

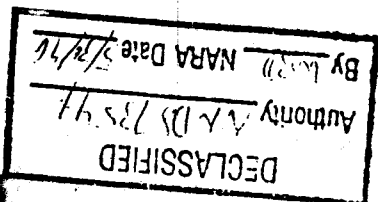
1966

HISTORY OF THE

155TH AVIATION COMPANY (AMED)

1 JANUARY 1966 - 31 DECEMBER 1966

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



HISTORY OF THE
155TH AVIATION COMPANY (AML)
APO SAN FRANCISCO, 96297

1 JANUARY 1966 - 31 DECEMBER 1966

Prepared by
Unit Historian and Assistant
1LT Willis J. Heydenberk
WO1 Paul G. Coke

Approved by

ROBERT V. ATKINSON
Maj Inf

52D COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO San Francisco, 96318

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations

Forward

Preface

I. Mission and Resources

Mission	1
Organization	1
Regional Analysis	2

II. Significant Events and Operations: 1966

1 January - 31 March	5
1 April - 30 June	8
1 July - 30 September	11
1 October - 31 December	15

III. Statistics

IV. Appendix

Lineage	19
Roster of Key Personnel	20
Maps of Significant Operational Areas	

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

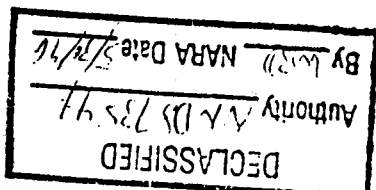
I MAP: Northern Central Plateau, Republic of Viet Nam
Indicating areas involving:

Operation PAUL REVERE I - IV
16 April 1966 - 31 December 1966
Mission in support of Special Forces, Kontum
23 October 1966 - 9 November 1966

II MAP: Southern Central Plateau, Republic of Viet Nam
Indicating areas involving:

Sector support and various airlifts of the 23D Division ARVN
Operation OMEGA
12 November 1966 - 3 December 1966

Maps included in initial copy only.

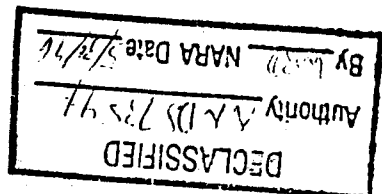


FORWARD

Serving as a combat support aviation unit in the Republic of Viet Nam, the 155th Aviation Company (AML), with its supporting detachments, is similar to the many other aviation units of the same size and structure. Formed originally as Company A, 1st Aviation Battalion, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas, the unit arrived at Vung Tau, Viet Nam on 1 May 1965. Bringing with them 24 UH-1D's, the company's advance party was welcomed to Ban Me Thuot by Lt Col Delbert Townsend, late commander of the 52d Aviation Battalion. After much preparation and many training hours, during which the men of Company A became proficient in the new and demanding techniques of flying in a combat zone, the company was declared operational on 1 June 1965. On 20 November 1965 Company A was redesignated as the 155th Aviation Company (AML).

From the first, however, the airlift platoons were known as the "Stagecoaches", while the armed platoon was called the "Falcons." Under these names, the men of this proud company have spread their reputation for accomplishing their mission while maintaining the highest of safety standards throughout Viet Nam. From Quang Ngai in the north to Soc Trang in the south, from the fertile coast to the Cambodian border, they have flown over 30,000 hours in support of the allied forces combatting the threat of Communism in South East Asia.

This history is dedicated to all those men who have served with the 155th Aviation Company since its arrival in Viet Nam, with special tribute to those officers, warrant officers, and enlisted men who gave their lives in defense of their country.



IN MEMORY

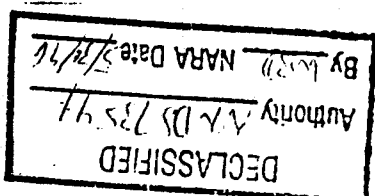
1965

PFC MICHAEL E. DAVIS	21 Oct
WO JOSEPH S. HUYLER	21 Oct
SP/5 WILLIAM J. JOHNSON	21 Oct
1/LT HAROLD A. PREISENDEFER	21 Oct

1966

WO EUGENE W. CASWELL	27 May
WO MICHAEL N. CORYELL	30 Nov
PFC RICHARD E. DABNEY	27 May
WO RAYMOND L. FORD	29 Mar
PFC GREGORY L. MILLER	20 Dec
WO PHILIP C. SMITH	29 Mar
PFC JAMES WALKER	30 Nov
WO WILMER J. WILLINGHAM	30 Nov
SP/4 JOHN W. WOOD	30 Nov

...that these men shall not have died in vain.



