

HEADQUARTERS  
145TH AVIATION BATTALION  
APO US Forces, 96227

AVAW-F

15 May 1966

Commander's Combat Note  
Number 23

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 6 MAY THROUGH 12 MAY 1966

OPERATIONS

The largest scale airmobile operation conducted by the 145th Aviation Battalion this week occurred on 6 May, when 1350 troops of the 173d Airborne Brigade were extracted from War Zone D. Four airmobile companies were employed in seven lifts to extract the ground elements. Moderate small arms fire was received during the first and second lifts resulting in several aircraft being hit. Suppressive fire by armed helicopters on enemy fire, prior to the third lift, significantly decreased enemy activity and no further hits were sustained.

For the remainder of the week, Company a/501st Aviation Battalion provided support to the 1st (US) Infantry Division for three days, and the 68th Aviation Company for two days. The 118th Aviation Company supported the 25th (US) Infantry Division on 12 May, by airlifting 238 troops in two combat assaults and two extractions, southwest of Trang Bang. All companies of the Battalion provided aviation support for the units of III (ARVN) Corps during the week. The 118th Aviation Company provided the largest share of this support.

The 118th Aviation Company was called upon to fly loud speaker psychological warfare missions. This mission involves the use of a UH-1D equipped with a battery of loudspeakers externally mounted. Controlled by a member of the advisory team of the Psywar Section III Corps (ARVN), prerecorded tapes or in some instances a captured Viet Cong will broadcast appeals to surrender. Often leaflets are dropped to supplement the information broadcast over the loud speakers.

A light fire team accompanies this mission as escort as a matter of standard operating procedures. Quite often the recipients of the propaganda broadcasts are inclined to answer with bullets.

The 197th Aviation Company scored one sampan sunk and one Viet Cong killed during the period. Other activities of the company consisted of effectively suppressing enemy automatic weapons fire directed against a Psy-war aircraft, and other armed helicopter strikes at the request of ground elements. Two light teams of the company performed a dramatic rescue of eleven survivors of a CH-47 crash 22 miles southeast of Saigon. This act required that rockets be jettisoned in order to lighten the load, landing in an extremely confined and non-secured area, which demanded the utmost in pilot skills.

The 74th Aviation Company performed the following tasks:

Visual Reconnaissance	97
Forward Air Control	4

Escort Missions 56

Flare Missions 2

Task Force Sea Wolf continued to operate from naval vessels in support of the U. S. Navy in the Rung Sat Special Zone. They provided overhead cover for the extraction of a SEAL Team which came under enemy fire. Two firing passes suppressed the enemy fire. One fire team reacted to providing aerial weapons fire on an estimated Viet Cong squad attacking a hamlet. The attack was stopped and an estimated six Viet Cong were killed by the aerial fire support. In another action a fire team struck a preplanned target and located a Viet Cong campsite which was struck. The results, 10 possible Viet Cong killed by air.

The U. S. Tortuga steamed out of Vung Tau and operated to the south during the period. A "first" was achieved by Lieutenant Reed, when he landed his helicopter while the ship was underway at night and during marginal weather after returning from a mission. The vessel had to be located by Lt. Reed by use of the low frequency homer. Task Force Sea Wolf also provided overhead cover for the evacuation of personnel from the crashed CH-47 mentioned above. On one occasion a fire team provided overhead cover for an ARVN ground operation west of Can Gio. For the period, Task Force Sea Wolf estimates 20 Viet Cong killed as a result of their air action.

The operational statistics for the week are as follows:

Rotary Wing

Total Sorties Flown 4155

Total Flying Hours 1549

Total Passengers 4512

Fixed Wing

Total Sorties Flown 338

Total Flying Hours 481

Training

The 20mm system is being rotated among the companies of the Battalion in order that all armed helicopter personnel receive instruction in the system. The personnel of the Pathfinder Detachment are training with a Portable Non-Directional beacon, and Glide Slope receiver equipment for night operations. The 68th Aviation Company is preparing to train the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, in the conduct of airmobile operations, which will commence 14 May 1966.

Aviation Safety

I am pleased to note that so far this month the Battalion has not experienced a single recordable aircraft accident. This I feel reflects highly on the