

Mike Law

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 21, 1998 7:19 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: 339th Monthly Patch

Mike,

Just came across your card in my wallet and realized I owed you this 339th summary that was used for a net patch of the month. If you have further need, I have 26 E-mails in the file that relate, but we didn't want to put all the exceptions in what was supposed to be brief.

The ol'fart in a cart,

Roy Kauffman

----- Begin forwarded message -----
From: Ted Jenkins [REDACTED]

Gary, thanks for info. I used what I could so that I could stay in the confines of a brief summary of the 339th and get this out on time. Certain information that may differ from Maj Allwine's recollections came from published works, e.g., "Stanton's Order of Battle" and "Army Aviation Logistics and Vietnam, 1961-75" so I thought I should use those references. Thanks to Mike for those. I thought it only fitting that I include the first commander by name. Have tried to leave out individual anecdotal stories, not because I wanted to, but believe they should go into some unit history. Only wish we had more 339th people to show up and fill in the missing parts. Hopefully, what I have done meets with everyone's approval.

This has been sent earlier today to Larry Russell.

339th Transportation Company (DS)
'ALWAYS IN GOOD HANDS'

The 339th TC (Direct Support) of Fort Riley, Kansas, under the command of Captain Robert Allwine, was alerted for movement on December 31, 1961, and in February, 1962, began deployment to Nha Trang, SVN, taking six weeks for the voyage. The 339th's primary mission, as a part of the 14th Aviation Battalion, was to support the 18th Aviation Company which deployed in March. It would also provide back-up support to the field maintenance detachments or KD's, operating with the in-country helicopter companies in I and II Corps. Its area of responsibility ranged from Phan Thiet in the South to the DMZ and from the South China Sea to the borders of Cambodia and Laos and missions were subsequently performed throughout this area.

At a time in 1963 and 1964, when troop concentration was less than 16,000, the 339th performed many missions not normally associated with a direct support maintenance company. Without a large presence of US aircraft yet in country to repair, the 339th performed logistic, resupply and humanitarian missions for the Special Forces A Teams in the highlands and near the western border, and assisted in the resettlement of Montagnard tribesmen, moving their families, livestock, and tons of dried fish and rice. Before there was a deep water port at Cam Rahn Bay, Navy units there also received resupply support from the 339th, as did units in Phan Thiet and Dong Ba Thin. Also during 1964 and 1965, the Air Force requested and received a CH-37B and crew to assist them in the Blue Springs recovery mission in Danang.

Even though many non-maintenance missions were flown, the men of the 339th were aware that their main purpose was to provide up to fourth echelon maintenance for all Army aircraft in I and II Corps. The men prided themselves in quick turn around of aircraft and insured

that when an aircraft went back to its unit, it was in perfect condition. Recovery teams were well trained and could prepare a downed UH-1 for recovery within 15 minutes of arrival. Unit efficiency also insured quick preparation would be applicable to any aircraft requiring recovery.

The aircraft complement was known to vary year by year. Upon arrival in 1962, the unit had one CH-21 Shawnee and one U-1A Otter. In early 1964, the 339th had two CH-21's, two UH-1B Iroquois, one U-1A and one U-6 Beaver, however, in May of 1964, they received three CH-37B Mojave's, replacing the CH-21's. As 1965 drew to a close, the unit had three CH-37B's, two UH-1B's, two U-1A's and one CV-2 Caribou.

Upon receiving the CH37-B's in the May of 1964, the 339th became the only unit in I or II Corps with the capability to recover downed UH-1's, CH-21's, Caribou's and U1-A's. Aircraft recoveries were performed over the entire I and II Corps until the summer of 1965 when the Cranes and Chinooks began to arrive and many of the missions not directly related to maintenance activities were accepted by those units having CH-47's and CH-54's. Later, the 339th would have its own CH-47 and continue to make recoveries as requested and perform resupply and support missions.

The 339th Transportation Company (Direct Support) and its 224 men served as an exceptional example of a unit dedicated to its mission and markedly deserved the motto "Always in Good Hands".

Prepared by Ted Jenkins, 339th TC(DS), 1964-1965 (tfjk@iswt.com) and Roy Kaufman, 339th TC(DS), 1964-1965 (rkman@juno.com) with valuable assistance from Jay Riseden, Mike Sloniker, Gary Roush, Gary Earls, Bob Allwine and Gus Ledwidge.

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