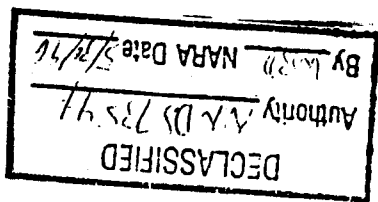
PREFACE

Since 10 August 1966 it has been my privilege to command the 155th Aviation Company (AML). However, before that time I had the opportunity to observe this company for a number of months while assigned to the Ban Me Thuot area. The flexibility of the aviation support operations and far ranging missions impressed me. I found it even more a challenge to command the unit with such an evident display of esprit de corps and team effort by officers and enlisted men of the company and detachments. During the period of my command, this company has supported ground and air elements of US and Republic of Viet Nam units in the Central Highlands. It has been my pleasure to be a part of this hard working combat assault helicopter company.

In the future I wish for the 155th the kind of year that it enjoyed so successfully in 1966. Company pilots, crews and aircraft flew a maximum number of combat hours with outstanding maintenance support behind them, and have produced one of the finest unit safety records in Viet Nam. The men of each supporting unit contributed to the overall flight record of the company, and made real history for the past year. Individually, they deserve special commendation for their participation in the full year's efforts of 1966.

It is a privilege to write this preface to the 155th's unit history for 1966. A unit history which began a good many flying hours and DEROS dates ago at Fort Riley, Kansas, and which is being made daily here in Viet Nam in the highest of US Army and aviation traditions.

Robert V. Atkinson
ROBERT V. ATKINSON
Major, Infantry
Commanding



Part I

MISSION AND RESOURCES

Mission

The mission of the 155th Aviation Company is to provide movement of combat troops in airmobile operations, and to provide tactical air movement of combat supplies and equipment within the combat zone.

Organization

The 155th Aviation Company is organized under TOE 1-77G and has the following units attached:

165th Transportation Detachment (Cargo Helicopter Field Maintenance)

8th Medical Detachment

208th Signal Detachment (RADRED) (AVIONICS)

52d Aviation Battalion Security Section

212th Military Police Detachment (K-9)

*Air Force Detachment 10, 5th Weather Squadron

* Not attached but in weather and flight planning support with METRO weather advisories.

Regional Analysis

Terrain

The II Corps Tactical Zone, in which Ban Me Thuot is located and in which the 155th Aviation Company renders the majority of its support, covers an area of 32,725 square miles, or 49% of the land area of South Viet Nam. Its western border is 342 miles long and in common with Laos, in the northern portion of Kontum Province, and Cambodia to the III Corps Tactical Zone. The eastern border is approximately 400 miles of coastline with the South China Sea. The area is 40 miles wide in the north and 342 miles wide in the south. This area is politically divided into the Provinces of Kontum, Binh Dinh, Pleiku, Phu Bon and Phu Yen in the 22d Division ARVN Tactical Zone, and Darlac, Khanh Hoa, Quang Duc, Tuyen Duc, Ninh Thuan, Lam Dong, and Binh Thuan in the 23d DTA. Geographically, this area may be divided into three major areas.

1. The coastal plain is a narrow strip of long, flat, often marshy terrain, not more than twenty miles wide from the sea inland. This area is formed by a series of numerous river deltas interrupted by rocky ridge lines running steeply to the sea. This area is almost entirely under cultivation, with four rice crops a year.

2. The mountain region extends from north to south almost the entire length of the II Corps Tactical Zone. Elevations range from 3,000 to 8,000 feet, with the eastern slopes quite steep and the western, more gradual. Rain forests cover three quarters of this area with most of the remainder covered with open, deciduous growth. Cultivation is limited to small, cleared areas on relatively flat land. Flying in this area is very hazardous with forced landing areas practically non-existent, ceilings frequently very low and winds unpredictable.

