1965

ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE HISTORY OF THE 121ST AVIATION COMPANY

1 JANUARY 1965 through 31 DECEMBER 1965

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13TH AVIATION BATTALION
12TH AVIATION GROUP
UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM

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FORWARD

The history of the 121st Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) dubbed "The Famed Soc Trang Tigers", the subject of this annual historical supplement, is one of long and dedicated service on the part of the officers and the men who have served this unit and the United States Army. Its origin dates back some thirty years 10 February 1936, on which date Company H, 2nd Battalion, 47th Quartermaster Truck Regiment was authorized. Its true spirit carried it through World War II where it served with distinction in numerous campaigns. The same spirit has enabled it to keep abreast of current modern developments in the field of Army mobility and has made it the effective combat support organization that it is today - a leader in Army Aviation. A comprehensive study of the unit's history from its initial formation through 1963 appears in the annual supplement of the history dated 1 January 1963 through 31 December 1963. Likewise the course of events and progress made during 1964 are detailed in the supplement for that year.

The changes and progress the unit has made as reflected in its history over the years have continued on an ever increasing scale throughout the past year creating the unit's "can do" capability when called upon to accomplish a mission. The 121st Aviation Company's place at the top of Army Aviation is further substantiated by its prominent role in helping the 13th Aviation Battalion (The Delta Battalion) become AAAA's "Most Outstanding Army Aviation Unit of the Year" for the year 1964.

The success and honor of the 121st Aviation Company can be attributed

to the pride, spirit and competance of the officers and men who are "The Famed Soc Trang Tigers", and to whom this supplement is respectfully and gratefully dedicated.

PREFACE

This document has been prepared as a supplement to the Unit History in an effort to make the important events, changes, progress, and developments which have taken place between 1 January 1965 and 31 December 1965 a matter of record.

Every effort has been made to screen all available sources of information and to draw from them such pertinent facts and figures as are necessary to present an accurate and complete narration of the 121st Aviation Company's activities and accomplishments during the year 1965.

SCOPE

The year 1965 has been a year of great significant growth and change for the 121st Aviation Company. This growth and change is commensurate with the United States' military buildup in the Republic of Vietnam and reflects this unit's determination to continue to meet the demands of our increasing committment to the people of South Vietnam. While several major significant changes have marked this year they have done so in such a way as to enhance the Unit's capability and effectiveness as opposed to detracting from them.

The first major significant change to appear during 1965 was the preparation for and actual arrival of a new airmobile company at Soc Trang Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion arrived in May after several months of preparation for their arrival. Both the new building program prior to their arrival and the training of new aviators in the methods of flying in the Delta once they had gotten here, taxed the skills of 121st personnel due to the fact that during this time they were required to continue to perform their own mission requirements in addition to these newly acquired duties.

The arrival of A, 101st brought with it a full contingent of UH-1D aircraft which have a considerably increased payload and troop carrying capability. An immediate exchange of some BRAVO models for the large DELTA models began a transition to an all DELTA model fleet for the two airlift "slick" platoons of the 121st. This transition was completed in August of this year with the arrival of replacement aircraft. The transition to the DELTA model "slick" ships greatly increased the unit's capability and effectiveness.

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Another major change brought about by the arrival of A, 101st "Winged Warriors" was in the command structure of the Soc Trang Airfield. Prior to their arrival the airfield had been under the command of the Commanding Officer of the 121st Aviation Company. Due to the fact that the Commanding of A, 101st was senior in grade to the Commanding Officer of the 121st, he in effect became Installation Coordinator of the Soc Trang Airfield. This arrangement has led to numerous changes which will be reflected and detailed in the ensuing pages of this supplement.

The period of the past year and the progress of the war effort have brought a bout a marked change in the general tactical approach to fighting the Viet Cong and consequently in the utilization of the unit's aircraft. The highly successful "eagle" flight, involving one airmobile company of helicopters and approximately 100 ARVN troops has given way to much larger scaled and more detailed and intricate airmobile operations, often involving several battalions operating as a heliborne task force working in close conjunction with ground troops mounted on armored personnel carriers, artillery, amphibious assault forces, and air strikes. Any combination of all of these elements were a part of operations this unit participated in the latter stages of the year. This called for increased planning, skill, judgement, and coordination on the part of the 121st Aviation Company leaders and they measured up with flying colors.

Still another change of major significance which occured in 1965 was the shift in the mission of the 121st Aviation Company from the role of direct support of the 21st Division (ARVN) to that of general support of the IV Corps (ARVN). This shift was probably in the making with the arrival of Company A, 502nd Aviation Battalion, the "Outlaws", at Vinh Long in December of 1964, but was not accomplished in full until 28 May 1965,

when the "Winged Warriors" participated in their first full scale operation. Prior to that time the "Tigers" had been called upon to support other units in the IV Corps area on occasion, but by and large their activity had been restricted to the 21st Division area. The presence of four fully operational airmobile helicopter companies in the Delta along with the increasing size of airmobile operations dictated this shift.

Two other major units became a part of the Soc Trang complex this year and thus beneficial impact has been felt by all. The first of these was the 221st Aviation Company (Fixed Wing Light) which has become known to all as the "Shotguns". Their OL-F, "Bird Dogs", while flying their reconnaissance and liaison missions, have become a familiar sight around the Delta to "Tiger" aviators. The new faces of the "Shotgun" officers and men have likewise become familiar as they shared our airfield facilities. Although many of their personnel and aircraft were based in various parts of the Delta in support of combat ground units, the 221st Headquarters and maintenance facilities were here at Soc Trang and in effect this has been their true home.

The most recent addition to the Soc Trang community came in December with the arrival of the 1st Platoon, 134th Aviation Company (Medium Transport) which brought to Soc Trang eight CV-2, "Caribous", to aid in general support of the IV Corps (ARVN). They were greeted in the traditional style at the Tigers' Den, the Soc Trang Officers' Open Mess, and the Beetle Nut Lounge, the EM club. The personnel of the "Rough Riders" were divided between the 121st and A/101st facilities to utilize available housing until more permanent arrangements can be made for them. The possibility of their joining the 134th's other platoon in Can Tho sometime in 1965 is anticipated but no definite decision has been made and as long as they are

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Numerous support units have been attached to the 121st this year and many services have been added, all of which have enhanced our capability and enabled us to perform our growing mission with greater professional competance. In summary 1965 was a year of tremendous advancement and great achievement for the 121st Aviation Company and its attached units.

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MISSION

The mission of the 121st Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) is to provide tactical and logistical air support to the military and civilian organizations of the Republic of Vietnam. Its primary role is that of general support to the IV Corps (ARVN) and then to the civilian organizations found within that area.

Tactically, the company provides air movement of troops, ammunition, and supplies and provides air support and aerial surveillance within the combat zone. The Company's aircraft are also utilized to assist in medical evacuation of ARVN and US wounded personnel when other support is unavailable. Search and rescue for Army, US Navy, USAF, and VNAF personnel from downed aircraft is an additional mission for the Company as well as security of downed aircraft. The advantages of aircraft mobility and speed in tactical operations are utilized to the maximum extent by supported Vietnamese units and elements.

Logistically the Company provides a heretofore unparalleled means of rapid transportation for the Vietnamese personnel, supplies and equipment from one strategic location to another. In other words the 121st Aviation Company is a combat air taxi service which is able and willing to haul anybody or any relatively light weight cargo which can possibly be of benefit to the Vietnamese people and their cause; in this way we contribute to the Civic Action Program. The command and logistical efficiency of Vietnamese military and civil authorities, as well as American advisory personnel, is augmented by use of the company's aircraft for transportation.

Additonal responsibilities of an administrative nature are found within the 121st Aviation Company's stated mission requirements. It assists in providing internal security of the compound, airfield, and post facilities, drawing upon its organic and attached personnel. The company provides administrative support for attached units and is responsible for rations and quarters for these units.

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ORGANIZATION

During 1965 the structure of the 121st Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) was formed under TO&E 1-77E dated 15 July 1963 as amended through Change 2 dated 25 August 1964, to meet the requirements which were necessary to bring about smooth and effective operation and to enable the unit to successfully accomplish its mission in the Republic of Vietnam. The basic structure of the Company's organization did not change from its previous configuration during Calendar Year 1965 except for the addition of a Gunner Platoon which became organic to the unit effective 1 December 1965, upon the authority of DA General Order 318.

The command structure showed a major commanding the unit, supported by an Executive Officer of the rank of captain. There were six component organizations within the company; company headquarters, one airlift platoon (armed), two airlift platoons (troop carrying), a gunner platoon and a modified service platoon.

Company headquarters contained a Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, First Sergeant, and such personnel in the Administrative Section as were necessary to provide effective administration for the company. It also contained an Operations Section with a captain as operations officer to handle the company's operational requirements. Further it contained an awards and decorations section and an intelligence section. Finally the company headquarters contained a supply section and an arms room.

The airlift platoon (armed) was commanded by a captain and was

further subdivided into two airlift sections or fire teams. Each fire team showed a lieutenant as section leader. The two airlift platoons (troop carrying) were likewise subdivided into two airlift sections, each with lieutenants filling the section leader positions. The service platoon (modified) called for a captain in command assisted by a warrant officer. Its primary mission was to provide second echelon aircraft maintenance for the Company's aircraft. Other duties normally assigned to the service platoon were assumed by units attached to the Company or handled through a consolidated facility with some of the unit's TO&E personnel participating.

As has been stated the gunner platoon became a permanent part of the 121st Aviation Company's organization on 1 December 1965. Prior to this time the gunner platoon which was TDY from the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii had only been attached to the 121st. Effective 1 December 1965, it became an organic platoon within the company and consequently one of its major component organizations.

As the 55 officers and warrant officers were not always balanced in rank according to the TO&E, deviations from indicated ranks in command positions were not infrequent during 1965.

AREA AND FACILITIES

The Soc Trang airfield and compound cover an area of approximately 150 acres. During 1965 the compound housed the 121st Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light), Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion, the 221st Aviation Company (Fixed Wing), the 1st Platoon, 134th Aviation Company (Medium Transport), the 82nd Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) and numerous other units attached to these major units for support.

Due to the tremendous influx of new units and personnel the Soc Trang installation facilities more than doubled in number and capacity during the Calendar Year 1965. Many of the facilities which were formally recognized as 121st Aviation Company facilities became installation facilities for joint use by all units. At the close of 1965 there were 165 buildings in use on the compound of which 45 were constructed during the year. Also a number of buildings were remodeled and expanded to meet the increasing demands.

In May 1965, construction began on facitities for the incoming company, Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion. This included the construction of eighteen troop billets, a mess hall, two latrines, and two wash houses, all which were completed by 1 June 1965. Two buildings were remodeled for an orderly room and a supply room. Also during May a water storage tank was constructed and the drilling of a 750 foot well was begun. The well was completed on 1 July 1965. During the month of June five troop billets and two administrative buildings were built to accomodate the 221st Aviation Company.

Again in the fall, extensive construction was under way at Soc Trang. An addition was built onto the 101st mess hall during December and two additional troop billets were constructed to aid in accommodating the incoming personnel of the 1st Platoon, 134th Aviation Company. Due to the cramped facilities of the Tigers' Den an addition was built onto the dining room during December of 1965. A post chapel was completed in December and its interior furnishings are expected to be completed by 31 January 1966.

A MARS Radio Station went into operation on 28 December 1965 for the purpose of sending Marsograms while Soc Trang GCA (ground controlled approach) received some long awaited radar equipment. August saw the beginning of the construction of a new air traffic control tower, however contractor and structural difficulties have delayed its completion. It is expected to be complete and operational in February of 1966. During September a construction program was inaugrated to replace all of the wooden frame and sand bag bunkers on the perimeter with concrete bunkers. This was completed in October by the RMK Construction Company at which time they began building a twelve foot high barbed wire fence around the compound. This was not yet completed at the close of the year.

At the close of 1965 current contracts were under way to expand aircraft parking areas on the flight line and to provide facilities for POL, ammunition storage and a motor pool. The POL, ammunition storage, and motor pool facilities are expected to be complete by March of 1966 and will serve as post facilities. Having experienced difficulties in obtaining a workable filter for the swimming pool,

it was not in service at the close of the year. It is expected to be open for the use of all installation personnel on approximately 31 January 1966.

A post exchange, library, movie theater, darkroom, and special services hobby shop were available for use of all installation personnel. A tailor shop, gift shop, and photographic processing service, all three being operated by local Soc Trang merchants were also open for installation convenience. And in December an addition was built onto the PX building to house the gift and photo shop. A model building room and gymnasium outfitted with weight lifting equipment were available for the use of personnel during their off duty hours.

The heavy construction at the Soc Trang Airfield was done by the RMK Construction Company, a civilian firm contracted by the US government. The RMK representative arrived at Soc Trang during the summer of 1965. Lighter construction and the Repair and Utilities Department as well as the airfield fire department were handled by Pacific Architects and Engineers, PA & E.

The area and facilities utilized by the 121st Aviation Company expanded tremendously during the year of 1965 and it is anticipated that this growth trend will continue in the future.

ATTACHED UNITS

Due to this Company's relative isolation from its parent unit, the 13th Aviation Battalion, and from other US Military support facilities, a number of the units have been attached to the 121st Aviation Company and to the other units of this installation to lend support. There are two categories of units attached for support. The first category includes those units which are attached to the 121st Aviation Company for direct support and for those the Company must provide rations and quarters and assume administrative responsibility. The second category includes those units which are in general support of the 121st Aviation Company, the other units which comprise the Soc Trang installation, and the other units within the IV Corps area. The Company's responsibility for them is only to provide rations and quarters as their control comes under the jurisdiction of the Installation Coordinator. A brief summary of the units attached to the 121st Aviation Company falling into each of these categories is as follows:

Units Attached for Direct Support:

80th Transportation Detachment (CHFM)

The 80th Transportation Detachment provided aircraft field maintenance support for the 121st Aviation Company (AML) and the 82nd Medical Detachment (HA). All aircraft maintenance work above the second echelon level went to or through this Detachment. Duties of the 80th Transportation included periodic inspections of aircraft, repair of battle damage, replacement of major components and field

recovery of downed aircraft.

Each of the Detachment's 70 men received a 60 to 90 day period of on-the-job training upon their arrival at Soc Trang. A man might have been assigned to a periodic inspection crew, or to the engine, sheet metal, electrical or machine shop. Others were assigned as supply technicians, handling the 2,000 different replacement parts used during the countless parts transactions every month. Those men experienced in maintenance work were likely to have final checks on all work performed by the other members of the Detachment and to declare an aircraft to be airworthy.

Once trained for a particular job, individuals continued in that job, thereby constantly increasing their proficiency. During an average month more than 13,209 man-hours were spent by members of the 80th Transportation in direct aircraft maintenance support.

During the early part of 1965, two courses in UH-1D maintenance were started at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon. From the arrival of the first DELTA models at Soc Trang members of the 80th Transportation as well as 121st Aviation Company crew chiefs attended one or both of these 14 days courses, which offered both classrooms and practical training on the DELTA model. Upon completion of these courses the men of the 80th Transportation Company were better qualified to lend their service to the over all effect of maintenance support.

Members of the 80th Transportation's downed aircraft recovery team demonstrated their skills and abilities on numerous occasions by recovering downed aircraft while in close proximity to enemy

activity. Due to their professional competance they were able to recover every downed aircraft in a minimum of time without exception. "Wrecker 1", as the maintenance aircraft was called, accompanied the "Tigers" on all major airmobile operations and was on call 24 hours a day at all other times.

Through diligent effort and constant analysis of their own work the men of the 80th Trans were able to maintain a high rate of aircraft availability which contributed significantly to the supported unit's performance during the year. The unit was ably commanded by Captain Joe Craig, Transportation Corps, who replaced Captain Clarence H. Keville Jr., Transportation Corps, in September 1965.

257th Signal Detachment

During 1965 the Signal Detachment (Avionics) provided avionics support to the 121st Aviation Company aircraft and to all other aircraft stationed or in transit at the Soc Trang Airfield. In addition they furnished support to the airfield tower and ground controlled approach (GCA) radar. They also assisted in maintaining the nondirectional beacon, emergency radios in the installation CP bunkers and aviators' APH-5 flight helmets.

