

Haul Men, Machines



WHAT IS DUTY like with an Army Aviation company?

A typical day for the crew and pilot starts at 0500 and ends at 1900, seven days a week. Pre-dawn hours will find crews busily preparing aircraft for flights throughout the Republic of Vietnam. At dusk crews make final checks and bed down for the night.

Army crews of one aviation company average eight to ten flights per day. Their total deliveries for a recent month included 1,508 tons of cargo and 14,944 passengers.

Terrain, enemy situations, and climatic conditions make flying supply missions dangerous. Many Caribou pilots have made "matchbox" landings on strips not much larger than a football field. This factor increases the dangers of supply missions to the many remote compounds throughout the Republic of Vietnam.

Not only does the Caribou company land supplies at airfields but they also airdrop a large percent to remote Army Special Forces

units. This is done by "Lolex" which is a low level airdrop. It is used under ideal conditions but extraordinary under combat conditions.

"Lolex" procedures are in common usage. Lolex drops are made from 3 to 15 feet above the ground, and supplies can be placed within 20 yards of a given area.

Additional missions include supplying airplanes to an airborne unit for jumps, medical teams for evacuations of U. S. and Vietnamese personnel, flare drops, and radio relay.

Despite the hazardous duty imposed by flying in support of Army Aviation missions, safety of operations has not been neglected. One company had flown over 13,000 accident free hours during 1965. They are confident of reaching their 1966 goal of 15,000 accident free hours.

Professionalism in doing their jobs, individually and as a team, gives every member of the company assurance that they are on the right track.

ARMY AVIATION'S newest unit insignia on aircraft over the Mekong Delta are crossed shotguns. They belong to an O-1F Bird Dog company.

Mission of the "Shotguns" is to provide ground commanders throughout the delta with greater surveillance and target detection capabilities. It also includes such missions as artillery adjustment, radio relay, psychological warfare operations, target marking, flare drops and aerial resupply.

Their light fixed wing airplanes are able to operate out of relatively unimproved airstrips, and

are permanently located at such strips which offer adequate security.

An aviator and airplane are assigned to different areas in the delta and live and operate with U. S. advisors. Each Bird Dog carries a trained Vietnamese observer in addition to the pilot and each has constant communications with his separate operations centers.

By keeping on the alert for Viet Cong movements and buildups and quickly calling in fire support, "Shotguns" are rapidly proving to be an invaluable addition to the mission of supporting the Republic of Vietnam.



Carrying on 20 year tradition of giving ground commanders airborne eyes is role of

O-1Fs in Vietnam