3. The plateau region is located west of the mountains and is comprised of the Kontum Plateau in the north and the Darlac Plateau in the south. This region has altitudes ranging from 1,000 to 3,000 feet with gently rolling hills and much open area. Where the soil is not under cultivation, a thick growth of grass, to a height of eight to ten feet, covers the ground. Where adequate drainage is provided, this area will support four vegetable crops yearly.

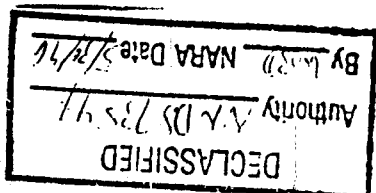
The principal cities of this area are Phan Thiet, Phan Rang, Nha Trang and Qui Nhon on the coastal plain; Dalat in the mountains; and Ban Me Thuot, Pleiku and Kontum on the plateaus. The major routes of this area are:

- Route #1 Saigon - Danang (Coastal Route)
- Route #11 Dalat - Phan Rang
- Route #14 Saigon - Ban Me Thuot - Pleiku - Kontum
- Route #19 Pleiku - Qui Nhon
- Route #20 Saigon - Dalat
- Route #21 Ban Me Thuot - Nha Trang

The republic's major rail line parallels Route #1 along its entire length with one spur line from Phan Rang to Dalat. The logistical and communications complex at Cam Ranh Bay is located between Phan Rang and Nha Trang.

Weather

Weather throughout this area can be divided into the summer monsoon, June through September, and the winter monsoon, November through April, with the months of May and October as periods of transition. During the summer monsoon the wind is southwesterly, causing cloud buildups on the western slopes of the mountains. This results in a



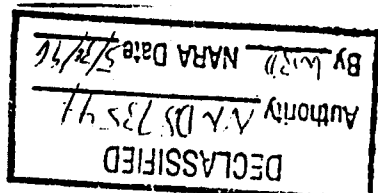
rainy season for the plateaus and mountainous areas during the summer months while the coastal provinces have clear skies and good flying weather. The winter monsoon brings a northeasterly flow with conditions reversed. The coastal provinces of Binh Thuan and Phu Thuan are little effected by either monsoon and have generally clear weather the year around.

Average rainfall in the mountain and plateau areas is 90 inches, and on the coastal plain 87 inches. The temperatures on the coastal plain range from the mid-70s to the high 80s during the rainy season and low 80s to high 90s during the dry season. The mountains and plateaus experience temperatures from the mid-60s to mid-80s during the wet season, and low 60s to low 80s during the dry season. Winds are normally gusty at 10-15 knots with velocity increasing with altitude. Surface winds up to 25 knots are frequently encountered.

Indigenous Population

The II Corps Tactical Zone has a population of approximately 2.5 million people, or just over 20% of the population of the Republic of Viet Nam. The majority of this population is located along the coastal plain in the vicinity of the cities. The majority of these people are Annamese.

The mountain and plateau regions are inhabited chiefly by Montagnard tribesmen. There are thirty-nine major tribes and some 150 subordinate tribal groups of these people living in the highlands of Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos. Ban Me Thuot is the traditional capitol of these people. The II Corps area is inhabited by approximately 500,000 Montagnards. The largest tribe in this region is the Rade, whose influence extends from Kontum to Ban Me Thuot.



Part II

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND OPERATIONS

Period 1 Jan - 31 Mar

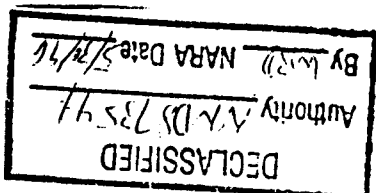
General:

Company operations of this quarter have been varied and widespread. From 7 January, when the 155th Aviation Company (AML) moved south to Tan Son Nhut, until 10 March, when it embarked on support missions of the 25th Infantry Division south of Pleiku, Stagecoaches and Falcons moved across the length and breadth of South Viet Nam in air combat support missions.

Major operations during this quarter involving the 155th included a large airlift out of Bien Hoa, with other short support operations staged from Bong Son, Phu Cat and Tan Canh. Also used as staging areas by the 155th were Camp Holloway Army Airfield, Pleiku, and for several battalion missions in the local area, Ban Me Thuot Airfield.