The shop operation consisted of an office located in the hanger area and a shop area adjacent to the POL facility at the north-east end of the airstrip. In order to provide the fastest and most efficient support possible, the two shift operation was utilized. The purpose of the night shift was to provide on site airborne equipment repair and direct exchange of inoperative equipment while the day shift accomplished bench work and the more complicated

avionics repairs.

The TO&E strength of the detachment of one officer and nine enlisted men was augmented by the addition of two avionics specialists from the 121st Aviations Company's communications section which resulted in increased efficiency and working capacity. While more than doubling work output per week the Detachment was able to reduce its backlog to an insignificant level. The progress made in 1965 by this unit is indicative of the professional competance of the 257th Signal Detachment's personnel and the long hours and hard work they put in their job. The Detachment was commanded by First Lieutenant Kenneth Tigges, Signal Corps.

Aerial Door Gunner Platoon (Provisional)

During the majority of 1965 the Aerial Door Gunner Platoons, which came TDY from the 25th Infantry Division, Hawaii, were attached to the 121st Aviation Company for a period of 90 days each. During their tours, the members of these TDY units lent support to the 121st by acting as door gunners for both "armed" and "slick" ships during each flight for the protection of the aircraft. Each member manned a M-60 machine gun and was responsible for the maintenance of two of these machine guns, one being for the crew chief and one for himself in the ship to which he was assigned.

The units were commanded by an officer and usually had 25 men assigned. Membership in the platoon was strickly on a voluntary basis and this was reflected in the high espirit de corps of the four units which served with the Soc Trang "Tigers" during 1965.

As previously noted, on 1 December 1965, the Aerial Door Gunner Platoon became organic to the 121st Aviation Company upon the Authority of DA General Order 318. The duties and responsibilities of its members remained the same, however an officer platoon leader was no longer authorized, this responsibility becoming an additional duty for an officer assigned to the company.

The members of the Aerial Door Gunner Platoon who were here at Soc Trang when the changes became effective were given their choice of either staying with the unit on a PCS basis or returning to their parent unit, the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry of the 25th Infantry Division. It was further understood for those who chose to stay, that the time already accumulated during their stay here would count towards their one year tour of duty in Vietnam. Sixteen of the gunners elected to stay and those who did not, returned to their parent unit with the last man departing 12 December 1965.

Attached for rations and quarters:

82nd Medical Detachment, Helicopter Ambulance

The 82nd Medical Detachment (HA) is a medical evacuation unit known as "Dust-Off" to all military personnel in the Delta. It was administratively independent of the 121st Aviation Company requiring rations, quarters, and aircraft maintenance only.

The mission of this unit was to provide immediate evacuation of casualties to facilities where medical and surgical attention was available. Many of its missions were at night and the ten officer

pilots assigned to the Detachment proved themselves extremely adept at maintaining a sustained 24 hour a day operating capability. The 22 enlisted men of the Detachment ably lent their support to help the unit accomplish its mission and become recognized for its outstanding performance.

During 1965, "Dust-Off" had five UH-1B models which made up its fleet of helicopter ambulances. Each aircraft carried an Aircraft Commander (AC), pilot, crew chief, and a medical specialist to give first aid to evacuees while enroute. The crew chief and medic also acted as door gunners when necessary.

"Dust-Off's" primary mission was to support US personnel, however it evacuated numerous ARVN casualties in cases where other support was unavailable. One or more 82nd aircraft accompanied the "Tigers" and other Delta Battalion flights on all combat assault operations. It was comforting to know that "Dust-Off" was only minutes away no matter where you were flying.

On 11 November, Major Arlie D. Price, Medical Service Corps, replaced Major Francis A. Copeland, Medical Service Corps, as Commanding Officer of the 82nd Medical Detachment (HA). Also the Detachment came under the jurisdiction of the 1st Logistical Command in October of 1965.

5th Quartermaster Detachment (POL)

The 5th Quartermaster Detachment (POL) was manned by eight enlisted men and was responsible for ordering, receiving, storing, and distributing all POL products at the Soc Trang Airfield.

Formerly having served only the 121st Aviation Company and its attached

units, it became an installation facility in 1965 with the arrival of new units. It was attached to the Company for rations and quarters only.

The Detachment handled an average of more than 4,400 gallons of JP-4 and more than 365 gallons of 115-145 aviation gasoline per day. During the year 1965 they dispensed 1,607,777 gallons of JP-4, 133,453 gallons of 115-145 aviation gasoline, 126,687 gallons of mogas, and 219,014 gallons of DF-2 disel fuel. Permanent type revetments are planned to house their storage tanks in the future. These should be built by the RMK Construction Company early in 1966.

Detachment 3, D Company, 41st Signal Battalion

During 1965, Detachment 3 became the installation signal facility for the Soc Trang Airfield. Its forerunner, Detachment 6, Delta Signal Company which was renamed Detachment 6, 581st Signal Company in May, had the responsibility for the maintenance and operation of Soc Trang's "Lady Swithboard" and "Lady Carrier" which handled all incoming and outgoing long distance telephone calls as well as local communications facilities and telephone traffic. It also handled the upkeep and operations of the teletype lines, circuits, and equipment, and it ran the installation message center. When Detachment 3, D Company, 41st Signal Detachment came to Soc Trang in October it in effect created an installation communications center and took over all of the above stated responsibilities with the exception that the responsibility for maintaining a message center reverted back to each of the units on post.

Detachment 3 brought with it an increased capability which it implemented almost immediately. It operated "Lady Switchboard" and "Lady Carrier" and had made the necessary preparations by the end of the year to make the change over to a new system designating its facitities Soc Trang carrier as part of a new and improved theaterwide communications system to take effect 1 January 1966.

The detachment's switchboard equipment was located in two vans where operators were able to service all local and long distance calls. Its carrier facilities were in carrier bays which included two systems of VHF line of sight type transmitters and receivers used for communications with Can Tho, each system having twelve voice channels. Likewise there was two VHF systems for the connection with Bac Lieu each having the same capability. In addition the Detachment had the capability of putting four separate teletype circuits simultaneously over any one voice channel. The communication center included teletype equipment which when utilized by hooking in with the carrier facilities provided a secure circuit in that encrypted messages could be sent. The unit also had and operated a one channel AM radio teletype, an Armed Forces Radio Station (AFRS) re-transmission unit, and a MARS Radio Station which it opened on 28 December 1965. At the close of the year the MARS station had the capacity of sending Marsegrams with the anticipated capability of direct voice communications with CONUS early in 1966. Detachment 3 had the capability of hooking into the Detachment 7, 362nd Signal Company (TROPO) tropospheric scatter equipment to provide long distance communications with Saigon.

The unit was administratively independent of the 121st Aviation Company and depended upon it only for rations and quarters. The improved communications capability which came into being at Soc Trang during 1965 was due in large part to Detachment 3, D Company, 41st Signal Battalion and the hard work of its one officer and 29 enlisted men. The Detachment was commanded by First Lieutenant Neil Bartow, Signal Corps, who brought it to Soc Trang.

Detachment 7, 362nd Signal Company (TROPO)

Detachment 7 had one NCO and six enlisted men who were responsible for the operation and maintenance of its AN/MRC-85 Tropospheric Scatter Terminals and allied equipment which were used for telephone communications with Saigon.

An outgoing call originating in Soc Trang or coming in over long distance communications equipment went through "Lady Switchboard" from where it was hooked into the tropo equipment for transmission. Similar equipment in Saigon could either direct the call locally or relay it to a more distant station for eventual connection with the desired party. Likewise incoming calls from Saigon were routed through "Lady" to the desired extension or sent over the VHF carrier to another switchboard for connection.

The equipment used at Soc Trang had twenty voice channels with the capability of putting sixteen teletype circuts over any one channel. Here again this provided a secure circut by transmitting encrypted messages. It also provided relay for weather teletype data.

Detachment 7, 362nd Signal Company was attached to the 121st Aviation Company for rations and quarters.

325th Signal Detachment (Avionics)

This detachment provided avionics support for the 221st Aviation Company (Fixed Wing Light). It was attached to the 121st Aviation Company for rations and quarters. Its responsibilities and organization were similar to those of the 257th Signal Detachment (Avionics) as modified for support of a fixed wing unit. The 325th Signal Detachment was commanded by Second Lieutenant Richard Hill.

Detachment D, 4th Platoon, 125th Air Traffic Control Company

Detachment D was responsible for air traffic control for the Soc Trang Airfield. Its one NCO and 11 enlisted men had the responsibility of operating the airfield control tower and the ground controlled approach (GCA) facility.

The Detachment had six qualified GCA operators and two tower operators. All of the GCA operators were also qualified as tower operators thus enabling the unit to set up a more favorable duty rotation schedule. In addition the Detachment had one radio repairman, one GCA radar repairman, and one generator repairman. The first and second echelon maintenance of the TPN-8 Ground Controlled Approach Radar unit and tower radios was the responsibility of the Detachment while the 257th Signal Detachment (Avionics) provided third echelon maintenance.

Detachment D, 560th Military Police Company

The one NCO and eight enlisted men of Detachment D were responsible for internal security of the Soc Trang compound. Their duties included

making security checks of the compound, airfield, and the town of Soc Trang. They were also responsible for the safety of personnel and the conduct of off duty personnel both on the compound and in town. The unit was attached to the 121st Aviation Company for rations and quarters and was directly responsible to the Installation Coordinator.

41st Medical Detachment (CA)

The 41st Medical Detachment provided medical attention for members of the 121st Aviation Company and all other installation personnel. The Detachment had two flight surgeons, one NCO and six enlisted personnel who operated its dispensary, ten bed hospital, and X-Ray equipment. A regular sick call was held and shots were kept up to date. The Detachment had a limited emergency surgical facility, serious cases being evacuated to the 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon as soon as possible. It was attached to the 121st for rations and quarters being attached to Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion for administrative purposes.

36th Dental Detachment

The only American dentist in the Mekong Delta was assigned to Soc Trang and this detachment was attached to the 121st Aviation Company for rations and quarters. Assisted by one enlisted dental technician he was qualified and equiped to perform any dental work up to and including minor dental surgery and building temporary plates and bridges. This dental facility supported all Americans in the IV Corps area.

69th Infantry Detachment (Anti-Personnel Radar)

The 69th Infantry Detachment assisted in providing security for the

Soc Trang Airfield at night by operating its Anti-Personnel Radar equipment to detect enemy activity around the airfield. It was attached to the 121st Aviation Company for rations, quarters, and administration.

78th Artillery Detachment (Counter Mortar Radar)

This Detachment assisted in providing security of the Soc Trang Airfield by operating its Counter Motar equipment at night to locate enemy mortar positions during mortar attacks. It relayed locations to the ARVN Artillery Battery located on the northeast end of the airstrip. It too was attached to the 121st for rations, quarters, and administration.

Detachment 10, 8th Aerial Port, USAF

The one NCO and two enlisted men of Detachment 10 handled the administration, loading, unloading, and coordination of all transient aircraft at the Soc Trang Airfield. They were responsible for the receiving and distribution of all incoming and outgoing logistical supplies and for seeing that they got to the proper person or on the proper aircraft. The unit was attached to the 121st Aviation Company for rations and quarters and came under the direct responsibility of the Installation Coordinator.

Detachment 7, 30th Weather Squadron, USAF

Detachment 7 operated the southern most weather observation station in the Republic of Vietnam. The Detachment's one officer and seven enlisted men gathered meterological data and reported weather interpretations pertinent to the aviation activities of the units operating aircraft in the Mekong Delta and more specifically those operating from the

Soc Trang Airfield.

The weather station was open 24 hours a day and provided regular weather forecasting service when called upon. A member of the Detachment gave a weather briefing prior to every airmobile operation. It was the only station south of Saigon to utilize weather ballons to take upper air readings from which wind left reports and other valuable meterological data could be derived. Reports were submitted regularly to the weather center in Saigon and this contributed significantly to the overall weather picture in Southeast Asia.

Detachment 7 was attahed to the 121st Aviation Company for rations and quarters. During 1965 it was commanded by Captain Kenneth J. VanHulla, USAF.

Detachment 7, 11th Air Postal Squadron, 6006th Postal Group, PACAF

This Detachment's three Air Force enlisted personnel operated APO 96296 at Soc Trang. They processed all outgoing and incoming mail as well as handling the sale of stamps and postal money orders. They proved themselves quite capable with their speedy handling of the tremendous volumn fo mail arriving and departing during the Christmas rush. It was attached to the 121st Aviation Company for rations and quarters.

Detachment 7, Operational Location, 1964th Communications Group, USAF

The two Air Force enlisted men of this detachment operated and maintained the Soc Trang TACAN station and non-directional beacon. This equipment was a low frequency navigational radio aid for pilots and was especially useful during periods of poor weather. The Detachment was attached to the 121st Aviation Company for rations and quarters.

Other Supporting Units

A number of other units gave support to the 121st Aviation Company at Soc Trang during 1965. As previously noted, Detachment 6, 581st Signal Company departed in October. This unit was attached to the 121st while it was here and supported all units on the installation. Another unit which departed during the year was the 2nd Medical Dispensary (General). While it was here it too was attached to the Company for rations and quarters, supporting all installations units and personnel. It was replaced by the 41st Medical Detachment (OA).

During 1965, Detachment D, 18th Airfield Operational Detachment became Detachment D, 4th Platoon, 125th Air Traffic Control Company. Also Detachment 7, 232nd Signal Company (Support) TRAC 24 departed Soc Trang and its duties and equipment were taken over by Detachment 6, 581st Signal Company and eventually by Detachment 3, D Comapny, 41st Signal Battalion. In August a detachment of the 209th Military Police Company (Dog) brought 12 German Shepard Police dogs to Soc Trang to assist in airfield security.

operation, [illegible]

the New Year's Day 1965, marked the beginning of the 121st Aviation Company's fourth year in the Republic of Vietnam in support of this little country's continued struggle for freedom from aggression. The "Tigers" of the 121st Aviation Company ushered in the New Year 1965, in their unequivocal fashion, by participating in a troop lift staged out of Saigon, in support of the III Corps (ARVN).

The seventh of January again found the "Tigers" supporting a troop lift in the northern provinces. It provided a flight of seven "slicks" to the 9th Division (ARVN) for an operation staged from Tam Hiep (XA438 518). This flight participated in three lifts carrying 168 ARVN soldiers into the forward landing zone. During a landing for refueling at Tam Hiep one of "Tiger" aircraft lost its tail rotor, but quick reaction of the AC who was WO Bradley L. Welfare, prevented damage to the other aircraft in the flight and injury to his crew.

Intelligence sources located a Viet Cong company in an area fifteen miles southwest of Bac Lieu (WR600150) on 21 January. An "Eagle" flight was mounted out of Bac Lieu early on the morning of the 22nd of January with two Command and Control ships, the "Viking" platoon, a flight of ten "slicks", and "Wrecker I" from the 121st Aviation Company participating. The "Eagle" flight procedures were used to their optimum, employing multiple troop lifts to position and reposition the ARVN's within the battlefield, blocking the Viet Cong from attempting to flee from the area. Final results of the operation revealed 51 Viet Cong killed in action and 26 captured.

One week later, on 29 January, an operation was planned to be conducted in Phong Dinh Sector, 30 miles northwest of Soc Trang. This

OPERATIONS AND EVENTS

operation, labeled Dan Chi 117, was staged from Can Tho with the C & C, the "Vikings", a flight of ten "slicks" and the wrecker aircraft from the Company participating. Although intelligence reports indicated the presence of a Viet Cong battalion in this area the ensuing operation resulted in only light contact being made and nine Viet Cong killed in action and three Viet Cong and 11 small arms captured.

The days on which the "Tigers" were not engaged with RF operations they were busy performing C & L missions.

FEBRUARY

The first event marking February was an operation at Bac Lieu. The Operation started on the morning of the 2nd and ended the same day. Contact was not made with the Viet Cong. Although the day was uneventful, a new in flight maneuver was practiced. Formation flanking turns were tried by the "slick" flight during its morning flight to Bac Lieu. This flanking turn designed to increase maneuverability was conducted successfully, and plans for utilizing this possible new tool for in flight changes in flight path were discussed.

