dug in that he had resistance to any effort to root him out. We supported resupply and administrative type missions in the Dak Pek area after the original combat assaults were made. Efforts by the 4th Aviation Battalion during the time of Task Force Matthews were greatly responsible for the success of the operation, and without the support the mission of Task Force Matthews would have been greatly hampered, or not accomplished at all.

	Co A	Co B	HHD	Total
HOURS FLOWN	5,718	2,839	0	8,557
SORTIES	19,778	13,241	0	33,019
PASSENGERS CARRIED	32,985	2,074	0	35,059
TONS OF CARGO	628	0	0	628
AMMUNITION EXPENDITURES				
7.62	82,700	507,100	0	589,800
40mm	0	1,714	0	0
2.75	0	1,714	0	1,714
FLARE	527	0	0	527
SMOKE	0	160	0	160
AVERAGE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT USED DAILY	14	10	0	24

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AVIATION PERSONNEL KHA	0	0	0	0
AVIATION PERSONNEL WHA	4	3	0	7
AIRCRAFT DESTROYED	2	2	0	4
AIRCRAFT DAMAGED	5	8	0	13

e. Ban Me Thuot. On 18 July 1968, we received the information that the Second Brigade would move from the Oasis to Ban Me Thuot in order to defend the city of Ban Me Thuot from suspected enemy attack. With the 66th, 320th and 95C NVA regiments surrounding Ban Me Thuot, deployment of the Second Brigade and all available assets to Ban Me Thuot was necessary, lest the heavily populated area should come under communist control. During the Second Brigade's transit period, we carried out our normal mission. Realizing their long term requirements in the Ban Me Thuot area, the long distance between Ban Me Thuot and Pleiku, and with the onset of the monsoon season and its adverse affect on aviation support, a decision was made to give A Company, with gun ships from B Company, the sole mission of supporting the Second Brigade. Since its arrival in Vietnam A Company had never been given a mission so singular in nature as the one requiring it to support only the Second Brigade. The only exceptions were Project Left Bank and the requirement for one flare ship. The Battalion's commitment to the second brigade was initially nine flyable UH-1H's and three gunships UH1C's. Among the problems that we had to face at the outset of the move to Ban Me Thuot were the availability of aircraft parts and spare living quarters. We initially moved into Camp Coryell, the home of the 155th AHC, however within one month living conditions became so congested that we had no choice but to hunt for better living facilities. At the same time, although the 155th was sympathetic toward our maintenance dilemma they

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could not afford to incorporate our ships into their maintenance program, for they had their own aircraft to maintain and they faced the same supply problems that we did at Camp Enari. It was finally determined that we should move to a more suitable area at Ban Me Thuot East airfield. This necessitated construction of revetments, an operations center, perimeter defense, living facilities and mess facilities. The A Company mess hall at base camp was closed and mess equipment and personnel were moved by convoy to Ban Me Thuot East. The arrival of a maintenance van and personnel terminated the move to Ban Me Thuot. A Company Commander was in charge of the move, as well as the operation center in Ban Me Thuot. In the period from 20 July to 23 August, most of the action was centered around the Ban Me Thuot city area. 4th Aviation Battalion combat assaulted 1/22 and 2/35 Infantry Battalions and 1/10 Cavalry into strategic locations on all sides of Ban Me Thuot, and resupplied the units once they were inserted. The beginning of the Ban Me Thuot operations was characterized by numerous small moves. 4th Aviation, with occasional help from the 155th AHC, handled all tactical moves. Most noteworthy of these moves was Operation Fearless, a coordinated effort to search the village and plantation approximately 20 kilometers southwest of Ban Me Thuot. On August 10, in an attempt to flush out enemy along the EA Blang River basin, we conducted a combat assault with 1/12 Infantry into this area. When relatively little information turned up, we then called 1/12 back to a position approximately 25 kilometers north of Ban Me Thuot. On 18 August 1968, 1/12 while in contact with the enemy called in air support and requested bombing runs against the enemy. After very successful efforts on their first runs, the Spads changed directions and raked a company CP.