Events and Operations:

Company operations began for the year on 7 January when the 155th was attached to the 145th Aviation Battalion at Tan Son Nhut for an operation in support of the 173d Airborne Brigade. Under the command of Maj Joseph L. Parlas Jr., the 155th participated in its largest operation to date. Involving 108 UH-1D aircraft, the massive airlift was staged out of Bien Hoa and consisted of six lifts, seven troops per aircraft. Regulars from the newly formed Australian Royale Brigade constituted a large number of the troop movement. During the operation, four of the 155th aircraft were struck by ground fire, three severely enough to require precautionary landings. The responsiveness and

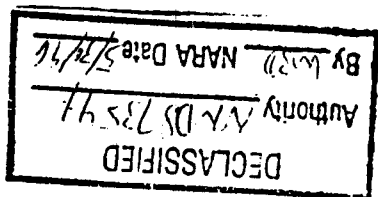


preparedness of a well trained wrecker crew was responsible for enabling three of the damaged aircraft to complete the mission and return with the company to Ban Me Thuot on 9 January.

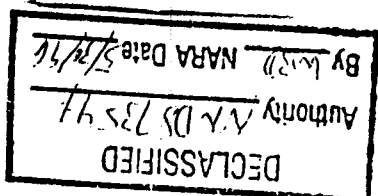
General support of the 22d Division ARVN was accomplished in an operation on 14 and 15 January, with the 52d Aviation Battalion in search and destroy missions near Bong Son. The company returned to the Bong Son area on 27 January to continue operations as part of the 52d Battalion. Remaining through 7 February in support of the ARVN airborne brigade, the 1st 5th participated in Operation Masher/White Wing, jointly staged by the US Marines, 1st Air Cavalry Division and the ARVN airborne brigade. Initial flights were made from the Army airfield at Phu Cat.

28 January and 3 February saw the company performing battalion combat assaults. On 4 February South Viet Nam Premier, Nguyen Cao Ky and his party were transported with eight airlift helicopters and four armed escorts on an aerial inspection of the operational area. Standby for reinforcement of the 1st Cavalry was the mission of 5 February, but poor weather conditions forced its cancellation. During the remainder of the operational support, the company was engaged in general missions involving resupply and medical evacuation flights. Major problems during the period proved to be lack of supply of potable water and fuel for range burners. Rations and water were received from a unit of the 1st Cavalry DIVARTY at this time.

From 15 through 20 February the 1st 5th supported the 3d Brigade, 45th Battalion, 23d Division ARVN in a search and destroy operation north of Ban Me Thuot. During this time the company continued its normal missions in support of the 23d Division and its Tactical Area (DTA). On both 15 and 16 February the company was scattered on multiple sector duties.



One misfortune marred the fine combat record of the company during this period. Two members of the armed platoon departed their aircraft after landing near Bu Prang on 29 March and wandered into an old French Minefield. Efforts to rescue the two pilots failed. WO Raymond L. Ford and WO Philip C. Smith became casualties when they accidentally detonated anti-personnel mines.



Period 1 Apr - 30 Jun

General:

Initial days of this quarter were spent by the 155th in normal mission flights around the various supported sectors, but later missions took the company farther away from home base. The 1st Air Cavalry Division initiated Operations Paul Revere in mid-April to search out and destroy the elusive enemy in the hazardous Chu Pong mountain range. 155th support of ground units with the 52d Battalion in this operation continued for the rest of the year.

Other quarterly events proved on the minus side as one company pilot and a young gunner lost their lives in the combat zone of Viet Nam.

Events and Operations:

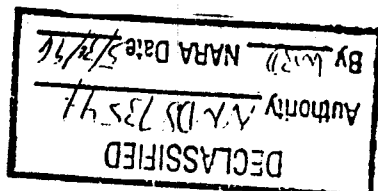
During the early part of April the company flew daily support missions for the various units around the sectors and in conjunction with the 23d Division operations near Ban Me Thuot. On 16 April the 155th departed Ban Me Thuot to support the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division on Operation Paul Revere. From 16 through 23 April the company staged missions from Tan Canh airfield. It was during this time that a combat assault on 20 April resulted in near casualties for two 155th pilots when a UH-1D was hit by enemy ground fire. Aircraft commander, Cpt Raymond L. Hardy, Inf, and pilot Maj Wilford C. Isner, Arty, were both wounded by a 50-caliber round that entered the cockpit, ricocheted off the armor-plated seats and exited out the other side. Both officers were evacuated to Army hospitals, and Cpt Hardy was later sent back to the states for additional recuperation. Maj Isner returned to the unit after some convalescence at Qui Nhon Army hospital.