On 5 February, elements of the 121st joined with aircraft of the 114th and A, 502nd in a flyby at Can Tho for the departing 13th Aviation Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel J. Y. Hammack. Everyone presented a welcome to the new Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Jack V. Mackmull as he assumed command of the Battalion during the ceremony that day. Departing Colonel Hammack had been reassigned to duties at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

The first week of February seemed to be ending quietly until the evening of the 7th. At 2230 hours Viet Cong mortar fire began pounding the southwest area of the compound. Automatically pilots and crew members raced out to the aircraft and began evacuating them while the remaining personnel began setting up a strong defense around the compound. Within five minutes all flyable aircraft were airborne for the Can Tho airfield where they remained until the attack was over. After the mortar attack it was determined that a total of 14 rounds of 81mm mortar shells had landed on or near the approach end of runway 04.

On the [illegible]

By early morning all aircraft had returned from Can Tho. Five seven "Viking" ships, [illegible] UH-1B helicopters, the GCA radar facilities, and one metal conex container were reported damaged. No casualties had been suffered throughout the attack. Normal missions were flown that morning, with the exception of [illegible] five damaged aircraft remaining at Soc Trang for repairs to skin and plexiglass.

On 10 February, a "Viking" ship took hits in its tail rotor cables during support of an operation in the 9th Division area. The aircraft returned to Soc Trang, jettisoned its rocket pods, and made a safe running landing on the airstrip without the benefit of tail rotor control. The gunner of the aircraft, SP/4 Billy T. Goodman, received slight shrapnel wounds in the left shoulder. He was treated at the 2nd Medical Dispensary in Soc Trang and was released for normal duties.

On the 12th a standby "Eagle" was formed at Soc Trang involving ships from the 121st and 114th Aviation Companies. The first and only elements lifted that day were holifted into the operational area at 1500 hours. No significant contact was made with the Viet Cong.

On the 15th, Intelligence reports were received indicating that an estimated 1000 Viet Cong were gathering just a few miles north of Soc Trang and an attempt would be made to attack the airfield that night. The Company's flare ship and armed platoon made a reconnaissance of the area of the suspected enemy buildup while personnel at Soc Trang manned the bunkers. No contact was made throughout the night.

On the 18th an "Eagle" flight involving a flight of ten "slicks", seven "Viking" ships, and two C & C aircraft was flown from Soc Trang to Vi Thanh to join with the other flights. The operation was organized to engage a reported two or three Viet Cong battalions in the vicinity of Vi Thanh. Four lifts were made in the morning on each of which over 350 troops were carried into the operational area. All four lifts were completed. Later in the morning an additional platoon of armed helicopters from the A, 502nd arrived at Vi Thanh to support the operations.

Early in the afternoon two more troop lifts were made. The anticipated two or three battalion sized enemy force had not materialized however, and the supporting aircraft were released at 1700 hours. The operation resulted in ten Viet Cong captured, seven killed in action, and ten wounded in action.

On the morning of 21 February, Captain John Shoemaker, piloting an O-1F was shot by down by enemy fire during a visual reconnaissance mission near Ca Mau. An enemy round hit the engine of Captain Shoemaker's aircraft forcing him to land in a rice paddy near an outpost, but he and his observer Captain Moore, USAF walked away from the aircraft uninjured.

The 121st armed ships were called to the scene of the downed aircraft to furnish protection to personnel of the 20th Transportation Detachment as they disassembled the plane. The aircraft was stripped of all its gear and the wings and fuselage were flown out separately by "Wrecker 1". The enemy position from which Captain Shoemaker had received fire was neutralized by the "Viking" platoon.

fire. On the 24th, an "Eagle" was flown in support of a ground operation a few miles north of Ca Mau. This was the same area in which a very highly successful battle had been fought on 5 December 1964. Ten "slicks" worked out of Bac Lieu making two assault lifts in the morning followed by an extraction of troops in the early afternoon. Light action was reported throughout the day and all aircraft were released at 1500 hours.

On 27 February, a flight of "slicks" and five "armed ships" took part in a lift staged from Vung Tau. One hundred and fifteen UH-1B helicopters and one flights of VNAF CH-34 helicopters lifted troops into nearby Binh Gia. The lift was supported by heavy air cover from A-1E fighter bombers and armed helicopters. Heavy suppressive fire kept enemy activity near the landing zone at a standstill.

One "Tiger" aircraft experienced directional control difficulty in the landing zone and badly twisted its skids on touchdown. As the crew was lifted out of the area, "wrecker 1" prepared the aircraft for evacuation. Within 20 minutes the aircraft had been picked up by a CH-37 and was enroute to Vung Tau.

Four aircraft of the 121st contingent were assigned to augment a second lift into a nearby area. After the second lift was completed, the aircraft joined the other "Tigers" at Vung Tau and the flight returned home.

On the last day of February another "Eagle" was mounted near Bac Lieu. Two lifts were made during the morning, but all troops were returned to the staging area shortly after noon. Within 45 minutes another lift was made into the operational area, with light

fire being received in the landing zone. Civilians in the area reported that a small force of Viet Cong had left the area as the "Eagle" flight approached. Light contact was made by the armed platoon, but ground elements were unable to overtake the fleeing Viet Cong.

During the month, 14 new AN/APV-44 transponders were installed in the 121st aircraft by the 257th Signal Detachment. These devices aided in radar tracking by Paddy Control, a USAF radar flight following service recently arrived to serve the Delta.

The 121st maintenance section received word from Lycoming on 16 February that the life of the T-53 engine, powering the UH-1B had been extended from 1000 hours to 1200 hours. They felt that their work and experience had played a part in providing the greater durability and useful life of this turbine engine.

Tail rotor shortages for the UH-1B aircraft caused maintenance problems during most of February. Towards the end of the month supply channels cleared, and the shortage problems were cleared.

The 80th Transportation Detachment moved to again augment its TO & E (55-500R) to include engine overhaul and repair personnel. Personnel having MOS 681.0 were added to the Detachment.

The parent unit of the 121st, the 13th Aviation Battalion, planned increased participation in field operations for this and future months. Airfields control, additional C & C ships, and POL pumps were to be provided during airmobile operations.

In addition, a combat operations center, to be set up at the staging area of operations was planned by the battalion.

The stingers of all 121st aircraft were painted with black and yellow strips - Tiger's Tails - during the month to further signify the Soc Trang "Tiger" ships.

Word reached the company at the end of the month of the location of a young tiger cub in Malaya. The company was to receive the young tiger as soon as delivery could be made. The "Tigers" hoped to again to have a tiger cub of their own to replace Tuffy who had benn given to the Cincinatti Zoo.

was replaced by Colonel [illegible] MARCH [illegible]

This unit received many [illegible]

awards presented during the [illegible]

Cross to Warrant Officer [illegible]

pinned on Mr. [illegible]

DFC award from CG USASCV, and , of course, continuing the assault

ral of USASCV, for his heroic actions during a [illegible]

against Viet Cong insurgents.

mission conducted in the [illegible]

"Tigers" and attached personal [illegible]

welcomed to Soc Trang by the Ba Xuyen Sector Advisor Major Grills,

with "V" device, one [illegible]

and the "Tiger" Commander Major Whitten. He was briefed on the

one Army Commendation Medal.

Sector activities and given a short tour of the hospital and air-

field areas. General Palmer was a member of the US Senate Prepa-

prior to his retirement [illegible]

redeness Subcommittee.

Major Whitten, and [illegible]

The second high ranking visitor was General Harold K. Johnson,

The company was [illegible]

Army Chief of Staff, who arrived on 11 March. General Johnson's

month. Late [illegible]

purpose for coming to Soc Trang was to give his impression of how

were called to fly a [illegible]

this war was progressing from an overall point of view, to answer

Khai Quan outpost, [illegible]

any question concerning the US effort, and to receive ideas and

prior to that time [illegible]

suggestions on how things could be improved from a lower echelon

had been receiving [illegible]

view point.

the "Tigers". [illegible]

Colonel Jim D. Keirsey, Senior Advisor to the 21st Division,

area, the "Vikings" received [illegible]

made presentations at an awards and decorations ceremony held on the

Vikings returned [illegible]

13th. He was also the Guest of Honor at a going away party given

into the enemy [illegible]

for him in the "Tigers' Den" that evening. Colonel Keirsey was pre-

down and the "slicks" [illegible]

sented the traditional "Tigers" plaque and was given a "Tiger" shirt,

interference. During the [illegible]

momentoes to remind him of the 121st Aviation Company personnel he

received several [illegible]

worked so closely with while doing his job in Vietnam. Colonel Keirsey

was replaced by Colonel Robert B. Spillman, Infantry.

This unit received many awards on many occasions. Outstanding awards presented during the month included a Distinguished Flying Cross to Warrant Officer Barry W. Whitehouse. The decoration was pinned on Mr. Whitehouse by General Delk M. Oden, Commanding General of USMACV, for his heroic actions during a medical evacuation mission conducted in the summer of 1964. Other awards presented to "Tigers" and attached personnel included: Two Bronze Star Medals with "V" device, one Air Medal with "V" device, 10 Air Medals, and one Army Commendation Medal.

In as much as this was to General Oden's last visit to Soc Trang prior to his rotation date he was presented a "Tiger" plaque by Major Whitten, and thus became an honorary Soc Trang "Tiger".

The company was quite active in the war effort during the month. Late in the afternoon of the 10th, two "slick" aircraft were called to fly a resupply mission to carry ammunition into Khai Quan outpost, northwest of Ca Mau. During the period just prior to that time while approaching and departing that outpost aircraft had been receiving fire, so the "Vikings" were called upon to escort the "Tigers". While making a low reconnaissance of the surrounding area, the "Vikings" received fire from Viet Cong elements. The Vikings returned approximately 46,000 rounds of 7.62 and 22C rockets into the enemy area and estimated 12 VC KIAs. The fire fight died down and the "slicks" were escorted into Khai Quan without further interference. During the encounter, Warrant Officer Paul Messa received shrapnel wounds in the arm and Chief Warrant Officer Jerome

Daly narrowly escaped serious injury when an enemy round passed through side of his helmet.

On the 29th, four "Slicks" and four armed [illegible] patched to Pleiku to participate in a two day [illegible]

An "Eagle" operation staged out of Bac Lieu on 17 March yielded 5 VC KIAs and 7 suspects detained. Only one lift was made into the operational area.

Aircraft maintenance problems limited [illegible] as other aviation units in the Republic. In [illegible] Armed Forces operations in Vietnam had [illegible]

Later on that same day, it was learned that a Viet Cong had been arrested in downtown Soc Trang with three home-made bombs along with VC propaganda and flags in his possession. Two of the bombs were to have been exploded in Vietnamese establishments having a large American clientele. The third bomb was to have been smuggled on the airfield and ignited in the ammo or fuel dump. Fortunately, neither of his intended plots were successful. Questioning of the VC and further investigations led to the arrest of others in a spy and sabotage ring operating in the Soc Trang area. One of these was a Vietnamese bar girl who worked in an establishment frequented by many airfield personnel. A State-side newspaper described the girl, whose name when translated meant "Moon Fairy", as a "beautiful, innocent looking creature who extracted intelligence information from lonely aviators at Soc Trang airfield in return for physical pleasures which sometimes ended with a kiss of death". This description, of course, has not been substanting by any of the aviators.

The group welcomed four new aviators [illegible] "sayonara" to three happy departing officers [illegible] Word from contacts in Bangkok was that the [illegible] would be delayed several hours until the [illegible] to make the long journey to [illegible]

Back on the war path, the 25th was the beginning of a three day heliborne operation staging out Vi Thanh. With the assistance of the 114th and A, 502nd, more than 50 VC were killed and a cache of over three thousand pounds of Viet Cong stores and ammunition was uncovered.

units. It became an installation [illegible]

On the 29th, four "slicks" and four armed helicopters were dis-

of new units. It was attached to the [illegible]

patched to Pleiku to participate in a two day operation in that area.

ters only.

Aircraft maintenance problems increased for the 121st as well

The Detachment handled [illegible]

as other aviation units in the Republic. The "blank check" that the

JP-4 and were than 565 gallons of 115-145 [illegible]

Armed Forces operations in Vietnam had been extended did not seem to

During the year 1965 they dispensed [illegible]

include aircraft parts.

gallons of 115-145 aviation gasoline, [illegible]

The company welcomed four new aviators during the month and said

910,014 gallons of DF-2 diesel fuel. [illegible]

"sayonara" to three happy departing officers.

planned to house their storage [illegible]

Word from contacts in Bangkok was that the arrival of the Tiger

built by the RVN Construction Company [illegible]

mascot would be delayed several weeks until the cub was old enough

to make the long journey to Soc Trang.

Detachment [illegible]

During 1965, [illegible]

for the Soc Trang Airfield. [illegible]

Signal Company [illegible]

in May, had the responsibility [illegible]

Soc Trang's Army Subdetachment [illegible]

incoming and outgoing [illegible]

communications facilities [illegible]

the upkeep and operation [illegible]

ment, and it was the installation [illegible]

B Company, 61st Signal [illegible]

effect created an unstable [illegible]

of the above stated responsibilities with [illegible]

responsibility for maintaining a [illegible]

of the units on post.

A "Tiger" flight of ten [illegible]

APRIL

aircraft from A, 502nd, formed at Vi Thanh [illegible]

April was an active month for the 121st Aviation Company. Preparation was made for the arrival of a new unit at Soc Trang, Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion. This unit was to be reorganized at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and transported by aircraft carrier to Vietnam.

The 539th Engineering Detachment, commanded by 1st Lieutenant Gray, Corps of Engineers, in conjunction with personnel of the installation R & U Section started construction on twelve enlisted and six officer billets, two bath houses, and a mess hall. Work also commenced for the conversion of two brick structures into a headquarters and a supply building in an area southwest of the existing contonment area.

On 1 April, the eigth aircraft flown to Pleiku late on 29 March to support missions of the 119th Aviation Company returned to Soc Trang. During the four day trip, 121st aircraft flew four lifts in the Nha Trang area, receiving no enemy fire, hits or injuries.

On the 4th a three day ground operation was initiated from Vi Thanh, thirty miles northwest of Soc Trang. An "Eagle" in support of this operation, Dan Chi 129, was flown that day, making one lift and only light contact with Viet Cong elements.

On the following day, the 5th, contact was made with enemy units. Ground elements aboard the naval vessels in support of the operations disembarked, and combined with elements already operating in the area, established contact a few miles northwest of Kien Long outpost by the following morning.

A "Tiger" flight of ten "slicks" supported by an additional ten "Outlaw" aircraft from A, 502nd, formed at Vi Thanh as an "Eagle" flight. The "Viking" armed platoon and fire teams from both the 114th Aviations Company's "Cobras" and the A, 502nd Aviation Battalion's "Mavericks" provided fire support. While deployed in defense of a downed VNAF A-1H fighter bomber in the operational area, two "Cobra" aircraft were shot down. Four American lives were lost during the crash of the first aircraft; the second crew escaped injury and was picked up by "Dust Off", an 82nd Medical Detachment aircraft.

The first of four heliborne lifts was landed in the operational area (WB602224) at 1040 hours. The "Eagle" flight received heavy ground fire during the first two lifts, with one "Tiger" aircraft taking a single round in the tail boom, and one "Outlaw" aircraft receiving four hits in the forward section of the cockpit. The "Outlaw" aircraft's crew chief was slightly wounded in the left shoulder. He was evacuated for treatment, but not listed as seriously wounded.

An American advisor with the 44th Ranger Battalion (ARVN), 1st Lieutenant Bowman, was fatally wounded immediately after debarking from a helicopter on the first heliborne lift. Continued VNAF strikes were called in on the well fortified Viet Cong positions, but it was not until early afternoon when ARVN elements were able to move into positions that had cost five American lives and the loss of three aircraft, that the Viet Cong had been routed.

The ARVN units were airlifted back to the Vi Thanh staging area late in the afternoon of 5 April.