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of 1/12. A Company in answering a call to help medevac the wounded despite intense hostile fire in the area, managed to evacuate more than 33 wounded. After realizing that Ban Me Thuot was too well fortified to be over run, the enemy shifted his attention and concentrated his manpower on the Special Forces compound at Duc Lap. With a force of 3 regiments and part of the 1st NVA Division, the enemy began the siege on 23 August. In an immediate reaction, we CA'd a battalion of ARVN 22nd Infantry to Duc Lap and the following day, as the battle raged on, A Company combat assaulted 2 companies of 2/35 Infantry and a battalion of the 173rd Airborne to areas to the southwest of the Duc Lap compound. On 26 August, which was the last day of the battle, we assaulted the 1/22 Infantry to an area called LZ Barron. On the 27th the enemy appeared to be moving westward toward the confines of Cambodia. Again we assaulted 1/12 and 1/10 to Landing Zone Pace in order to intercept the NVA before they reached Cambodia. The situation at Duc Lap assumed a serene atmosphere, but because of some intelligence tips we continued working with 4/503 Infantry and ran a series of combat assaults along the Ea Krang River. These operations ran from 5 September through 10 September and also included 1/12 Infantry. The situation remained placid from the middle of September through the beginning of October. When we were not running combat assault missions, we were performing vitally needed resupply missions. One A Company pilot was mortally wounded on a resupply mission in that area. He became the only fatality the Battalion had during the Duc Lap action, however there were other aircraft which received hits from enemy fire. One aircraft was destroyed when it was shot down but the crew was unscratched. The arrival of October signalled a gradual withdrawal of American troops from

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the Duc Lap area. On 14 October 1968 the 4/503 Infantry was moved to Duc Lap airstrip, and subsequently returned to Ban Me Thuot by Air Force aircraft. On 21 October 1/12 Infantry was CA'd from Duc Lap to the Mewal plantation. We not only supported 1/12 by combat assaulting them along the edges of the Mewal, but ran emergency supplies and munitions to them once they had established contact with the enemy. On 29 October, 1/22 was moved from Duc Lap to Ban Me Thuot and on the same day we moved 2/35's companies to the positions formally occupied by 1/12 and 1/22 Infantry Battalions. Once the 1/22 had been moved out and their move north completed, we then moved 1/12 from the Mewal plantation to Ban Me Thuot so that they also could close with the remainder of the Second Brigade. With the movement of the Second Brigade to Kontum, we were notified that we would return to Base Camp, thus ending Task Force Spoiler and one of the finer moments in the history of 4th Aviation Battalion in Vietnam.

	A CO	B Co	HHD	Total
HOURS FLOWN	4,974	1,408	0	6,382
SORTIES	18,358	6,291	0	24,649
PASSENGERS CARRIED	19,996	1,620	0	21,649
TONS OF CARGO	898	0	0	898
AMMUNITION EXPENDED				
7.62	124,520	432,750	0	557,270
2.75	0	1,267	0	1,267
40mm	0	985	0	985
SMOKE	0	380	0	380
FLARES	347	0	0	347
AVIATION PERSONNEL KHA	1	0	0	1

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AVIATION PERSONNEL WHA	6	1	0	7
AIRCRAFT DAMAGED	4	3	0	7
AIRCRAFT DESTROYED	1	2	0	3

f. Pacification Period. At the beginning of the Pacification Period, we were transitioning from the Ban Me Thuot area of operations to the Pleiku, base camp AO. Approximately four ships a day, and a skeleton work crew stayed in the Ban Me Thuot area to finish moving the remaining troops from Task Force Spoiler into Ban Me Thuot East. From there the troops would be air lifted by Air Force Transposts to Pleiku or Kontum. Of the four ships left behind, one had the additional task of supporting 2/35 Infantry which remained in the Ban Me Thuot, Duc Lap area. The majority of the aircraft returned to Pleiku to operate from Hensel Field. With the return from Ban Me Thuot came a change in the mission. Although the primary mission remained to support the 2nd Brigade, no longer was this the company's sole purpose. Once again we assumed the responsibility for division general support that we had before the inception of Task Force Spoiler. A minor problem arose with the switch from Ban Me Thuot to the Pleiku area. Many of the pilots and aircraft commanders had never flown before in the mountainous terrain characteristic of the territory north of Pleiku. Consequently for a period of about 2 weeks aviators unfamiliar with the northern AO flew only with those aviators who were familiar with the northern AO and its inherent flying hazards. Support to the 2nd Brigade consisted of enough slicks to resupply all the 2nd Bde Battalions, plus supplemental aircraft to perform combat assault and LRRP operations. Once the battalions had been assaulted into their base positions, and a semblance of organization established the 2nd Brigade initiated search and