During the above action of 20 April, an armed helicopter, commanded by Cpt Robert W. Frost, Armor, engaged an enemy 50-caliber position and scored a direct hit with four rockets. Cpt Frost was credited with one confirmed kill and with destroying the gun position.

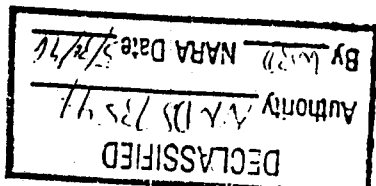
Moving to Pleiku on 23 April, the 155th operated from there in support of elements of the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and the ARVN airborne brigade. Through the period 23 to 30 April, the company was also involved in support of the 23d Division during Operation Longfellow. Two aircraft daily, and one additionally during the regimental size operations, were supplied. Difficulty was encountered in meeting this dual requirement and also providing another aircraft for medical evacuation. The number of aircraft remaining at Ban Me Thuot was generally considered to be inadequate. On 30 April the company returned to Ban Me Thuot and operations returned to normal.

During the month of May, three aircraft were totally destroyed. An armed helicopter was shot down in a combat assault north of Duc Co. The ship burned, but no injuries were sustained by personnel on board. Two airlift aircraft were lost during the last week of May as one crashed and burned due to a tree strike, killing two US infantrymen. Also lost were the lives of four CIDG personnel, while two others were badly burned. The second UH-1D was lost as a result of engine failure over rough terrain. No fatalities or injuries occurred in this accident. One UH-1D received three hits from enemy ground fire on a resupply mission in May, but no serious damage or personal injury resulted from this hostile contact.

From 3 May through 30 June the 155th operated from Camp Holloway, Pleiku in general support of the 25th Infantry Division, with time out for battalion operations with the 22d Division ARVN on 19 May in the



vicinity of Bong Son. Tragedy struck the company on 27 May during a troop lift south of Pleiku near field base Oasis. WO Eugene W. Caswell was killed when the aircraft he was flying failed to clear tall trees in the takeoff path from a confined area and crashed. Crew chief, PFC Robert C. Luce, and gunner, PFC Richard E. Dabney Jr., were severely burned in the crash and required medical evacuation to Nha Trang. PFC Dabney subsequently died on 3 June while enroute to an Army hospital in San Antonio, Texas.



Period 1 Jul - 30 Sep

General:

During this quarter, company aircraft moved north daily from the Ban Me Thuot area, until the company operations control was moved to a fixed location in support of Operation Paul Revere south of Pleiku. Nevertheless, the 155th aircraft continued to provide air support to the 23d Division in a number of important operations staged from Ban Me Thuot.

Events followed a colorful line as company commander, Maj Parlas, received a Vietnamese award and members of his command were presented like recognition for their efforts in assisting the 23d Division in its battle against the common enemy. A change of command ceremony brought in new leadership, as the company moved to full support of the 4th Infantry Division, newly arrived from the states.

Events and Operations:

The first ten days of July were spent in the usual support missions within the local flying area. A daring late afternoon rescue of a downed USAF O-1E pilot made by a UH-1D commanded by CWO Wesley D. Page on 3 July added much optimism to future air-land rescues. Within 20 minutes from the time the rescue call was received in 155th Operations, CWO Page's aircraft was making the pickup. Flight Surgeon Cpt James Paulk was on board to assist the downed pilot. A light team of "Falcon" gun ships were dispatched to provide air cover for the rescue.

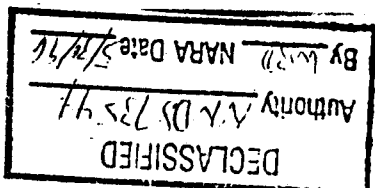
Later that evening the company's aircraft were assembled at Ban Me Thuot to lift a quick reaction force to the scene of the downed O-1E on a lonely stretch of road near the Cambodian border. However, poor weather conditions prevented the lift, and the plane was extracted

the next day.