Losses suffered by the Viet Cong during Dan Chi 129 were 276 dead, 32 captured, and 55 weapons seized. Among the weapons taken were a 75mm re-

coilless rifle, three bazookas, two 60 mm mortars, five machine guns, 13 submachine guns, and 31 small arms. ARVN forces suffered 21 KIA and 81 WIA's. Six American lives were lost during the operation.

Two days later, Captain Charles Teague, Commander of the "Viking" armed platoon was presented the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm by General Nguyen Quang, IV Corps Commander, at ceremonies in Can Tho. Captain Teague was cited for his leadership of the "Vikings" during this operation. Nine additional members of the 121st Aviation Company received Crosses of Gallantry at Bac Lieu a week later. 1st Lieutenant Michael Romar, CWO Jerome Daly, WO's Paul Messa, Norton Davidson, Thomas Ilowiecki, Harvey Corr and Specialists Fourth Class Raymond Tylich, Robert F. Lannard, and Joseph R. Leone were decorated for their individual participation in Dan Chi 129.

On 9 April, 13 aircraft from the 121st Aviation Company supported the 114th and A, 502nd during an operation staged from Tan Hiep (XS 650 580). Three troop lifts were flown, with fire being received in the first LZ. No hits or injuries were sustained by the "Tiger" aircraft and the flight returned to Soc Trang early in the afternoon.

On the 13th, the Soc Trang "Tigers" were treated to a USO Show. The show was held in the 121st Aviation Company aircraft maintenance hanger and included a comedienne, singer, dancer, ventriloquist, and band. It was well received, all personnel enjoying the novelty entertainment.

Late on the 15th, seven "slicks" departed Soc Trang for Saigon to

Seven "tigers" aircraft made [illegible]

participate in a mass lift. The operation was designed to eliminate a large Viet Cong concentration in the Tay Ninh "Black Virgin Mountain" area, 40 miles northwest of Saigon. Eighty seven "slick" aircraft plus a flight of VNAF CH-34s made the lifts. Massive pre-strikes in the area preceded the troop drop. No enemy resistance was encountered during the landings, and after completing lifts, the "Tiger" aircraft were released for return to Soc Trang.

On the 20th, an Eagle was staged from Ca Mau. Twelve "slicks" and six "armed ships" of the 121st Aviation Company participated, with "slick" and "armed ship" support being provided by the 114th Aviation Company. Three lifts were made to an operational area 15 miles north of Ca Mau (WR 179 455). The first lift received no fire. By 1700 hours a single extraction lift had been made, and aircraft were released to return to home station.

On the 21st, 80th Transportation Detachment field recovery crews were kept busy by two aircraft experiencing maintenance problems in the field. One UH-1B operating out of Ca Mau lost the attaching bolts of the 90 tail rotor gear box. 80th Trans personnel were dispatched to make repairs. Shortly afterwards, a "Tiger" aircraft at Vi Thanh experienced engine trouble during shut down. Standby pilots at Soc Trang carried a replacement engine and additional personnel of the 80th to the scene. Both aircraft were repaired with major component changes, and returned to Soc Trang before dusk.

[illegible] is an exercise to [illegible]

aircraft were [illegible]

Seven "tigers" aircraft made two lifts along with the 114th and A, 502nd from Tan Hiep on the 22nd. Moderate fire was received in the first LZ, but no hits were sustained by the "Tiger" aircraft.

On the 26th, an "Eagle" was staged from Ca Mau. Ten troop carriers were supported by 16 "slicks" from the 114th and A, 502nd. Eighteen "armed ships" including six from each of the "Viking", "Cobra", and "Mavericks" platoons participated.

Ground and armed aircraft reconnaissance showed little activity in the area. Some small arms fire was received by an "armed ship", with one hit taken in a rotor blade. Air strikes and answering fire from the "armed ships" neutralized any enemy present and left the four "Eagle" forces flown into the area little to do besides capture three Viet Cong, a Russian made gas mask, a Chinese carbine, and report two Viet Cong dead.

On the 28th, a large armada of helicopters was formed at different staging areas north of Soc Trang to lift two battalions of the 7th Division (ARVN) into a suspected Viet Cong regional headquarters and training center. Both LZ's that the "Tiger" aircraft lifted troops into were heavily suppressed by armed helicopter fire. Enemy activity in the operational area was high and on both lifts enemy fire was received.

At the close of the month, the operation was still going on, but 15 tons of explosives and hundreds of Viet Cong weapons had been recovered.

On 30 April a practice alert sent all flyable Soc Trang aircraft aloft in an exercise to test reaction time to evacuation orders. All 22 flyable aircraft were airborne in four minutes.

post exchange, and tailor s MAY [illegible]

planning phase for th[illegible]

The month of May 1965 was filled with much activity for the Soc

On the 3 May the Instructor pilot [illegible]

Trang Tigers. The month began on a high pitch with the last minute

became actively engaged in the transition [illegible]

preparations being made for the arrival of Company A, 101st Aviation

UH-1D aircraft for aviators of the 101st [illegible]

Battalion at Soc Trang. The constructions effort put forth in the new A,

101st Aviation Battalion, under the direction of [illegible]

101st area had produced eight troop billeting structures and a headquarters

Battalion Standardization Board, [illegible]

building by the time the unit arrived with construction efforts continuing.

Aition training continued until the 1[illegible]

The first elements of Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion,

An "Eagle" Operation was [illegible]

began arriving by C-123B aircraft during the early afternoon of 1 May.

one C & C, six "Vikings", and seven [illegible]

A reception committee consisting of Colonel Mackmull, Major Whitten,

the 101st. [illegible]

CO of the 121st Aviation Company, Major Charles A. Licha, S-3, 13th

of Dai Ijen (Medical) [illegible]

Aviation Battalion, Segeant Major Glenn E. Owens, Sergeant Major, 13th

contact was made during this [illegible]

Aviation Battalion, and SFC Frank M. Fellman, 121st First Sergeant stood

At 2[illegible] hours on [illegible]

by to welcome the new unit.

from CCC that the aircraft of the [illegible]

At 1300 hours on the same day word was received from CCC

by a large [illegible]

that the aircraft belonging to the new company were ready for pick

and a C & C loaded with [illegible]

up in Vung Tau and that USASCV would require the presence of a Mekong

Delta, were [illegible]

Delta qualified pilot in each of the returning UH-1D helicopters, plus

out of Ca Mau. The Vikings [illegible]

an armed platoon to escort them from Vung Tau to Soc Trang. All avai-

support of the ground forces. [illegible]

lable 121st pilots were assembled, 22 in all, and were loaded on a CV-2B

Ca Mau airfield [illegible]

for transportation to Vung Tau. The "Vikings" were dispatched for the

fire team [illegible]

escort mission. The UH-1D's began arriving at Soc Trang at 1630 hours

operation [illegible]

and were directed to their parking areas by members of the 121st Aviation

to Soc Trang at [illegible] hours.

Company Operations Section without incident.

Between the 3 May [illegible]

The influx of these 261 new personnel at Soc Trang was

the history of the [illegible]

immediately felt by all post facilities, especially the mess hall, clubs

by lateral [illegible]

a 40% increase in [illegible]

post exchange, and tailor shop, but a well prepared and executed planning phase for this operation produced excellent results.

On the 3 May the instructor pilots of the 121st Aviation Company became actively engaged in the transition training program in the UH-1D aircraft for aviators of the 121st Aviation Company and Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion, under the direction of the 13th Aviation Battalion Standardization Pilot, Major Howard R. Johnston. This transition training continued until the 16th of the month.

An "Eagle" Operation was staged out of Bac Lieu on the 4th, with one C & C, six "Vikings", and seven "slick" aircraft participating from the 121st. Four lifts were made into four LZs located 10 miles northwest of Bac Lieu (WR605469) lifting a total of 336 troops. No significant contact was made during this operation.

At 2000 hours on Thursday, 6 May, an urgent call was received from CCC that the outpost of Hai Yen (VQ860835) was under attack by a large Viet Cong force employing large caliber mortars. The "Vikings" and a C & C loaded with aerial flares and piloted by "Tiger 6", Major Whitten, were immediately dispatched to aid the besieged outpost. Staging out of Ca Mau, the Vikings performed ten suppressive fire missions in support of the ground forces. During one refueling, rearming stop the Ca Mau airstrip was taken under mortar fire, but an airborne "Viking" fire team was successful in immediately silencing this threat. The operation lasted into the morning of the 7th, and the aircraft returned to Soc Trang at 0130 hours.

Saturday, the 8 May, reflected several notable events occuring in the history of the Soc Trang Tigers. Eight UH-1D helicopters were received by lateral transfer from Company A, 101st Aviation battalion giving a 20% increase in the troop carrying capability of the Company. Also

on the 8th, 14 Soc Trang "Tigers" were transferred to Company A of the were spotted and heavy ground fire was [illegible]

101st, now designated the "Winged Warriors"; to aid in balancing the operation was immediately [illegible]

monthly rotation losses of that company, twelve "warriors" became new executed as soon as possible. [illegible]

"Tigers". The final event on the 8th was the annual "Monte Carlo" night into the area, containing supplemental fire [illegible]

at the Tigers Den. This fund raising event proved to be a very successful co was performed by the two armed platoons, [illegible]

affair, with the Officers Club clearing over $2,000.00. operation designated Dan Chi Lo, [illegible]

At 1830 hours on Sunday, 9 May a call was received from CCC that Hai total of 25 "slicks" including [illegible]

Yen was in great need of ammunition. One C & C ship, six "Viking" ships, armed platoons, the "Vikings", [illegible]

and six "slicks" aircraft were dispatched to Ca Mau to execute this resupply on station. Seven [illegible]

mission. After transporting 4,800 pounds of ammunition into Hai Yen, the revealed 175 Viet Cong [illegible]

"slicks" were released to return to Soc Trang. While the aircraft were gun, one 60mm mortar, [illegible]

refueling at Ca Mau, word was received that the outpost of Khai Quang 19 individual aircraft [illegible]

(WR023300) was under heavy attack by the Viet Cong and required immediate 19 individual aircraft [illegible]

air support. The "Vikings" and the C & C ship scrambled on order of Major sustained 16. [illegible]

Whitten to aid this besieged outpost, flying air cover for the [illegible]

counterattack of the friendlies for a two hour period. [illegible]

A troop lift was planned for staging from Bac Lieu on interdicting fires [illegible]

13 May to go into an operational area 10 miles northwest Bac Lieu, [illegible]

The ground operation was well established and the initial troop lift [illegible]

completed by 1000 hours. At approximately the same time an estimated during the night, [illegible]

50 Viet Cong soldiers in camouflaged uniform were sighted in the vicinity [illegible]

of Thanh Thoi An, nine miles southeast of Soc Trang (XR163441). The 101st Company arrived [illegible]

Aviation Company C & C aircraft with "Tiger 6" in command diverted its airfield [illegible]

flight to this area to make an estimate of the situation. The "Cobras", early June.

the armed platoon from the 114th Aviation Company, was just going on station, The 19th [illegible]

and was diverted to this new area to conduct a more thorough reconnaissance. Security Platoon from [illegible]

Upon their arrival "Cobra Lead" reported many iniformed Viet Cong running

in the area also many open and covered fox holes and weapons emplacements

were spotted and heavy ground fire was encountered. The emphasis of operation was immediately shifted to this area, and an airstrike was executed as soon as soon as possible. An immediate troop lift was made into the area, continuing suppressive fire was delivered, and reconnaissance was performed by the two armed platoons, "Viking" and "Cobra". The operation designated Dan Chi 136, lasted thoughout the day and night with a total of 25 "slicks" including four "Tigers" participating. Also three armed platoons, the "Vikings", the "Cobras", and the "Mavericks", alternated on station. Seven bombing missions were performed by VNAF. Final count revealed 176 Viet Cong KIA; 20 Viet Cong captured; one caliber .30 machine gun, one 60mm mortar, one 57mm recoilless rifle, and 17 small arms captured; 19 individual aircraft hits on 4 aircraft; and one U. S. casualty. Of the 19 individual aircraft hits, the aircraft flown by CWO Jerome R. Daly sustained 16. Although he received multiple wounds from the shattered plexiglass caused by one of these hits, CWO Daly continued with the mission.

A "first" employed during this operation was the use of harrassing and interdicting fires throughout the night delivered by armed fire teams to retard the withdrawal of the Viet Cong from the area.

By the 14th the battle and subsided, the Viet Cong having withdrawn during the night, and an extraction of the 900 troops involved was executed.

Representatives of Raymond, Morrison, and Knudson Construction Company arrived in Soc Trang on 17 May, in preparation for repaving the airfield ramps and runway. The construction was forecasted to begin in early June.

The 19th of May was marked by the arrival of an unexpected 25 man Security Platoon from CONUS, assigned for airfield security. On the

20th and 21st of May, flight tests, and weight and balance computations
On Tuesday 25 May, the C & C aircraft, a flight of [illegible]
were made to determine the troop carrying capacity of the UH-1D helicopters
six "Vikings", departed Soc Trang at 0645 hours [illegible]
with armor plating installed. This project was conducted under the
the 21st Division in the closing of Khai [illegible]
direction of the Company Standardization Pilot, Captain Edward Tolfa.
[illegible] at 0900, two C-123B defoliation aircraft [illegible]
The findings disclosed that the UH-1D aircraft in this configuration could
Soc Trang Airfield due to aircraft damage [illegible]
safety carry 11 ARVN soldiers with full combat load for a period of two hours.
arms fire received in the vicinity of Ca [illegible]

A USO Show, "Jubilee 65", was presented the night of 21 May. Then
of the first C-123, with an [illegible]
at 1800 hours on the 23rd a call for assistance was received from an ARVN
Rapid response by members of the Soc Trang [illegible]
Battalion which was bring ambushed in the vicinity of Thoi Binh (XR110340).
fear of fire, and was responsible for the [illegible]
The C & C aircraft, six "Vikings", and a "Dust Off" aircraft were immediately
runway. The two C-123's remained at Soc Trang [illegible]
dispatched to Ca Mau, the designated staging area. Seven UH-1D's and four
repair, and were then flown to [illegible]
UH-1B's were dispatched to Bac Lieu to pick up the 42nd Ranger Battalion

A troop lift was staged out of Soc Trang [illegible]
(ARVN) and transport them to Thoi Binh. The Rangers were lifted to Ca Mau
and five UH-1B's from the 1st [illegible]
and then airlifted into the operational area. The "slicks" were released
which included 25 "slicks". [illegible]
and returned to home station at 0005 hours on the 24th, The "Vikings", and
of the operation, scheduled to be [illegible]
their accurate suppressive fires were credited with saving the ARVN Batta-
Trang (XR78620) [illegible]
lion from complete destruction.
lift was started, supported by the "Vikings" [illegible]

Twelve "slicks" departed Soc Trang at 0645 hours on the 24 May to
(ARVN) as the [illegible] Battalion [illegible]
assist on a follow up action in the Thoi Binh area. Several troop lifts
operation designate Dan Thi [illegible]
and medical evacuation flights were made. At 1445 hours a call was received
fire was encountered by elements of the [illegible]
from CCC directing dispatch of a "Viking" fire team to escort "Dust Off"
Additional troop lifts, [illegible]
to a field site in the vicinity of Vinh Long to pick up two US casualties.
flights lasted well into the night. [illegible]
Upon arrival in the area the "Vikings" encountered heavy ground fire, and
during this operation. The [illegible]
received two aircraft hits, but successfully accomplished the mission.
morning of the 28th, with C & C aircraft, [illegible]

On Tuesday 25 May, the C & C aircraft, a flight of ten "slicks" and [illegible] "Vikings", departed Soc Trang at 0645 hours for Ca Mau to support the 21st Division in the closing of Khai Quang outpost.

180 [illegible] 0900, two C-123B defoliation aircraft made emergency landings at Soc Trang Airfield due to aircraft damage resulting from the heavy small arms fire received in the vicinity of Gia Rai (WR512213). The landing of the first C-123, with an engine shut down, resulted in a blown tire. Rapid response by members of the Soc Trang fire department dispelled any fear of fire, and was responsible for the expeditions clearing of the runway. The two C-123's remained at Soc Trang for 36 hours undergoing repair, and were then flown to their home station.