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destroy maneuvers along and in the Plei Trap Road and Plei Trap Valley area. Located along the Cambodian border, the Plei Trap area offers some of the most rugged terrain in Vietnam. Nevertheless, we supported the entire operation, which began on 15 November 1968 and ended 2 December 1968, in an outstanding manner. Concurrent with the Plei Trap operation was a coordinated swap with local ARVN forces on the mountain and hill masses to the east of Kontum. 4th Aviation, with supplemental help from the 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion, bore the majority of the load for providing slicks in this effort. In addition to supporting the 2nd Brigade, A Company gave the division its usual intelligence resources of Snoopy and Project Left Bank. The advent of December saw a marked change in our mission. After nearly nine months of supporting the the 2nd Brigade, our support was now switched to the 3rd Brigade and its operations in the Oasis area. At the same time we changed A Company's daily mission requirement from twelve to fourteen day-time missions. In the beginning of December, much of the 3rd Brigade's efforts were concentrated in the Duc Co area. In an effort to improve aircraft on station time we established a P.O.L. point at Duc Co, thereby eliminating the necessity to return to the Oasis for fuel. When anticipated attacks on Duc Co never materialized, emphasis was shifted to the Special Forces compound at Plei Me. Characteristic of the Plei Me efforts of the 3rd Brigade were several night combat assaults and extractions. At the same time those operations were going on in the Plei Me area, the 1st Brigade was operating in the Sui Doi area in an operation coined Task Force Winner. Besides establishing an additional P.O.L. point at Sui Doi (Blackhawk Firebase) we, on many occasions, supplemented 52nd Aviation Battalion

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aircraft in the airmobile operations in the Sui Doi - VC Valley area of operations. On other occasions our aircraft ran combat assaults and airlifts in this area, despite the fact the air operations were not our responsibility. In addition to the normal operations, we took on another requirement when the 20th Infantry (LRRP'S) began maneuvers in our area of operations. Our support in all LRRP efforts was outstanding and whether it was day or night, we answered all calls for insertions and extractions. In a separate action in the end of December, we combat assaulted a battalion of 47th Regiment ARVN troops to the southeast of VC Valley. Night requirements in December consisted of a flare ship and two ships on standby for possible LRRP extractions. Toward the end of December, numerous sightings of alien helicopter action was reported in the mountains north of Plei Djereng. We participated in night missions in quest of the enemy aircraft. After finally determining that enemy air action was taking place, many troop movements took place in the same area during the month of January. In an effort to counteract enemy activities, particularly that of the 24th NVA division, a battalion of 1/12 Infantry was assaulted into the area north of Plei Djereng called the Punchbowl. After running 3 neopy missions and Project Left Bank in the area of Chu Pa mountain, the 3rd Brigade decided to put more troops into the Chu Pa area. Again we assumed responsibility for the mission, and despite heavy enemy anti-aircraft and small arms fire, assaulted 1/35 Infantry battalion into the Chu Pa area. Later A Company reinforced these battalions with portions of 1/14 Infantry. Along with the combat assault missions, we still supported the infantry battalions with needed resupply materials. Despite the movement and friendly activity, we still maintained our normal division

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staff requirements in the form of staff missions, and night missions.

At the close of the Operation Mac Arthur, we were still supporting the 3rd Brigade and their operation in Plei Djereng and areas west of Pleiku.