July Fourth was passed at home base with Vietnamese representatives from the local Darlac Province gathering to celebrate the Declaration Day with the American servicemen at the aviation compound. Province Finance Chief Tri presented gifts to the command in behalf of his people for the continuing US effort in opposing Viet Cong aggression in their area. The morning of 5 July saw men and aircraft of the 155th returning to the Pleiku area to continue support of ground units there with the 52d Battalion.

During the period 6 to 10 July the company was once more in support of the 23d Division with the primary duty of lifting elements for the 145th Regiment in the Buon Ho area. During this operation, five troop lifts were accomplished. Two of the lifts, on 8 and 9 July, carried 700 regulars to ground contact with an estimated battalion size Viet Cong force in the vicinity of Buon Ho. Only brief contact was made the first day, but subsequent engagements followed the next day with mounting casualties on both sides. Approximately 140 reinforcements as well as ammunition and supplies were flown in that afternoon. A body count of 100 Viet Cong was reported by American advisors near the action, while friendly killed was termed light. Cover support provided by the 155th's armed "Falcon" platoon accounted for many of the enemy killed. Ground troops captured enemy rifles, radio equipment and Viet Cong documents. No 155th aircraft were reported damaged or hit during the two-day engagement.

Successful 155th participation in the close ground combat of the 23d mission support prompted Brig Gen Nguyen Van Manh, 23d Division Commanding General, to present Vietnamese honors to three men of the company on 1 August. 155th Commander, Maj Parlas, received the Vietnamese

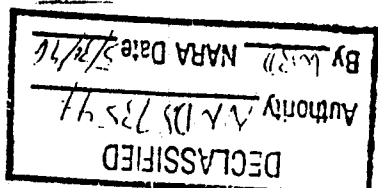


Gallantry Cross with the Silver Star for his close cooperation with the ARVN division staff and personnel since coming to the command in December 1965. To Cpt Frost and 1Lt William O. Martin went the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for their part in supporting ARVN combat action during Operation Thang Long, 8 July to 12 July 1966. Cpt Frost was decorated for suppressive armed air support which resulted in killing forty Viet Cong. 1Lt Martin received his Vietnamese medal for evacuating 26 wounded from under enemy fire and returning them to medical facilities in Ban Me Thuot.

During the period 11 to 31 July, the company returned in force to coordinate with 52d Battalion operations in support of the 25th Infantry in the Pleiku area. Field base Catecka was utilized often during the month by 155th aircraft in staging troop lifts and resupply missions. The same type of mission support continued through August when the field base was moved to the Special Forces camp located at Plei Djereng, and later to the division's Forward Supply Area south of there.

With the reassignment of two 155th pilots, Cpt Franklin E. Pearce JR. and Cpt Gerald L. Ziegler, to the 2d Airlift Platoon, 282d Aviation Company on 5 August, this unit relinquished further responsibility of administrative flights for the 33d Senior Advisory teams. The 282d aircraft were assigned regularly to the VIP flight missions at Ban Me Thuot and utilized the parking and refueling facilities available at the aviation company base.

On 10 August Maj Parlas relinquished the command of the 155th as "Stagecoach 6" to Maj Robert V. Atkinson, Inf. The 52d Battalion Commander, LtCol Foy Rice, took part in the exchange of the company guidon. Afterwards, Maj Parlas invited LtCol Rice to join him in putting the remaining 15 minutes on UH-1D, number 64-13545, flying the aircraft into the compulsory 1200-hour engine change. This was a first for the company



in engine endurance, and a rarity in the Viet Nam combat zone.

Three armed "Falcon" aircraft were assigned the mission of visual reconnaissance and road clearing from 7 through 12 September in the Phu Trang area. This flight was characterized by daily contact with Viet Cong, resulting in the destruction of 50 structures and 30 enemy killed.

Throughout August and September, the 155th spent the majority of its operational time in the field under monsoon clouded skies. Operating in connection with the 119th and 170th Aviation Companies and a 1st Cavalry (CH-47A) airlift unit, 155th pilots proved extremely reliable during the quarter as no major aircraft accidents occurred and no lives were lost. It was during this period also that the company organized and completed a move from Ban Me Thuot to Catecka, with its own mess personnel and operations team intact. In the future, battalion mess and operations facilities were to switch frequently among the three companies in the Pleiku area.