A troop lift was staged out of Soc Trang on 27 May with six UH-1D's and five UH-1B's from the 121st forming the primary flight for the lift which included 25 "slicks". Due to bad weather the airmobile portion of the operation, scheduled to be conducted 13 miles northwest of Soc Trang (WR785620), was delayed in starting. At 0915 hours the troop lift was started, supported by the "Vikings" and "Cobras", with the 3/33rd (ARVN) as the airlift Battalion. At approximately 1500 hours, this operation designate Dan Chi 137, took on increased importance when heavy fire was encountered by elements of the 21st Reconnaissance Company. Additional troop lifts, ammunition resupply, and medical evacuation flights lasted well into the night. A total of 720 troops were airlifted during this operation. The clean-up operation was started early on the morning of the 28th, with C & C aircraft, the "Viking" platoon, and

two "slicks" participating. Final results disclosed 68 Viet Cong killed in action while 19 enemy and 30 small arms were captured.

Near the end of the month word was received that a signal company, 180 men strong, was programed to be assigned to Soc Trang in late June. Additional buildings were constructed in the Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion area in preparation for the arrival of this new unit.

Also during this ceremony of 1 June 1965, [illegible] was presented the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry [illegible] operations in support of the 21st Division [illegible] June 1964 through 14 May 1965.

On the 2nd of June a troop lift [illegible] 121st Aviation Company providing one C [illegible] 13 "Slick" aircraft. During the operation, [illegible] of Cia Rai (XB488057), [illegible] were [illegible] zones.

The Viet Cong demonstrated a new passive air [illegible] the armed helicopters during this operation. [illegible] armed ships the VC [illegible] out, with [illegible] ships started their firing passes, the VC would [illegible] under the water. Thus near misses with the [illegible] inch rockets had little or no results.

The results of the days operation were [illegible] KIA and six VC WIA.

On the 6th of June the Martin Rays [illegible] for a single performance. This great comedian [illegible]

very entertaining show.

The last month of fiscal year 1965 started with an awards ceremony held at Bac Lieu. Presentations were made by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam in recognition of the heroic acts performed during the execution of Dan Chi 136 on 13 and 14 May 1965. Token awards were presented to several members of the 121st Aviation Company, the remainder of the awards programmed for presentation at a later date.

Also during this ceremony of 1 June 1965, the 121st Aviation Company was presented the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm for exceptional operations in support of the 21st Division (ARVN) during the period 1 June 1964 through 14 May 1965.

On the 2nd of June a troop lift was staged out of Bac Lieu with the 121st Aviation Company providing one C & C ship, five "Vikings", and 13 "Slick" aircraft. During the operation, conducted in the vicinity of Cia Rai (WR488057), 864 ARVN soldiers were lifted into four landing zones.

The Viet Cong demonstrated a new passive air defense tactic against the armed helicopters during this operation. Upon the approach of the armed ships, the VC waded out into waist deep water and as the armed ships started their firing passes, the VC would submerge themselves under the water. Thus near misses with the 7.62mm rounds and 2.75 inch rockets had little or no results.

The results of the days operation were an estimated 15 VC KIA and six VC WIA.

On the 6th of June the Martha Raye USO show arrived in Soc Trang for a single performance. This great comedienne and singer presented a

every entertaining show." Aerial Door Gunner Platoon [illegible]

Friday the 7th of June found the "Vikings" at Vinh Long for participation in a 9th Division (ARVN) troop lift. This operation conducted in the vicinity of Ben Tre (WS672637) resulted in the "Vikings" being credited with six Viet Cong KIA and six VC WIA. [illegible]

through the first troop lift conducted jointly by the 1/21st and A, 101st Bde staged out of Can Tho on the 8th of June. The first elements of the flight departed Soc Trang at 0500 hours, all aircraft observing strict radio silence. The planned objective of the operation was to trap and destroy elements of three Viet Cong regional force companies located in the vicinity of Phong Dinh (WS740045). The operation was developed by the participating airlifted ARVN elements early in the day. The Viet Cong force proved to be larger and more heavily armed than anticipated, fighting a fierce "break through" to the south. The airmobile companies continued to maneuver the ARVN elements about the battle field well into the night to prevent annihilation of one of the participating ARVN units, being able to lift the [illegible] operation. The morning of the 9th found the Viet Cong withdrawn from the battlefield, and an evacuation lift was conducted returning the ARVN's to Can Tho. The final results showed 86 VC KIA, 29 VC prisoners, 62 ARVN KIA, and 71 ARVN WIA. [illegible]

Also on the morning of the 9th initial planning was started for the proposed construction of a "Tiger - Warrior" patio addition to the Tigers Den [illegible]

On the 10th of June the 5th Aerial Door Gunner Platoon commanded by 1st Lieutenant John J. Kauza, Infantry, departed for Hawaii, and the

members of the "Shot Gun" Aerial Door Gunner Platoon, commanded by Captain Frederick C. Turner Jr., Infantry, arrived in Soc Trang and commenced their training. [illegible] staged from Tan Hiep, in support of the [illegible]

On 11 June the "Vikings" were dispatched to participate in a search and recovery operation for a downed OV-1 crew. The search lasted throughout the day with the crew not being found. At 1630 hours on the 11th an emergency call was received to send the "Vikings" to support the Cai Nuoc outpost (WQ020880). [illegible]

June 12th was marked by receipt of word that the Signal Company programmed to be assigned to Soc Trang was to be replaced by the 221st Aviation Company (Fixed Wing Light).

The "Tigers" departed Soc Trang for Bien Hoa on the morning of the 13th to participate in a troop lift in support of the 145th Aviation Battalion. Again on the 16th the "Tigers" were called upon to make a northern run, this time to participate in an operation staged from Tan Son Nhut. The troop lift was scheduled to take place on the 17th, the "Tigers" being slated to lift the reserve froce into the area of operation if required. The reserve was not committed and the "Tigers" returned to "home plate" on the afternoon of the 17th.

Major General Hutchins, Chief of Staff of USARMAC visited Soc Trang on the 20th of June. After a short visit to Ba Xuyen Sector the General processed to the airfield and was given a briefing on the 121st Aviation Company and Soc Trang Airfield by Major Whitten and Captain Tolfa.

An Eagle operation with one C & C, five "Vikings" and nine "Slick" aircraft, was staged from Soc Trang on the 22nd of June. No significant contact was made with the Viet Cong. A troop lift was staged from Can

JULY

The on the 24th, again with negative results.

On the 27th, five "Viking" aircraft participated in a diversionary operation staged from Tan Hiep, in support of the 7th Division (ARVN). One "Viking" aircraft received one hit during the course of this operation.

On the 28th a large scale operation was launched against the VC by the 7th Division (ARVN) again staged from Tan Hiep. The 121st Aviation Company furnished nine "Slicks" and six armed helicopters received no hits from Viet Cong ground fire.

[illegible] five minutes after take off. He [illegible] a dike on touchdown resulting in the [illegible] side. He received a minor cut on the [illegible] the rice paddy within three minutes by the [illegible] Det (HA) crew off. [illegible] Gilligan noted that he was [illegible] immediately flew to Can Tho [illegible] a total of 53 holes were found in the aircraft [illegible] hole in the fuel tank. All aircraft [illegible] next morning. The record number of holes [illegible] craft during the action was 21. [illegible] 121st maintenance section and the Cash [illegible] job accomplished in repairing the damaged [illegible] aircraft were back on flyable status [illegible]

An increased effort to destroy the [illegible] scale operations participated in by the [illegible] operations ranged from Tan Hiep on the [illegible] participating in an operation east of Vi Thanh [illegible]

flying on his first operational mission with the [illegible]

The new fiscal year and this month of Indepence Day started off with a bang! At 2240 hours on 1 July the VC launched an 81mm mortar attack on the Soc Trang Airfield. Approximately 15 rounds fell on the airfield causing minor injuries to four personnel and minor damage to seven aircraft. All flyable aircraft were evacuated within five minutes after the first round hit the airfield. One UH-1D piloted by WO Robert J. Filipowski experienced an engine failure approximately five minutes after take off. He autorotated into a rice paddy striking a dike on touchdown resulting in the aircraft turning over on in its side. He received a minor cut on the forehead and was evacuated from the rice paddy within three minutes by the alert crew of the 82nd Med Det (HA) "Dust Off". While at the platoon orbit point WO Patrick J. Gilligan noted that he was losing fuel at a fairly rapid rate and immediately flew to Can Tho to inspect his aircraft. Upon landing, a total of 53 holes were found in the aircraft and included a large, hole in the fuel tank. All aircraft were returned to Soc Trang the next morning. The record number of holes incurred by a single aircraft during the attack was 273. Much credit must be given to the 121st maintenance section and the 80th Trans Det for the outstanding job accomplished in repairing the damged aircraft. All damaged aircraft were back on flyable status four days after the attack.

An increased effort to destroy the VC was evidenced by nine large scale operations participated in by the 121st during the month. The operations ranged from Tan Hiep to Ca Mau. On 28 July while participating in an operation west of Vi Thanh, Captain George C. Strch

flying on his first operational mission with the "Vikings" was wounded by small arms fire; Captain Stroh was evacuated to CONUS and reports received indicate he will recover with no serious after affects.

Aviation Battalion. This unit was to be [illegible] Kentucky, and transported by aircraft carrier [illegible]

The 539th Engineering Detachment, [illegible] Corps of Engineers, in conjunction with [illegible] B Section started construction on twelve [illegible] pan path houses, and a mess hall. [illegible] of two brick structures into a [illegible] area southwest of the existing [illegible]

On 1 April, the eight aircraft [illegible] support missions of the 119th Aviation Company [illegible] During the four day trip, [illegible] Trang area, receiving no enemy [illegible]

On the 4th a three day ground [illegible] Thanh, thirty miles northwest of [illegible] this operation, Daniel 169, was [illegible] light contact with the Cong elements.

On the following day, [illegible] Ground elements [illegible] disembarked, and [illegible] established contact a few miles northwest [illegible] following morning.

Battalion [illegible] AUGUST

On 23 August Brigadier General [illegible], Ar[illegible]

It appeared that the Viet Cong had established a pattern for Commander, 1st Cavalry Division, visited [illegible]

mortar attacks against the Soc Trang Airfield. At 2230 hours on by Captain William E. Hodgens Jr., [illegible]

2 August the airfield was again attacked by Viet Cong 81mm mortars. [illegible] For the first time since arriving in Vietnam [illegible]

A total of twelve rounds fell on the airfield. One round fell bet- departed Soc Trang on 23 August for an extended [illegible]

ween the enlisted barracks just behind the control tower proving the Ranger area. Twenty-four aircraft and 135 personnel [illegible]

value of the sand bags surrounding the barracks, in that they absorbed north to Ban Me Thuot. On the 24th was 12[illegible]

the majority of shrapnel. Four personnel received minor injuries [illegible] that supported a road clearing operation to [illegible]

from shrapnel and no aircraft were damaged. Again all flyable between Ban Me Thuot and Kon Tum. [illegible]

aircraft were evacuated in record time. After breaking ground Ban Me Thuot, the [illegible]

"Viking 21", CWO Jerome Daly, spotted the mortar positions. Due 24 August, the unit was visited by General [illegible]

to his alertness, the "Vikings" were able to attack and silence the Commanding General, [illegible]

mortars. Investigation of the mortar position the following morning to several of the officers and [illegible]

revealed that the "Viking" attack apparently destroyed the mortar operation [illegible] with [illegible]

tubes wounded an estimated five Viet Cong.

27 August the "Tigers" returned to Soc Trang.

Precedance was set this month by the taking of a unit photo- Upon arrival at Soc Trang at 1700 [illegible]

graph. It was recommended that a unit photograph be taken every six committed to support [illegible] 197 in t[illegible]

months due to the constant change of personnel.

arrival at Vi Thanh they were [illegible]

The highlight of the month came on 15 August when a change of two armed helicopters had been [illegible]

command took place. Major Millard Whitten was replaced by Major had been hit by ground fire during [illegible]

Colin W. McKenzie Jr., Infantry. Major Whitten returned to CONUS assumed control of the operation and [illegible]

on 10 September 1965, for an assignment to Combat Developments at troops from 1800 until 1900 hours on 2[illegible]

Fort Rucker. Major McKenzie, the new "Tiger 6" came to Vietnam were hit by ground fire and [illegible]

from the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, on the left formers from [illegible]

Kansas. Present for the change of Command ceremony was Lieutenant the door of his helicopter.

Colonel William J. Maddox Jr., Commanding Officer, 13th Aviation

Battalion was truly an outstanding month for the [illegible] Corps. On 23 August Brigadier General Wright, Assistant Division Commander, 1st Cavalry Division, visited Soc Trang and was briefed by Captain William H. Hodgson Jr., Executive Officer of the 121st. For the first time since arriving in Vietnam, the "Tigers" departed Soc Trang on 23 August for an extended TDY tour to the II Corps area. Twenty-four aircraft and 135 personnel made the journey north to Ban Me Thuot. On the 24th the 121st along with A, 1st and A, 501st supported a road clearing operation on Highway 21 which runs between Ban Me Thuot and Nha Trang. Following five lifts from Ban Me Thuot, the 121st moved to Nha Trang. On the evening of 24 August, the unit was visited by General W. C. Westmoreland, Commanding General, MACV. He was met by Major McKenzie and talked to several of the officers and enlisted men. The road clearing operation went extremely well with negative Viet Cong contact and on 27 August the "Tigers" returned to Soc Trang.

Upon arrival at Soc Trang at 1730 the 121st was immediately committed to support Dan Chi 157 in the vicinity of Vi Thanh. Upon arrival at Vi Thanh they were briefed on the situation, learning that two armed helicopters had been shot down and a total of 30 helicopters had been hit by ground fire during the operation. "Tiger 6" then assumed control of the operation and support was rendered the ground troops from 1830 until 1200 hours on 28 August. Two "Tiger" aircraft were hit by ground fire and Captain Scott Lyman received minor cuts on the left forearm from flying fragments when a round went through the door of his helicopter.

August was truly an outstanding month for the 121st Aviation Company. The unit distinguished itself by flying a total of 2,702.4 aircraft hours for the month of which 2,493.8 were in rotary wing aircraft. Total aviators time for the month was 4,439.2 hours. This was a first in Army Aviation. Great credit must be given to our maintenance personnel for their outstanding accomplishments. The high number of hours flown was only possible because of their ability to maintain a high availability rate for the Company's aircraft. More than 27 one hundred hour periodic inspections were completed during the month.

In addition to the Company's support to the II Corps the "Tigers" participated in seven airmobile operations in the IV Corps area. Its accomplishments during August again substantiated its position at the top in Army Aviation.

with 35 Viet Cong KIA and 65 WIA.

On the 6th four ships were

"Tiger 6" took the

operation.

The "Tiger"

Division operation on the 7th.

"Vikings" flew 2

The Company joined with

alternate mission commander.

dark, but at 2000 hours an urgent call

C & C, and the "Vikings" planned to

Kien Tien to evacuate 35 ARVN soldiers who

The beginning of the month was fairly routine for the "Tigers", but as the month progressed they became more and more involved in extensive combat operations. The Company participated in eleven combat assault operations during the month in addition to one large scaled medical evacuation and two VIP runs.

The first AF was on the 3rd when "Tiger 6", nine "slicks", six "Vikings", and "Wrecker 1" joined forces with the 114th Aviation Company in support of a 9th Division (IRW) operation. The Company participated in five troop lifts from both Can Tho and Vinh Long. A total of 824 troops and 16,850 pounds of cargo were lifted in "Tiger" aircraft during the day. Moderate contact was made with the Viet Cong and the cargo carried out of the operations area was predominanatly captured Viet Cong stores, weapons, and ammunition. The "Vikings" were credited with 35 Viet Cong KIA and 65 WIA.