	A Co	B Co	HHD	Total
HOURS FLOWN	6,248	2,996	0	9,244
BORTIES	21,507	12,229	0	33,736
PASSENGERS CARRIED	31,910	3,364	0	35,274
TONS OF CARGO	871	0	0	871
AMMUNITION EXPENDED				
7.62	49,000	1,398,400	0	1,447,400
2.75	0	3,112	0	3,112
40mm	0	4,635	0	4,635
FLARES	1,077	0	0	1,077
SMOKE	0	613	0	613
AVIATION PERSONNEL KHA	0	0	0	0
AVIATION PERSONNEL WHA	3	3	0	6
AIRCRAFT DESTROYED	2	1	0	3
AIRCRAFT DAMAGED	3	3	0	6

9. (C) Results. See inclosure II.

10. (U) Administration Matters.

a. Logistics. The S-4 section effected significant changes during Operation Mac Arthur. The consolidation of the company supply rooms at Battalion level was accomplished without any loss of efficiency or delay in accomplishing the supply mission. All expendable and non - expendable supplies are now requisitioned and controlled by S-4. The arms rooms remained at company level. The consolidation allowed the S-4/PB to hand-

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receipt equipment directly to the user. The Battalion is now taxing all aviation units supporting the division to provide forward area refueling points. Because of the Battalion's POL responsibility at Hensel Army Airfield, which requires the major portion of the Battalion's POL equipment, it can only operate two forward area refueling points. The Battalion has experienced difficulty in accomplishing POL mission requirements due to the lack of functional equipment. The forward area refueling equipment system (FARES FSN 4930-087-7494) comes equipped with plastic hoses that have proven to be inadequate because the high pressure from the pump causes the hose to burst. Recommend that the hard rubber hose FSN 4720-083-0050 replace the plastic hose in the system. There has been a continuing shortage of BPH-6 ballistic flight helmets and body armor within this Battalion. This has resulted in most individuals having to utilize the APH-5 helmet, which does not offer the user adequate protection from hostile fire. The continuing shortage of these items of equipment could result in the serious injury or loss of life of aircraft crew member.

b. Maintenance. This unit was continually plagued with performing required aircraft maintenance during hours of darkness. After each flight the crew members are required to perform a Post Flight Inspection of the aircraft. There are also required cumulative flight time inspections that must be completed. To insure a sufficient number of flyable aircraft for the following day these maintenance inspections must be completed at night. An inspection that may take 2 man hours in daylight may take upward of 5 or 6 man hours to complete it at night and still not have the same degree of thoroughness. Lighting in the hanger is insufficient

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and there are not enough small portable neon lights to support all the night maintenance. This unit has a recurring need for both electronic and armament replacement parts. To be specific, none of B Company's UH-1C armed helicopters have both attitude indicators (these are not available). . . Some aircraft lack both ADF and the FM homer. On several occasions mini-guns parts have not been available, therefore making an otherwise mission ready ship unable to accomplish its mission. Battalion maintenance section continue to find it difficult to maintain an adequate supply of high turnover items required for organizational maintenance, such as intermediate kits. It is also difficult to obtain main rotor blades and radio parts. Delays in supply channels continue to render valuable pieces of equipment non-combat ready.

c. Pathfinder. The importance of the Pathfinders, and the assistance they can render, is many times overlooked or disregarded by the Ground Commanders and the Air Mission Commander. A thorough understanding of the Pathfinders capabilities, and usage of the available assets, can materially assist in the heliborn missions. Although their employment is not always feasible, their usage should always be considered, both in the LZ's and RZ's.

d. Transportation. The Battalion's organic transportation consists of 62 vehicles of various types. The number on hand is much greater than what is required to accomplish the Battalion's mission at the present time so twenty-two (22) vehicles have been placed in administrative storage to eliminate unnecessary maintenance and consumption of POL products on nonessential vehicular dispatches.

e. Communications. While A Company was supporting an operations

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in Ban Me Thuot an automatic FM retransmission circuit was installed between base camp and Ban Me Thuot. Air traffic control had to be conducted by FM radio both in Ban Me Thuot and base camp, because our UHF radios were in support maintenance. The unit was installed on Dragon Mountain, and the distance covered was twice the planning range for the radio used.