Period 1 Oct - 31 Dec

General:

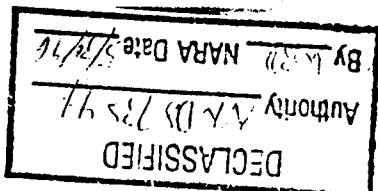
Operations in support of the 25th Infantry and the 4th Infantry continued throughout this period, extending to the north as far as Kontum, and as far south as the enemy infested Chu Pong mountain range. Operations also extended as far west as the Cambodian border, with the 155th involved in a majority of the missions.

Events proved to be pleasant on Thanksgiving and Christmas for the men of the 155th. Both days were holidays for the troops and both were enjoyed fittingly. On 24 November the compound swimming pool was officially opened by the 17th Group Commander, Col John W. Marr, Inf, and 52d Battalion Commander, LtCol Foy Rice, in a ribbon cutting ceremony. On 24 December the new Battalion Commander, LtCol Paul C. Smithey, TC, assisted in dedicating the Crossbow Inn NCO club which contributed to the relaxational offerings of the aviation compound at Ban Me Thuot.

Events and Operations:

Operation Searchlight required two gun ships in the Phan Thiet area from 7 through 12 October to test the suitability of using the zion infrared searchlight during night combat operations. Working in conjunction with elements of the 1st Cavalry, the "Falcons" hit hard at VC activity in keeping Route #3 open north of Phan Thiet and impairing enemy rice stealing raids.

Airlift platoons of the 155th were involved in the support of elements of the 25th Infantry and the newly arrived 4th Infantry. Personnel during this time were billeted in the transit quarters provided at Camp Holloway, Pleiku.



On 23 through 25 October the 155th operated in brief airlift support of the 23d Division in the Ban Me Thuot area of operations. During the last half of October, five airlift aircraft and two gun ships were assigned to US Special Forces unit located in the Kontum area. 155th aircraft acted in aviation support during the classified operation of long range reconnaissance patrol actions. This operation turned out to be one of the most interesting and challenging for the unit pilots and crew members alike.

On 30 October a UH-1D commanded by WO Michael M. Coryell and piloted by WO Wilmer J. Willingham was shot down while on a resupply mission for an element of the 25th Infantry near Plei Djereng. Crashing to the ground in flames, the aircraft had no survivors. Also perishing in the aircraft were the crew chief, PFC James Walker and the gunner, SP/4 John W. Wood.

While in support of operations near Kontum in late October, the 155th was involved in a rescue of an Air Force pilot shot down by intense enemy ground fire in hostile territory. 1Lt Richard H. Silva, Arty, and WO Stephen B. Birchall were dispatched in a UH-1D with two gunships in escort to make the dangerous pickup of the uninjured pilot in near darkness. The rescue story made the Pacific Stars and Stripes, and all participants were awarded distinguished combat aerial decorations.

Completing the Special Forces support mission at Kontum, the 155th dispatched one platoon of airlift ships and two gun ships to a similar mission, Operation Omega, at Ban Blech, 25 miles north of Ban Me Thuot. During that operation, aircraft were diverted from a patrol lift to a helicopter crash south of Ban Blech airstrip. Mechanical failure in a 155th UH-1D resulting in a forced landing in jungle terrain caused aircraft commander Cpt Freddie W. Williams and pilot WO Dennis M. Trux to be evacuated to the Army hospital at Nha Trang. Rapid reaction by other

company aircraft dispatched from Ban Me Thuot made the successful rescue possible, even though it was dark. Cpt Williams was later evacuated to the states while the other crew members and three passengers aboard returned to the company from hospital recuperation.

On Thanksgiving Day the 155th, minus those personnel involved in Operation Omega, enjoyed a brief respite in mission activity at Ban Me Thuot. The day was observed with a fly-by, awards and decorations ceremony, dedication of the new swimming pool and a short interdenominational service, followed by a well prepared meal for the men and guests in the enlisted mess. Meanwhile, Cpt Charles T. Peases, Inf, and WO James K. Erickson utilized one UH-1D to fly Gen William C. Westmoreland and party into Special Forces camps located in the Ban Me Thuot area. They were escorted by two "Falcon" gun ships.