The next four days were taken up by performing C & L missions. On the 6th four ships were dispatched for a VIP run from Can Tho while "Tiger 6" took the C & C ship and provided an airborne CP for a ground operation, loss of American lives

The "Tiger" contingent traveled to Bac Lieu to participate in a 21st Division operation on the 7th. The "slicks" flew 31 sorties while the "Vikings" flew 25 sorties and chalked up 30 Viet Cong KIA and 65 WIA. The Company joined with 1, 101st for this operation and "Tiger 6" was alternate mission commander. All aircraft returned to Soc Trang before dark, but at 2030 hours an urgent call scrambled five "slicks", the C & C, and the "Vikings" platoon to

"Sabellers" and the "Thunderbirds" participating.
Kien Tien to evacuate 35 ARVN soldiers who had been wounded during a
and destroy sweep with negative results the 12nd
Viet Cong attack. They were successfully transported to Can Tho and
and taken to Phong Dinh.
the ships were released.
The "Vikings" traveled to An Long to
On the 10th and 11th a full contingent of 121st aircraft participated
operation on the 18th while the "Sabers" were out
in two day 21st Division search and destroy operation labeled Dan
and to be a bad day for 1/1st Mechanized Army Vietnam
Chi 159. Here the Company again skillfully deployed the 2/31 and 1/33
Lieutenant William F. Wilson, Infantry.
ARVN Battalion from the staging area at Vi Thanh to the operations area
at Cai Cai while on a aerial formation
on the first day. After a sweep of the designated area resulting in
wire from a pole at the time they were about to
only light contact with the VC, the troops were extracted and returned
approach. The aircraft went into a
to Vi Thanh,
on its side. The aircraft was
The 14th started out quietly, however a call from COC at 0957 hours
crew crashed injury. Recovery attempts
scrambled the "Vikings" to the vicinity of coordinates WR993434 where a
B-57 and the crew resulted in the
US Navy A1E had crashed. The "Vikings" and "Dust Off" were at the scene
where it sunk out of sight.
of the crash within minutes, however they quickly realized that the pilot
The 21st saw two "slicks" and a "Viking"
had not survived the crash. A napalm bomb had exploded prematurely and
Vinh and on to Tra On for a VIP
the aircraft had gone down in flames. Another call at 1734 hours sent
121st contingent traveled to Vi Thanh for
the "Vikings" to another location where a US Navy A4 jet had crashed.
commander skillfully directed the
Again rescue attempts which continued through the 15th were unsuccessful
followed by an operation
and the loss of American lives served as a grim reminder of the severity
having light contact
of this conflict with the Viet Cong.
Again on the 24th the "Sabers"
On the 16th a flight of eight "slicks", the "Viking platoon and
Tan Hiep in the 7th Division area.
"Wrecker 1" went to Tra Vinh for a 9th Division committment. Results of
aircraft were released
this operation were known to the participating aviation units as was
to Saigon in support of the
the case following numerous operations. Early on the morning of the
seven "slicks", and six "Vikings"
17th the "Tigers" lined up here at Soc Trang for Dan Chi 161. "Tiger 6"
turned here at 1730 hours on the
was aviation mission commander with eight "Tigers", the "Vikings", seven

"slicks" and the "Thunderbirds" participating. Following a search and destroy sweep with negative results the 42nd Rangers were extracted and taken to Phong Hiep, found a flight of "slicks" [illegible] work. The "Vikings" traveled to An Long to standby for a possible ground operation by the 18th while the "slicks" were out on C & Rs. This turned out to be, and they for 1/Lt Lieutenant Henry Holzheuser, Artillery and 2nd Lieutenant William C. Miles, Infantry. After making two successful landings at Cai Cai while on a special forces run, their tail rotor hit a guide wire from a pole at the time they were about to terminate their third approach. The aircraft went into a barbed wire fence and flipped over on its side. The aircraft was severely damaged but the pilots and crew escaped injury. Recovery attempts were made by one of the 611th's H-37s but the second one resulted in the aircraft being dropped in a marsh where it sunk out of sight.

The 21st saw two "slicks" and a "Viking" fire team depart for Tra Vinh and on to Tra On for a VIP flight. The 23rd was the day when a full 121st contingent traveled to Vi Thanh for Dan Chi 163. "Tiger 6" as mission commander skillfully directed two lifts of the 42nd Ranger Battalion followed by an extraction late in the afternoon. The results showed having light contact and five Viet Cong killed in action.

Again on the 24th the "slicks" were airborne at sunrise enroute to Tan Hiep in the 7th Division area. Three early lifts were made and the aircraft were released for return to "home plate" to prepare for a trip to Saigon in support of the 145th Aviation Battalion. "Tiger 6", thirteen "slicks", and six "Vikings" made the trip. The 121st aircraft returned home at 1630 hours on the 25th following the successful extraction

of 173rd Airborne Brigade troops involving three lifts. All missions on this extraction were made at low level.

The month of October was an active one for the 21st Division. The 27th and 28th found a flight of "slicks" and the "Vikings" platoon Company. The month began with an RF for the 21st Division [illegible] working out of Bac Lieu and Ca Mau after being recalled from C & L missions. Vi Thanh. Three lifts were made in the morning which [illegible] On the afternoon of the 28th they assisted A, 101st in recovering "Warrior" 2/31 and 1/33 battalions to the operations area. Only [illegible] aircraft, returning to Soc Trang at 2100 hours.

[illegible] test was established resulting in one Viet Cong KIA and [illegible]

During the month 12 officers and 18 enlisted men departed Soc Trang POW taken. Also some supplies and a few rifles were [illegible] for return to CONUS. Also the Company welcomed 33 new "Tigers" in the troops were extracted thus ending Dan Chi 165. [illegible] traditional style.

[illegible] flight operation in that it was the first Corps slice [illegible]

The month went by quickly and the average aviator time of 75.5 hours [illegible] ever been staged in the Delta. Both the 21st and [illegible] for 48 assigned aviators indicated that the "Tigers" were always ready, participated. Each Division worked within an [illegible] willing, and able to go any place, anytime, to do their share in the while the Corps CP monitored the actions of both [illegible] struggle against Communist aggression.

~~Aviation mission commander for the 21st Div[illegible]~~

The 4th was the beginning of a three day [illegible] which turned out to be highly successful. The [illegible] 21st Division were helilifted by the [illegible] which included "Tiger 6" [illegible] "slicks", and the "Viking" [illegible] received small arms fire during the first two [illegible] none but the air strikes and suppressive fire of the [illegible] silenced it. "Tiger 6" was on [illegible] with Colonel Nguyen Minh, CO, 21st Division [illegible] Colonel Robert Spillman, Infantry, [illegible] "Vikings" and five "slicks" returned on the 5th [illegible] personnel which included four Americans. They also [illegible] missions to the units on the ground and brought [illegible]

supplies, and documents. Light ARVN casualties.

The month of October was an active one for the 121st Aviation Company. The month began with an RF for the 21st Division staged from Vi Thanh. Three lifts were made in the morning which transported the 2/31 and 1/33 battalions to the operations area. Only very light contact was established resulting in one Viet Cong KIA and eight Viet Cong POW taken. Also some supplies and a few rifles were captured. The troops were extracted thus ending Dan Chi 165. This was a very significant operation in that it was the first Corps sized operation that had ever been staged in the Delta. Both the 21st and the 9th Divisions participated. Each Division worked within an assigned operations area while the Corps CP monitored the actions of both. "Tiger 6" was the aviation mission commander for the 21st Division part of the operation.

The 4th was the beginning of a three day operation south of Ca Mau which turned out to be highly successful. The first line units of the 21st Division were helilifted by the aviation elements participating which included "Tiger 6" as aviation mission commander, a flight of "slicks", and the "Viking" armed platoon from the 121st. The "slicks" received small arms fire during the first two lifts into the landing zone but the air strikes and suppressive fire of the "Vikings" quickly silenced it. "Tiger 6" was on station throughout the three day period with Colonel Nguyen Minh, CO, 21st Division (ARVN), and Bullmoose, Colonel Robert Spillman, Infantry, Senior Advisor to the Division. The "Vikings" and five "slicks" returned on the 5th to evacuate wounded personnel which included four Americans. They also carried out resupply missions to the units on the ground and brought back captured weapons,

went to Tan Hiep for a troop lift. This was [illegible]

supplies, and documents. Eight ARVN soldiers were killed during this [illegible] in the same area. The morning of the [illegible]

action and a final talley revealed 75 VC KIA and ten VC POW brought in, out on C & L missions while the "Vikings" [illegible]

The operation, labeled Dan Chi 167, ended with a troop extraction on the Division commitment. At 1030 hours the [illegible]

6th.
sent to Vinh Long for a briefing and then on to [illegible]

The next significant event for the "Tigers" was a two day trip to (XS000300) where they got into a pretty [illegible]

Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa. The Company departed with a C & C ship, five Three ships were hit by ground fire and [illegible]

"Vikings", eight "slicks", and "Wrecker 1" on the evening of the 7th. was wounded in the right elbow by a VC bullet [illegible]

All personnel spent the night at Tan Son Nhut and participated in a mas-firing pass on an enemy position. [illegible]

sive airlift of American troops into the "Iron Triangle" the next morning, the time and she climbed aboard the "Dust Off" [illegible]

returning to Soc Trang the afternoon of the 8th.
medical aid while enroute to the [illegible]

On the 10th the 121st provided C & C ships, ten "slicks", five Kaye is a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army [illegible]

"Vikings", and one Maintenance aircraft to support Dan Chi 169 staging a trained Registered nurse. [illegible]

from Vi Thanh. During the day 800 troops were lifted during eight and dispatched to Can Tho at 1530 hours [illegible]

lifts. There was no contact with the VC and this aviation company sized On the 12th Soc Trang and the [illegible]

operation ended late that day with an extraction.
General Westmoreland after his visit [illegible]

The next two days the "Tigers" flew C & L missions and on the 13th (ARVN) which he had presented with the [illegible]

a full contingent of aircraft went to Binh Thuy near Can Tho to begin Also on the same day three "Vikings" [illegible]

Dan Chi 171. This two day operation turned into a bloody battle and the mission of taking Hamlet Award H. [illegible]

when the smoke had cleared 168 Viet Cong had been killed and ten captured. of the delta area.

Numerous enemy weapons were captured including three automatic rifles. The Month ended with the "Tigers" [illegible]

Nine "slicks" flew an evacuation mission of dead and wounded early the "Vikings" and "Tigers" traveled to Can Tho [illegible]

second morning followed closely by a POW run. One "slick" was used two assault lifts and the [illegible]

for a psy war speaker mission that same day. Four "slicks" received with the VC. On the [illegible]

hits during the course of this operation but all were repaired quickly My Tho, Tra Vinh area [illegible]

and were able to continue the mission.
which they returned to Soc Trang. [illegible]

The next action for the "Tigers" came on 21 October when six "slicks" filled with combat assault [illegible]

went to Tan Hiep for a troop lift. This was followed on the 23rd by an RF in the same area. The morning of the 24th found the "slicks" out on C&L missions while the "Vikings" were on standby for a 9th Division commitment. At 1050 hours the gun platoon was scrambled and sent to Vinh Long for a briefing and then on to vicinity of Tra Vinh (XS000300) where they got into a pretty good fire fight with old Charlie. Three ships were hit by ground fire and 2nd Lieutenant William C. Wilson was wounded in the right elbow by a VC bullet while he was making a firing pass on an enemy position. Miss Martha Raye was in the area at the time and she climbed aboard the "Dust Off" aircraft and gave him medical aid while enroute to the 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon. Miss Raye is a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army Nursing Corps Reserves and a trained Registered Nurse. That same day four "slicks" were recalled and dispatched to Cao Lanh at 1555 hours to airlift emergency supplies.

On the 26th Soc Trang had the distinction of being visited by General Westmoreland after his visit with the 42nd Ranger Battalion (ARVN) which he had presented with the Presidential Unit Citation. Also on the same day three "slicks" and a "Viking" fire team were given the mission of taking Senator Edward H. Kennedy on an inspection tour of the Delta area.

The month ended with two "Eagle" operations. On the 30th the "Vikings" and "Tigers" traveled to Ca Mau where they participated in two assault lifts and two extractions. Negative contact was established with the VC. On the 31st ten "slicks" and "Tiger 6" traveled to the My Tho, Tra Vinh area for a troop lift in the 7th Division area following which they returned to Soc Trang. This ended a month which had been filled with combat assault operations with varying results.

The first few days of the month were spent performing C & L missions. On the 3rd "Lightening Bug", a new lighting device developed by the 121st and 80th Trans, went with a heavy "Viking" fire team to Tan Hiep to search for and destroy illegal canal and river traffic operating in the area. This experiment was successful in that procedures for performing the night hunting mission were refined from the experience gathered that evening.

The 4th was a day of rest for 121st aviators while maintenance personnel had all of the unit's aircraft in for a day to be worked on. The next day the "slicks" were again out on C & L missions and on that night another night hunting mission was staged, this time resulting in the confirmed sinking of a large number of VC sampans.

The first RF of the month came on the 6th as ten "slicks" and the "Vikings" traveled to Ben Tre to make several troop lifts early in the morning and then they were on standby for the remainder of the day. On the 9th the 21st Division began Dan Chi 180 and the "Tigers" and "Vikings" staged from Soc Trang. This operation was of special significance because it marked the first time that Regional Forces units had ever been airlifted for combat assault purpose. The "slicks" hauled seven tons of captured ammunition and weapons out of the operational area. The "Vikings" were credited with three VC KIA and ten VC WIA. The ground troops rounded up four POW and detained 15 suspects.

On the 11th the C & C ship, ten "slicks", and the "Vikings" left for Tan Hiep before daylight and made two lifts. Six "slicks" were released at 0930. At approximately 1630 word was received that a maximum

number of "slicks" were to report to Can Tho to pick up troops and return them to Tan Hiep to reinforce the aircraft. The "Vikings", "Lightning Bug", and Puff the Magic Dragon were all working in the area that night. This was the first night combat assault mission that the entire Company had participated in, and all troops were landed at the Tan Hiep airfield without incident.

troops This operation was followed by several rather routine days before things got hot again. The "Vikings" were scrambled to a location two miles south of Ca Mau on the 15th to do some trouble shooting.

Upon other on the 16th work began in earnest. The 21st Division initiated Dan Chi 182 which turned into a two day operation. The C & C ship, a flight of "slicks", and the "Vikings" staged from Soc Trang making the assault lifts early the first day. The operation went on into the night and when final count was made 114 Viet Cong had been killed and two POW Otaken. The "slicks" flew med evacs and resupply missions for the ground troops the next day bringing out captured weapons and supplies. The operation ended with a troop extraction.

over to On the 17th the Viet Cong staged a multi-battalion attack on the Tan Hiep airfield and overran it. The staging area for the RF on the 18th was shifted to the new strip at My Tho. An effort was made to hit the massed VC units before they could again split up. Some success came out of this effort but strong contact was never maintained. The VC withdrew leaving a number of ARVN casualties behind. The chase operation lasted two days with a full contingent of 121st aircraft participating. The VC made good with their escape suffering moderate casualties in the process. For two airmobile [illegible]

From the 20th the Company was scheduled to travel to Bieh Hoa in support of III Corps, however this plan was cancelled by an "instant RM" which staged from Soc Trang against suspected elements of the Soc Trang Battalion. No contact was established and an extraction was executed. On the 21st the "Tigers" were recalled from their C & L missions to a place near Rach Gia to make four lifts of troops from an outpost which had been mortared by the VC to a secure area where they could regroup for the counter attack. These lifts were made at a low level due to the terrain and distance to be covered. Upon completion the "slicks" returned to their C & L duties.

At 0138 hours on 22 November the VC initiated an attack on the Soc Trang Airfield using 81mm mortars and indirect fire from 75mm recoiless rifles. A total of 35 rounds fell within the compound causing light damage to 16 helicopters and injuring 12 enlisted men and one officer. One of the EM assigned to the 221st died several days later as a result of wounds received during the attacks. The "Tigers" were operational at dawn despite the fact that some of their aircraft had to be turned over to maintenance for repair. That morning a flight of eight "slicks" reported to Tra Vinh on time for a 9th Division troop lift.

Toward the later part of the month "Tiger" aircraft were attached to other companies to augment their capabilities for various missions as well as being assigned their own C & L missions. The "Vikings" were called upon on several occasions to escort our "slicks" into outposts surrounded by Viet Cong infested territory.