(C) b. Civil Action. The 4th Aviation Battalion areas of responsibility are Village No. 39, Plei Pham Nghol, Village No. 42, Plei Pham Co, Village No. 44, Plei Kro and the Plei Do Lim school. The team consists of one 1LT, one SSG, six enlisted men and one Montagnard interpreter. The civil affairs team moved to the field in late Oct 1968 with the mission of consolidating the villages and to give protection to the villagers. The team also had the additional task of constructing a defensive position while performing daily civil action work. A defensive position has been constructed, and is being made stronger each day. A major problem while in the early stages of construction was the lack of logistical support. This problem seems to have been overcome in every aspect except the reality of materials appearing in the forward areas. On orders from higher headquarters a Self Defense Corps. (SDC), consisting of fifty Montagnard tribesmen, was recruited and trained by the civil action team. The Montagnard tribesmen were told that they would receive a monthly salary while serving in the Self Defense Corps; this has not materialized. Enemy activity has increased in the Plei Do Lim area in the last three months. On four occasions an enemy force has entered Villages under our protective care, and have either killed or abducted friendly Montagnard tribesmen. Three other separate occasions the Civil Affairs team has

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received small arms fire. At 0140 hours, 15 Jan 69, an estimated two platoons of Viet Cong launched a ground attack against the Civil Affairs Team. The enemy force suffered one known killed in action. There were many blood trails leaving the scene of battle. Later reports from the villagers indicated the enemy losses may have run as high as ten killed or wounded in action. There were no friendly casualties. The Civil Affairs Team is not able to offer any protection what-so-ever to the villagers at the present time. As a matter of fact if the enemy ever attacks from two fronts simultaneously there will not be enough defenders to meet both threats. It should be easy to understand that a single rifleman could feasibly hold the entire Civil Action Team at bay while a Squad or two of Viet Cong commit any acts of terror or destruction that they desire. At the present time a perimeter fence is being installed around the entire consolidated village. It will consist of two five strand cattle fence approximately fifty feet apart. The villagers will fill in between the fence with punji stakes. It is hoped that we will be able to put one row of triple concertina in the center. However, the lack of wire may hamper this objective. Observation towers and fighting bunkers have been strategically placed around the perimeter. The Self Defense Corps will man the perimeter. The construction of a dispensary is now underway and should be completed within ten days. This will allow the medic to observe borderline cases more closely. Villagers will have the benefit of immediate care instead of waiting for the medic to arrive at their village.

g. Aviation Training. Due to mission commitment and the high time flown on the aircraft each month, formal flight training was marginal during the first 10 or 11 months of Operation Mac Arthur. This lack of

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formal training and the mission requirements, necessitated the placing of incoming aviators with aircraft commanders prior to flying them with instructor pilots. This in turn increased the time required for them to be completely standardized and mission ready. A Division Flight School was organized this quarter under the direct supervision of the DAVNO, and has trained the following:

Type AC	Qualified	Qualified IP	Stan Ride	Post Accident Check Rider.
OH-6A	10	5	5	3
UH-1H	1	3	5	
UH-1C		1	10	
AH-1G		4		
U -6A			3	
JUH-1D			1	

h. Aviation Safety. The majority of the aviation accidents that occurred during Operation Mac Arthur were the result of pilot error, due to pilot fatigue and the low experience level of our aviators. Monthly Aviation Safety meeting are used to discuss emergency procedures, escape and evasion techniques, weather and normal operating techniques.

i. Personnel. With the arrival of the AH-1G aircraft to replace the UH-1C aircraft an additional modification of TOE 1-78E is required. Each AH-1G requires an aircraft armorer MOS 45J20, but does not require the gunner as does the UH-1 aircraft. The authorization has been requested to convert 6 each E4 slots of MOS 67A1F to 4 each E4 slots MOS 45J20 and 2 each E4 slots of MOS 55B20 (Ammunition Storage Specialist). The change in MOS is recognized by USARV and is standard practice for an aviation unit converting to the AH-1G (Cobra) aircraft. Due to the

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extensive ordnance required for the AH-1G there is a need for additional  
ammunition storage specialists to support the increased ordnance level.

11. (C) Special Equipment and Techniques.