December was again characterized by the 155th in Pleiku area operations in support of the 4th and 25th Infantry Divisions, the 52d Battalion having taken full responsibility of those units' air support. Mid-December saw the termination of Operation Omega at Ban Blech, and the 155th was looking forward to a well deserved rest and company reunion at home base over the two-day Christmas truce.

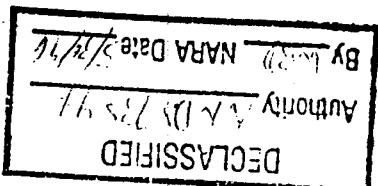
Christmas Eve day saw the company in full strength at the compound in Ban Me Thuot. Vietnamese Province Sector Chief Col Thanh and Nguyen Van Can, president of the Provincial Committee, headed a delegation which presented a plaque to the 155th, and other gifts to all members present. Some 80 Montagnard orphans visited the compound later that morning and were greeted by WO Robert W. Johnson dressed as Santa Claus who gave them gifts of candy. On Christmas day the men enjoyed a feast preceded by a short religious service. From then until 2 January, the 155th relaxed and readied for the new year.

Part III

STATISTICS

155TH AVIATION COMPANY (AML)
1 JANUARY 1966 - 31 DECEMBER 1966

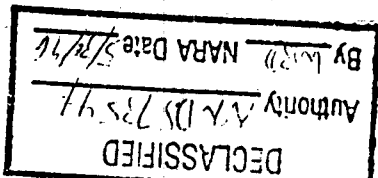
Combat hours flown	21,142
Combat sorties	65,768
Total passengers	77,000
Total cargo	3,846 tons



LINEAGE

155TH AVIATION COMPANY (AML)

On 20 November 1965 Company A, formerly of the 1st Aviation Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kansas, was redesignated as 155th Aviation Company (AML), having been operational at Ban Me Thuot, Republic of Viet Nam since 1 June 1965 as part of the 52d Aviation Battalion. The former 155th Aviation Company was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division as Company A, 1st Aviation Battalion upon its arrival in Viet Nam from Korea.



ROSTER OF KEY PERSONNEL

As of 31 December 1966

155TH AVIATION COMPANY (AML)

Company Headquarters

Atkinson, Robert V.	MAJ	066671	INF	Co Cmdr
Fleming, Charlie P.	MAJ	04005545	INF	Co XO
Hayes, James B. Jr.	MAJ	099329	INF	Flt Opns Off
Betz, John A.	CPT	05710479	INF	Intel Off
Sasser, Henry A.	WO1	W3151568	QMC	Supply Off
Newport, Dennis E.	MAJ	04026571	CE	1st Plat Cmdr
Coley, Thomas W.	MAJ	01880931	CE	2d Plat Cmdr
Doyle, John P.	MAJ	072037	TC	3d Plat Cmdr

Service Platoon

Martin, William O.	CPT	05104493	ARM	Svc Plat Cmdr
--------------------	-----	----------	-----	---------------

165th Trans Det

Stephens, Richard B.	MAJ	081535	TC	Det Cmdr
----------------------	-----	--------	----	----------

8th Med Det

Paulk, James F.	CPT	05307524	MC	Det Cmdr
-----------------	-----	----------	----	----------

203th Signal Det

Kervahn, Raymond L.	CPT	04022958	SIG	Det Cmdr
---------------------	-----	----------	-----	----------

212th MP Det (K-9)

Thomas, Garrison C.	SGT	RA14810846	--	Det Ldr
---------------------	-----	------------	----	---------

52d Avn Bn Security Sec

Baker, Charles H.	SGT	RA13538831	--	Sec Ldr
-------------------	-----	------------	----	---------

PREVIOUS 155TH COMPANY COMMANDERS

DeLoach, William W.	MAJ	067668	ARM	20 Mar 65 - 28 Aug 65
Yamagata, Fred T.	MAJ	02097050	INF	28 Aug 65 - 15 Nov 65
Hapier, James W.	MAJ	072172	INF	15 Nov 65 - 18 Dec 65
Parlas, Joseph L. Jr.	MAJ	01935283	INF	18 Dec 65 - 10 Aug 66