On the 26th and again on the 29th the various elements of the 121st pulled together for two airmobile operations both of which were staged

from Bac Lieu and involved the 21st Division. Negative contact was established on either of these RPs and extractions were made. The mission closed out quietly with routine C & L missions being flown on the 26th to Co Cong where they lifted troops to [illegible] the coast of the South China Sea in conjunction [illegible] amphibious assault force. Moderate contact [illegible] captured were than five tons of supplies, weapons and [illegible]. The troops were extracted that a [illegible] operation.

For the next few days the "slicks" [illegible] the "Vikings" worked out of Bangkok [illegible] acquired pilots, 1st Lieutenant Alan [illegible] and WO John D. Hunter. The remaining days [illegible] filled by participation in several [illegible] A, 502nd with three "slicks" at Vinh Long [illegible] rous C & L missions. Dan Chau [illegible] 7th and 8th, and 13th reconnaissance [illegible] significant results.

On the 13th during the conduct of [illegible] Hall, AC, and Captain Richard L. [illegible] aviators who had bailed out of a US Navy [illegible] into the Gulf of Siam. They [illegible] conditions and took the [illegible] "Lightening Bug" and the "Vikings" [illegible] during the course of which they encountered [illegible]

The last month of 1965 was an important one for the Soc Trang "Tigers". On the 1st "Tiger 6", six "slicks", and the "Vikings" travelled to Go Cong where they lifted troops to the operations area on the coast of the South China Sea in conjunction with the landing of an amphibious assault force. Moderate contact was made and the friendlies captured more than five tons of supplies, weapons, and ammunition. The troops were extracted that afternoon following a highly successful operation.

For the next few days the "slicks" performed C & L missions while the "Vikings" worked out on Range ALPHA (WR855732) training two newly acquired pilots, 1st Lieutenant Alan N. Pritchard, Transportation Corps, and WO John D. Hunter. The remaining days up through 14 December were filled by participation in several 21st Division operations, supporting A, 502nd with three "slicks" at Vinh Long on the 5th, and flying numerous C & L missions. Dan Chi 187, and 189 took place on the 2nd, 7th and 8th, and 13th respectively. None of these operations produced significant results.

On the 15th during the conduct of a C & L mission CWO Gordon S. Hall, MC, and Captain Richard L. Buxton, Infantry, went to the aid of two aviators who had bailed out of a US Navy RA5C jet from the USS Enterprise into the Gulf of Siam. They made a heroic sea rescue under hazardous conditions and took the rescued airmen safety to Can Tho. That night "Lightening Bug" and the "Vikings" went out on a night hunting mission, during the course of which they encountered .50 caliber machine gun fire.

No hits were received and they returned home at 0400 after sinking several hostile sampans. Eight "slicks" reinforced the 114th Aviation Company for an airmobile operation on the 16th while the armed platoon was given a day of rest. The tempo increased on the 19th with the entire Company's flyable aircraft supporting a tactical troop lift in the morning. The "slicks" were released at 1130 hours to perform miscellanous C & L missions throughout the Corps area.

The 20th of December saw two "slicks" depart for a nine day trip to Tan Son Nhut where they were attached to the 120th Aviation Company for the purpose of transporting part of the VIP party of General Harold K. Johnson, Chief of Staff, United States Army.

The morning of the 22nd saw the C & C ship, six "slicks", and the "Vikings" staged from Soc Trang in support of Dan Chi 191. The operation was a great success with the armed platoon being credited with ten VC KIA. The 2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry claimed a large percentage of the 282 VC KIA during this tremendous ARVN victory. Captured during this operation were two 81mm mortars, six automatic weapons, and 47 individual weapons. Dan Chi 191 ended as the "Tigers" extracted the 2/31, "Stormy 2", on the 23rd.

On the 24th four "slicks" were on their way before dawn to supplement the troop lift capability of the 114th Aviation Company for a 9th Division operation near Vinh Kim. Christmas Day was a beautiful day in the Delta. Four "Tigers" performed C & L missions during the day which consisted of taking mail and turkey dinner to all US personnel throughout the Delta. The Company was rewarded for their efforts on Christmas Day by being given a day down on the 26th. The "Tiger" aviators did not all

stay down however. The Company IPs gave monthly proficiency rides while the Vikings practiced on Range ALPHA.

One "slick" was untilized on the 29th to transport an ARVN VIP to several outposts throughout the Corps area. On the 30th the Company participated in their last airmobile operation of the year by helping lift an ARVN battalion from Soc Trang to the staging area for Dan Chi 194 at Vi Thanh. From there they deployed five lifts into the field in search of a VC battalion, however results were almost negligible with only two guerillas killed and some ammunition and flags captured. An extraction was made and all ships returned to "home plate" in the late afternoon. By participating in the operation the 121st maintained a consistent record. Even though its mission had shifted from that of direct support of the 21st Division to general support of the IV Corps, the unit had participated in every airmobile operation the 21st Division had conducted between 1 June 1965 and 31 December 1965 except for two. The two exceptions were operations conducted while the "Tigers" were TDY to II Corps at Ban Me Thuot in August. For its loyal support and outstanding performance General Minh and General Quang, IV Corps Commander, recommended the 121st Aviation Company for its second Vietnamese Unit Citation and Gallantry Cross with Palm.

The IG inspection of the 121st Aviation Company took place during December. The results were more than complimentary and all personnel reaffirmed their belief that they had been doing an outstanding job. As the year closed out the Soc Trang "Tigers" were all proud of their accomplishments and were looking forward to a successful new year.

produce greater efficiency. MAINTENANCE

The Maintenance activities of the 121st Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) were organized to provide maximum availability of aircraft. Personnel newly assigned to the 121st maintenance section or its supporting unit, the 80th Transportation Detachment were given a one to two month OJT period in the maintenance hanger to completely familiarize them with their work and the problems peculiar to aircraft operation in the Republic of Vietnam. After their initial training period 121st personnel continued on with duties in the hanger or were assigned as crew chiefs and mechanics and specialists assigned to the 80th Trans assumed specialized positions according to their particular line of training and background.

Breakdown of maintenance responsibilities was standard. Crew chiefs accompanied their assigned aircraft on all flights and attended to daily and intermediate inspections. The ordering of parts, making minor repairs and general cleanliness and upkeep of the aircraft were their responsibilities. difficulty.

Second echelon maintenance was performed by personnel of the 121st maintenance section. This included making periodic inspections, complying with modification work orders (MWOs), and component parts replacement.

Third echelon maintenance work was accomplished by the 80th Trans. Engine repair, major component changes, and field recovery of downed aircraft fell into this unit's area of responsibility. The 121st Maintenance Section and the 80th Transportation Detachment's activities were very close knit and the units cooperated with each other to

produce greater efficiency. [illegible]

[illegible] aircraft which were seriously damaged or destroyed were sent to the [illegible] Transportation Company (DS) at Vung Tau. This unit backed up the [illegible] with fourth echelon maintenance support. It also provided one of its assigned CH-37, "Mojave", to assist in the field recovery of 121st Aviation Company aircraft when necessary. After making a recovery they either returned the recovered "bird" to Soc Trang or took it to Vung Tau according to its condition.

During the first half of the year, UH-1B helicopters were the only aircraft used by the 121st except for its one assigned U-6, "Beaver". The arrival of Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion and subsequent exchange of aircraft brought the introduction of UH-1D aircraft into the Company's inventory. Initially, previously noted the "slick" platoons had a full complement of SOUTH models by the end of August. The BRAVO models were retained for use in the "Viking" armed platoon. [illegible]

Maint Maintenance personnel serving the Company were to make the transition with a minimum of difficulty. The changeover was eased to a great extent by the sending of selected maintenance personnel to the UH-1D maintenance school at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon. This school offered two courses. One dealt with the UH-1D airframe and the other with the intricate workings of the Lycoming T-53, L-11 engine, the aircraft powerplant. Members of the 121st maintenance section, crew chiefs, and mechanics of the 80th Trans attended one or both of these courses which lasted 14 days each. A total of 19 Company personnel and 80th Trans personnel attended during 1965. Parts shortage for both the UH-1B and UH-1D aircraft plagued the maintenance program throughout the

year. The main parts which the maintenance people had difficulty in obtaining were engines and rotor blades. A high percentage of the aircraft down time can be accounted for by their being EDP for engines, rotor blades, or other various parts. Part shortages for the UH-1B affected the Company's maintenance status primarily in September, October, November, and December. UH-1D parts were in short supply in July, November, and December, bringing down the Company's aircraft availability rate for these months.[4]

In general the maintenance record of the 121st Aviation Company for 1965 reflected great achievement. Very few mechanical failures were evidenced which reflected very thorough maintenance and supervision of work. The 121st maintenance section was commanded by First Lieutenant Ralph E. Riddle, Jr., Transportation Corps, who was assisted by CWO Donald F. Patten. Lieutenant Riddle was preceeded by Captain Louis P. McFadden, Transportation Corps, who after leaving his job as Company Maintenance Officer became Company Executive Officer. Captain Leonard F. Mice, Transportation Corps, and Captain Alan P. Wooley, Transportation Corps, also held the job as Maintenance Officer during 1965.

FOOTNOTES

1 See ATTACHED UNITS, page 15

2 See ATTACHED UNITS, page 15

3 Reference, Tuffy, 1963 Unit History, page 25

4 See CHART II, Monthly Aircraft Availability, page 118

APPENDIX A

The Mekong Delta

The Mekong Delta is that area of the Republic of [illegible] is South of an east-west line stretching [illegible] above Saigon. It is bordered on the east by the [illegible] and on the west by the Gulf of Siam and the [illegible] Delta area is approximately 175 nautical miles [illegible] southeast line and varies in width from 150 nautical [illegible] widest point to 20 nautical miles as it tapers to a [illegible] southernmost extremity.

The Delta is an almost absolutely flat [illegible] mean elevation of less than 20 feet [illegible] [illegible] a narrow strip of dense foliage and [illegible] much as four to five kilometers [illegible] characterized by swamps and marshes.

APPENDIXES

Inland may be found large rice [illegible] entire region. Numerous canals, [illegible] countryside and along the streams and rivers are [illegible] small villages and hamlets.

The Mekong Delta is transversed by two major [illegible] and the Mekong. The Bassac is the main southern [illegible] comes down from Laos through Cambodia and enters [illegible] of Chau Doc flowing southeasterly past Long Xuyen [illegible] empties into the South China Sea. The three cities [illegible] are major cities in the Delta region starting in [illegible] Sadec, Vinh Long and My Tho located on the Mekong River

generally parallel and to APPENDIX A east of the [illegible] located on the coast of The Mekong Delta.

The Mekong Delta is that area of the Republic of Vietnam which is south of an east-west line stretching across the country just above Saigon. It is bordered on the east by the South China Sea and on the west by the Gulf of Siam and the Cambodian border. The Delta area is approximately 175 nautical miles long on a northeast southeast line and varies in width from 150 nautical miles at its widest point to 20 nautical miles as it tapers to a point at its southernmost extremity.

The Delta is an almost absolutely flat stretch of land having a mean elevation of less than 20 feet MSL. Much of its shore line has a narrow strip of dense foliage and trees extending in places as much as four to five kilometers inland. Other shore line areas are characterized by swamps and marshes.

Inland may be found large rice fields which cover almost the entire region. Numerous canals, streams and rivers mark the countryside and along the streams and rivers are tree lines and small villages and hamlets.

The Mekong Delta is transversed by two major rivers, the Bassac and the Mekong. The Bassac is the most southernly of the two and it comes down from Laos through Cambodia and enters Vietnam just north of Chau Doc flowing southeasterly past Long Xuyen, Can Tho and empties into the South China Sea. The three cities mentioned above are major cities in the Delta region sharing in importance with Sadec, Vinh Long and My Tho located on the Mekong River which runs

generally parallel and to the northeast of the Bassac, Rach Gia located on the coast of the Gulf of Siam, Ca Mau located toward the southern tip of the country and Soc Trang located just south of the Bassac near the eastern coast line. Bac Lieu, Tra Vinh, Vi Thanh, Ben Tre and Ce Cong are other cities of importance. The Mekong River divides into three branches just southeast of Sadec near Vinh Long. Each branch, as characteristic of the main parts of the two rivers, contains numerous small islands.

The rivers together with the numerous streams and canals and the flooded rice paddies in the wet season give the impression to one observing from the air that the country is predominently under water. This effect is minimized during the dry season which lasts from December to late in May when the smaller streams and canals dry up with the rice paddies.

The Mekong Delta is a rice growing region producing over two-thirds of the food produced in the Republic of Vietnam and having over half of the country's population. It is an area rich in natural resources which is tremendously important to the Vietnamese people. This is the operating territory of the 121st Aviation Company - "The Famed Soc Trang Tigers."

doors to give protection to APPENDIX B ft flank.

wall of the cabin was Aircraft Configurations

floor space for cargo. Five normal

During 1965 the 121st Aviation Company (AML) utilized two kinds on this seat. The crew chief and gunner normally

of helicopters, the UH-1B and the UH-1D, "Iroquois", manufactured by seats next to the doors. They had seat belts

the Bell Helicopter Company of Fort Worth, Texas. During the first falling out of the aircraft as they occasionally

half of the year the BRAVO models were used for both "slicks" and doors while engaging enemy positions.

"armed ships". During the latter half of the year the DELTA models

combat assaults or "Eagle

were used in the "slick" platoons while the "Vikings" retained their normally carried seven troops. There

BRAVO model aircraft.

crew chief and the gunner while the remainder

UH-1B "Slicks"

in the forward part of the cabin

The UH-1B, "Iroquois", which was utilized as a "slick" aircraft they could sit in the doorways hanging

carried an Aircraft Commander, pilot, crew chief, and gunner. In the helicopter. The doors were

addition it had the capacity of carrying seven fully equipped ARVN assault mission. During the

combat troops or approximately 800 pounds of cargo. It had a 44 foot rear seats were sometimes folded

rotor blade and was powered by the Lycoming T-53, L-9 turbine engine. or other supplies or

The cockpit or pilot's compartment was located to the front of or dead.

the aircraft and had all of the controls and seats for the two pilots.

A certain amount of armor plating was positioned around the pilot the "slicks" were used quite extensively

seats. This offered some protection against small arms fire and was down if passengers were to be carried

in such quantity as the lifting capacity and weight and balance payload was strictly cargo.

limitations would afford. The pilots and crew members of each could be positioned between the

aircraft were also provided with armor chest protectors to be worn facing either

over their own personal flak vests. Behind the pilots' compartment phones were available

was the main cabin with a large sliding door on either side of the if desired, monitor radio

aircraft. The crew chief and gunner sat on either side of the talk to the pilots or

cabin, each manning a M-60 machine gun which could be fired out the

doors despite protection to the aircraft flanks. Along the back wall of the cabin was a seat which could be folded up to give more floor space for cargo. Five normal sized people could sit abreast on this seat. The crew chief and gunner normally occupied the end seats by the doors. They had seat belts to keep them from falling out of the aircraft as they occasionally leaned out the doors while engaging enemy positions. ~~[illegible]~~

On combat assaults or "Eagle" operations the UH-1B "slicks" normally carried seven troops. Three or four would sit between the crew chief and the gunner while the remainder would sit on the floor in the forward part of the cabin in front of the seat or occasionally they would sit in the doorways hanging their legs out the sides of the helicopter. The doors were always kept open during a combat assault mission. During the latter stages of these missions the rear seats were sometimes folded upon to make room for ammunition or other supplies or for litters during the evacuation of the wounded or dead. ~~[illegible]~~

On another type of mission, the command and logistics (C & L), the "slicks" were used quite extensively. Here the rear seat was put down if passengers were to be carried or folded out of the way if the payload was strictly cargo. For certain missions two jump seats could be positioned between the rear seat and the pilots' compartment, facing either rearward or outward as desired. Headsets with microphones were available so that passengers riding in these seats could, if desired, monitor radio conversations on the intercom as well as talk to the pilots or crew members whose APH-5 protective helmets

were equipped with earphones and microphones.