The Battalion is presently using a new technique of employing the Airborne Personnel Detector (Snoopy). The Scorpion Hunter-Killer team (2 LOH's and 2 AH-1G's) is used instead of the 2 UH-1H's and 2 UH-1C's that were used in the past. The LOH is smaller, faster and more maneuverable than the UH-1, and there are only two people in the LOH rather than 5 as in the UH-1. Snoopy pinpoints the target then CS is employed. After waiting for the CS to deploy, the target is attacked by the AH-1G's using Fletchette 2.75 rounds, 40mm and mini-guns.

Because of suspected enemy movement at night, a special night mission, which was to be termed Nighthawk, was given to A Company. One ship, equipped with either a xenon light, or "Cluster light," consisting of a group of seven C-123 landing lights mounted and wired in a cluster, was sent out at specific times to check an suspected enemy locations or routes of travel. On several occasions, Nighthawk spotted enemy troops, and was instrumental in bringing artillery and gunships in on the enemy's position.

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12 (C) Commanders Analysis. 4th Aviation Battalion is the only Division Aviation Battalion that provides true combat aviation support. Airmobile light companies in other divisions are used in a general support roll. In this Division Company A (Airmobile light) is used to support a brigade in a direct support roll. The advantage here is that the supported brigade can work out problem areas with a unit that habitually works for them. This close relationship provides smooth well organized combat assaults. Company B provides general support with staff liaison, intelligence gathering Snoop missions and Scorpion overt neutralization of known or suspected targets. The Battalion recently moved the Command flight section (4 UH-1H's) from B Company to A Company to facilitate maintenance. Company B recently acquired six AH-1G Cobra helicopters. This aircraft provides the division with a highly lethal air to ground capability. The Scorpion concept was conceived by LTC George F Powers and was instituted as an additional mission on 23 January 1969. The new concept of the Hunter killer team (Scorpion) goes along with Concept 1969, Scorpion can rapidly react to hot intelligence targets through employment of an airborne personnel detector, CS fletchettes and other ordnance to neutralize a target area. The concept is still unproven because of the vast commitments of the division. Along with the neutralization of a target area emphasis should be placed on inserting a ground element to assess the damage the Scorpion team has inflicted. The experience level of the new aviator is still below the USARV average. 85% of the aviators in the division have less than one year aviation experience. We have about 5% second tour aviators at this time. This factor and the shortage of Instructor Pilots (IP) caused great concern. The DAVNO organized a division flight training school and standardization board.

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The division has undergone a rapid change in the type aircraft authorized causing qualification and standardization problems. The OH-23G observation aircraft is being replaced by the OH-6A LOH aircraft. At present there are only four OH-23G aircraft left in the division inventory and they will be phased out by late February 1969. USARV OH-6A transition quotas have provided 4 qualified pilots. The division has qualified 10 more pilots in the OH-6A. The AH-1G has presented similar problems. At present the UH-1C gunship is being replaced by the AH-1G. Only six UH-1C remain in the division inventory. USARV has qualified 2 AH-1G pilots and the division school has qualified an additional 4 AH-1G instructor pilots. With the arrival of the OH-6A and the AH-1G Cobra to replace the OH-23G and the UH-1C an additional modification of TOE 1-78E is required. Each AH-1G requires an aircraft armorer MOS 45J20, but does not require the gunner as does the UH-1C. A total of 9 each MOS 45J20 and 2 each 55B20 are required.

Shortages in pathfinders MOS 31G4Y, 11B1Y and 11B4Y have existed since August 1968. Shortages in MOS 67N40 (Helicopter Maintenance Supervisor) have existed for over a year. A critical shortage of MOS 71P (Flight Operation Specialist/Operation Sergeant) exists and continues to grow worse. Landing zone (LZ) size, physical condition and police continue to plague both aviator and ground commands. Greater command emphasis should be placed on this area of operation. Lost time from blade strikes in LZ's continues to reduce the availability of aircraft because of LZ's not being improved and FOD damage to engines continue because LZ are not well policed. Better management of the aviation assets has been stressed to the brigades. Aircraft and crews are still being flown over programmed flying hours established by USARV. Continued command emphasis is needed in this area and education of the ground force commander on how best to manage his aviation assets.

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The Civil Affairs team of the 4th Aviation Battalion at Plei Phan Klan continues to have difficulty in accomplishing its intended mission. The team has consolidated five villages around the base village Plei Phan Klan. The village and the defensive position occupied by the CA team has come under attack by a platoon or larger force twice in the last month. The defensive position occupied by the CA Team has withstood the attacks. However, during the last attack on Plei Phan Klan about 40% of the homes were burned.

Defensive wire and positions have been constructed recently, after the last attack and the Self Defense Corps has been armed with weapons. At present an RF platoon is helping defend Plei Phan Klan so that construction, self help projects and military training can continue.

S-3 requirements for manning the Army Aviation Element still presents a problem. The AAE is run 24 hours a day seven days a week. Under TOE 1-74E the S-3 has an operations officer and an assistant Operations Officer. The battalion has had to SD another officer from a much needed flying position to help alleviate the work load at the AAE. The shortage of MOS 71P personnel are especially critical due to the requirements in addition to normal TOE to operate Hensel Army Airfield and the AAE on a 24 hour basis. Attempts have been made to rectify the shortage by placing cooks, wheeled vehicle mechanics, crew chiefs, and control operators in vacant 71P20 and 71P40 slots. The results were unsatisfactory. Existing shortages have not been filled by qualified MOS 71P personnel.

S-4 section effected a significant change during the last quarter of the reporting period. The consolidation of the Company supply rooms at Battalion level was accomplished without loss of efficiency or delay in accomplishing the supply mission. The consolidation allowed the S4/FPQ to hand receipt equipment directly to the user, thus eliminating the middle man and affixing

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Commanders and Principal Staff Officers

Commanding Officers

LTC Myles H. Mierswa	2 Dec 67 - 4 May 68
LTC Donald L. Williams	5 May 68 - 21 Aug 68
LTC George F. Powers	22 Aug 68 - 31 Jan 69

Battalion XO's

LTC Donald L. Williams	2 Dec 67 - 4 May 68
LTC George D. Shields	5 May 68 - 4 Aug 68
MAJ William MacPhail Jr.	5 Aug 68 - 31 Jan 69

S-1

CPT Edgar B. Taylor III	2 Dec 67 - 23 Jul 68
CPT Ronald W. Lewos	24 Jul 68 - 3 Aug 68
CPT John D De Martini	4 Aug 68 - 31 Jan 69

S-2

MAJ William R. Aiken, Jr.	2 Dec 67 - 18 Jan 69
CPT James W. Mc Cready	19 Jan 69 - 31 Jan 69

S-3

MAJ Marvin O. Myers	2 Dec 67 - 1 Dec 68
CPT David L. Radlinski	1 Dec 68 - 13 Dec 68
MAJ John J. Griffiths	13 Dec 68 - 31 Jan 69

S-4

LLT Lanny M. Helgeson	2 Dec 67 - 4 Aug 68
LLT James P. Delaney	4 Aug 68 - 28 Sep 68
CPT Guntis G. Berzins	28 Sep 68 - 31 Jan 69

S-5

CPT Ronald W. Lewos	2 Dec 67 - 4 Aug 68
LLT Carl W. Parnell	5 Aug 68 - 31 Jan 69

INCLOSURE - I

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	WORK COMPLETED			AMMUNITION EXPENDED					FRIENDLY LOSSES			
	HOURS FLOWN	SORTIES	TROOPS CARRIED	TONS CARGO	7.62	2.75	40mm	FLARES	KHA	WHA	AIRCRAFT DAMAGED	AIRCRAFT DESTROYED
PRE-TET	4,630	13,178	20,484	408	224,500	467	—	408	1	10	1	1
TET	756	2,131	3,913	75	86,800	1,204	—	108	1	6	3	0
POST TET	3,106	13,483	127,765	320	175,600	600	1,590	557	0	10	1	2
POLEI KLENG- DAK TO	8,557	33,019	35,059	628	589,800	1,714	—	527	0	7	8	4
BAN ME THUOT - DUC LAP	6,382	24,649	21,649	898	557,300	1,267	985	317	1	7	6	2
PACIFICATION- PERIOD	9,224	33,736	35,274	871	1,447,400	3,112	4,635	1,077	0	6	6	3
TOTAL	32,675	120,196	129,114	2,772	3,081,400	8,364	7,210	3,034	3	46	25	12

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