UH-1B [illegible] positions for the crew chief [illegible]

The configuration of the UH-1D, "Iroquois", which was used as a [illegible] aircraft by the 121st Aviation Company during the last half of 1965, while similar to that of BRAVO model, had several very distinct differences. The new DELTA model had a 48 foot rotor blade with a 27 inch cord which along with its Lycoming T-53, L-11 turbine engine, increased its lifting capacity significantly. Its over all dimensions were increased over those of the UH-1B and it had four additional seats, five. Once having [illegible] be out. The pilots' compartment was essentially the same as that of the BRAVO model, housing two seats for the pilots and all of the aircraft control systems and radios. The seats were improved and of a more comfortable type which were surrounded on three sides and underneath by armor plating to give additional protection to the pilots from small arms fire and flying shrapnel. Each DELTA model also had four armored chest protectors for the crew members. The cabin behind the pilots' compartment was similar to that of the UH-1B having troop seat for five passengers across the rear of the main cabin and space for the two jump seats. Also on either side to the rear of the main cabin were extensions of the cabin, each having two additional seats facing outward.

The aircraft had a large sliding door on either side which when fully opened by sliding it to the rear, exposed the entire main cabin section as well as the cabin extension. In front of the main door on each side was a small door which could

be opened to provide more space for loading and unloading purposes.

The normal positions for the crew chief and gunner were in the rear most seats of the cabin extensions from which position they manned their M-60 machine guns. The machine guns were mounted on cast iron mounts which were attached to the outside of the helicopter. These mounts were adjustable and provided a stable base upon which the gun was placed and could be maneuvered in all directions, thus enhancing the capability of delivering more accurate fire. When taking off the doors were left open and the door gunners were on alert for possible enemy fire. Once having gained sufficient altitude to be out of the range of small arms fire the pilot would slow the aircraft back to 60 knots and the doors were closed. This was done because opening and closing the doors at high airspeed could cause them to be blown off. Then when beginning a descent the pilot would again "slow for doors" and they were opened and the machine guns were again manned during the landing.

Alternate positions for the door gunners were the end seats of the main troop seat at the rear of the main cabin. The machine gun mounts were swung forward to enable the door gunners to handle them.

On combat assault missions the main doors were always left open. The smaller forward doors were removed to make it easier for the troops to load and unload. The crew members generally used the rearward seating arrangement described above and left the main troop seat in its stowed position allowing the troops to sit on the floor of the main cabin, some of them sitting with their feet hanging out the sides to enable them to get out more quickly in the landing zone.

UH-1B "Armed Ships"

With a full fuel load the DELTA "slicks" generally carried nine ARVN troops and their equipment. On subsequent lifts after burning off fuel, they sometimes carried 11 troops. Normally it was unnecessary to make any changes in order to make resupply hauls, to recover captured supplies and equipment, or to evacuate the dead or wounded personnel.

On several occasions during the year the "slicks" were called upon to lift American combat troops. Here the troop seats were generally put down and each aircraft carried seven troops.

On C & L missions the nature of the cargo dictated the configuration of the aircraft. For passengers the troop seats were utilized and sometimes the jump seat and headsets were installed. For internal cargo loads they were folded up. For certain types of cargo, such as 55 gallon drums of POL, slings were utilized to carry the load externally by fastening the sling to the cargo hook on the under side of the aircraft. The pilots had release whereby they could come to a high hover and drop their load in the desired location.

The configuration flexibility of the UH-1D and the relative ease and speed with which changes can be made enable it to be utilized for a great variety of missions. This combined with the maneuverability and capability of landing virtually anywhere there is an area large enough for the helicopter itself, catagorizes it as a true utility helicopter and has enabled it to be termed the "work horse" of Vietnam. This it truely has proved itself to be.

UH-1B "Armed Ships" of the platoon's heavy [illegible]

The UH-1B, "Iroquois", was used by the "Viking" armed platoon of the 71st Aviation Company throughout 1965. It carried a crew of four which included an Aircraft Commander, pilot, crew chief and gunner. It had the same basic design as the UH-1B "slicks" with added equipment to enable it to perform an entirely different mission. The pilots' compartment was the same as the "slick" version with sighting devices and fire controls for the aircraft's weapons system included. The main cabin was utilized for ammunition as opposed to passengers and cargo. There were two different designs or configurations to be found on the "armed ships", but both variations carried the two crew members who acted as door gunners handling modified M-60 machine guns as hand carried weapons.

The first of the two configurations was called the "Hog" and it was equipped with a XM-3 rocket system carrying 48 rockets of 2.75 inch diameter mounted in two pods, one on either side of the aircraft, each pod holding 24 rockets. The rockets were either HE (high explosive) or WP (white phosphorous) and could be aimed and fired effectively by the pilot from this aerial firing platform up to a range of 1000 meters. The rocket warhead had a bursting radius of 15 meters. Also mounted on the "Hog" was the XM-5 40mm grenade launcher which also could be aimed and fired from the pilots' compartment. This weapons system fired an HE projectile with a bursting radius of five meters for a maximum effective range of 500 meters. The XM-5 was fed automatically and rounds of ammunition were carried in the helicopter. The "Hog" was flown by "Viking 26", the platoon leader, and represented a

immediately perceptible of the platoon's heavy fire power capability.

The other armed ship configuration incorporated a quad 7.62 caliber machine gun kit and two rocket pods, each having seven rockets, the system being designated the XM-16. There were two machine guns on either side below which was mounted the rocket pod. The rockets were aimed and fired by the pilot in the right seat while the machine guns were aimed and fired from the left seat. The machine gun kit had a wide deflection, elevation, and depression spread and in the cabin was carried 6000 rounds of 7.62 caliber ammunition which was fed by belts through metal casing into the weapons.

The equipment found on the aircraft of the "Viking" platoon was a fairly recent development and enabled them to accomplish their assigned missions in a truely outstanding manner. The combined fire power of all these weapons systems plus the fire from the door gunners rendered a devastating blow to the enemy in the target areas.

UH-1B and UH-1D in Other Configurations

There were several other configurations of both the UH-1B and UH-1D, "Iroquois", which have not been previously mentioned. The most prominent of these was the Command and Control ship which was flown most of the time by the Company's Commanding Officer and the Operations Officer. During the first half of the year the BRAVO model was used for the C & C ship, but the arrival of the DELTA models saw the immediate change over to the large and more powerful model. The C & C ship was equipped with a radio console, appropriate antennas, and numerous headsets which enabled it to become an effective CP. ~~The~~

commander of the ground forces on an operation would ride in the back aircraft along with the members of his staff and advisors, and from this "birds eye" view of the battle, he directed the actions of his units on the ground over the radios available to him.

Another UH-1D configuration which came into being during the latter half of 1965 was "Lightening Bug". This was an aircraft which was equipped with an arrangement of seven spot lights and a power supply to be used for finding and lighting enemy positions at night. The light arrangement was the idea and creation of CWO Foster Fort and members of the 80th Transportation Detachment and was used quite effectively on several occasions.

The UH-1D model also was used as an aerial platform for either one or two .50 caliber machine guns which became known to all personnel in the area as the "Swatter".

One of the unsung heros of the Army aviators in the Mekong Delta was "Wrecker 1". Orginally a UH-1B aircraft, the maintenance people immediately adopted the DELTA model as soon as it became available. Essentially of the same configuration as the "slick", "Wrecker 1" was flown by two maintenance officers and accompanied the "Tigers" and "Vikings" on most combat assault operations. It carried tools and a variety of extra parts to correct most maintenance difficulties from combat damage or mechanical failure which the aircraft might encounter in the field. It also carried a maintenance team capable of making necessary field repairs or field recovery of a downed or disabled aircraft. "Wrecker 1" either orbited above the formation in the operations area or was on standby at the nearby staging area as the demands of the particular situation dictated. At all other

times "Wrecker 1" was on 24 hour standby at Soc Trang to rush to any aircraft encountering difficulty. On numerous occasions the personnel of "Wrecker 1" truely distinguished themselves by their speedy action under the most adverse conditions, especially to note field recovery under enemy fire. The presence of this aircraft was a tremendous morale booster to all the Company's pilots and personnel. and again the tremendous versatility of the UH-1B and UH-1D helicopter, demonstrated by its adaptability for use as a C & C ship, "Lightening Bug", "Spotter" and "Wrecker 1", reflects its importance to operations in a combat zone.

U-6, "Beaver"

One U-6, "Beaver", was the sole fixed wing aircraft assigned to the 121st Aviation Company during 1965. It could carry two pilots and four passengers or a limited amount of cargo. It was a single engine aircraft. Its main uses were for PCS personnel transfer, pay runs to Saigon and administrative courier runs. It was also used on occasion to bring mail back from Saigon. The arrival of the 221st Aviation Company (Fixed Wing Light) in August saw their taking over the operation of the "Beaver". It was officially transferred to them in December which left the 121st as a soley rotary wing unit.

described in the previous annex was kept alone at

all of the movements and activities necessary

Aircraft Utilization

mobile operation, the C & C ship carried the

The activities of the 121st Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) involved basically four catagories of missions. These included combat assault missions, command and logistics missions, administrative missions, and armed combat missions. Each type had its own peculiar characteristics, though due to the multitude of diverse conditions existing in the Republic of Vietnam, seldom if ever were any two missions exactly alike. There was a basic pattern, however, to each type of mission and an attempt will be made in this appendix to briefly describe each.

Combat Assault Missions

The concept of the airmobile assault as it had developed here in the Mekong Delta involved one or more ARVN combat units and a sufficient number of "slicks" to carry them into a landing zone near a known or suspected Viet Cong position. In connection with the troop lift it was essential to have the "armed ships" available to perform an armed reconnaissance of the desired landing area, to choose an appropriate landing zone, if necessary, and to escort the "slicks" into and out from the LZ while laying down protective suppressive fire to the front, flanks, and rear of the approaching aircraft. Also it was advantageous to have a "Dust Off" aircraft readily available to evacuate any personnel who might be wounded or injured during the conduct of the operation. For maintenance and recovery purposes "Wrecker 1" which was

described in the previous annex was kept close at hand. To control
Normally Air Force and VMAF prestrikes on the ob
all of the movements and activities necessary for a successful air-
pre-arranged and the ground force commander
mobile operation, the C & C ship carried the aviation mission commander
or adjusted them as he saw fit. The C & C ship
who directed the proceedings of all aircraft in accordance with the
area in a right hand orbit at 2500 feet MSL. From
desires of the ground commander within the capabilities of the aviation
ground force commander and the aviation mission
unit or units participating.
view of all that was going on and could
Once having been alerted that the Company was to support a par-
At an appropriate time the
ticular ground force at a particular time, the Company's operations
reconnaissance of the area. They
section began making plans, scheduling aircraft and crews and other
established tactical patterns at
preparations. A briefing was conducted at an appropriate time by the
Based upon this the commanders
aviation battalion liaison officer from the supported unit who outlined the
wanted the troops to be landed. Once
area of operation, details of the operation, and other matters to the avi-
ships" made a thorough reconnaissance
ation personnel holding key positions in accordance with the desires
In the meantime
and plans of the ground force commander. Final planning was then
find the ditches" to
completed prior to commencement of the operation. This included the
Ki. From there they could be called
preparation and distribution of maps and the briefing of all personnel
Ki. From the Ki the "Ditches" were
who were participating, on matters pertinent to their proposed actions.
ion of "Viking 23", the
At the appointed time certain designated aircraft moved CP person-
the "Ditch" operation leader,
nel and equipment into position and other such personnel and equipment
landing zone and landing
as had been deemed necessary to support the operation. Then all air-
a smoke grenade to mark the
craft proceeded to the staging area and lined up in readiness to begin
"Ditch" to touch down. He also gave his
when called upon.
depart the landing zone.
The C & C ship picked up the ground force commander, his staff, and
were inbound from the Ki to
advisors and proceeded to the operational area at a designated time.
then up providing area cover for them.

Normally Air Force and VNAF prestrikes on the objective area had been pre-arranged and the ground force commander observed these and changed or adjusted them as he saw fit. The C & C ship orbited operational area in a right hand orbit at 2500 feet MSL. From this position the ground force commander and the aviation mission commander had a good view of all that was going on and could direct their respective elements.

At an appropriate time the "Vikings" were called in to make a reconnaissance of the area. They flew over designted areas using pre-established tactical patterns at low level and reported their findings. Based upon this the commanders were better able to decide where they wanted the troops to be landed. Once having made a decision the "armed ships" made a thorough reconnaissance of the landing zone.

In the meantime "Tiger 6", the aviation mission commander, had notified the "slicks" to pick up the troops and to proceed to a specified RP. From there they could be called when wanted and directed to the LZ. From the RP the "slicks" were normally under the direction of "Viking 26", the armed platoon leader. He gave "Tiger Lead", the "slick" formation leader, instructions as to how to approach the landing zone and landing information. He had one of his ships throw a smoke grenade to mark the exact location of where he wanted the lead "slick" to touch down. He also gave him instructions as to how to depart the landing zone. At the approximate time while the "slicks" were inbound from the RP to the LZ, the "Vikings" went out and picked them up providing armed escort for them.

[illegible] final approach to the LZ the "Vikings" suppressed [illegible] necessary and many occasions the "slick" door gunners were [illegible] instructed to lay down suppressive fire to their flanks with their [illegible] machine giving the flight the capability of [illegible] in the touchdown in the LZ the troops quickly unload- [illegible] and formed for the assault of the enemy position or a sweep of a [illegible] specified area. Their actions were dictated by the ground force [illegible] in the [illegible] who had been observing the movement. [illegible] The "slicks" were in the landing zone for an average of seven [illegible] to unload the troops. On signal from "Tiger Lead" they departed [illegible] in formation according to their instructions from "Viking [illegible] climbed to altitude, and returned to the staging area to [illegible] troops for another lift or to refuel and standby for another [illegible] The "Vikings" stayed on station to give aerial fire support [illegible] to the friendly units on the ground in close [illegible] Lead" During the course of an operation one lift might have been all [illegible] required or many lift might have been necessary. This [illegible] determined by the size of the enemy force, the number of friendly [illegible] available, and whether or not any contact was actually made with [illegible] A force was always maintained in reserve in the stag- [illegible] area to act as a reaction force.

On an aviation company sized operation the "armed ships" were [illegible] employed in fire teams relieving each other on station. By [illegible] in this manner sustained coverage in the operational area [illegible] possible, still maintaining the integrity of the [illegible] method was taking off to the front and [illegible]

was [illegible] final approach to the LZ the "Vikings" suppressed if necessary and on rare occasions the "slick" door gunners were instructed to lay down suppressive fire to their flanks with their machine guns [illegible] the flight [illegible] in the [illegible] touching down in the LZ the troops quickly unloaded and formed for the assault of the enemy position or a sweep of a specified area. Their actions were dictated by the ground force commander in the C & C ship who had been observing the movement. [illegible] The "slicks" were in the landing zone for an average of seven seconds to unload the troops. On signal from "Tiger Lead" they departed the LZ in formation according to their instructions from "Viking 26", climbed to altitude, and returned to the staging area to pick up troops for another lift or to refuel and standby for another lift. The "Vikings" stayed on station to give aerial fire support to the friendly units on the ground. [illegible] Lead" During the course of an operation one lift might have been all that was required or many lift might have been necessary. This was determined by the size of the enemy force, the number of friendly units available, and whether or not any contact was actually made with the Viet Cong. A force was always maintained in reserve in the staging area to act as a reaction force.

On an aviation company sized operation the "armed ships" were often employed in fire teams relieving each other on station. By rotating in this manner sustained coverage in the operational area possible, still [illegible] method was [illegible]

was maintained, one fire team working while the other returned to the as soon as all aircraft had [illegible]

staging area to refuel and rearm.
left turn was often made by [illegible]

Ten "slicks" were normally employed in an average sized company at a hover before take off. [illegible]

operation giving the flight the capability of landing 100 combat troops with a 180 degree reversal of the [illegible]

in the landing zone simultaneously. At the staging area they lined up departing on the opposite [illegible]

in a trail formation and started their machines on signal from "Tiger flying not over the same terrain the aircraft

Lead". Once having the troops aboard they took off in trail formation This was accomplished by [illegible]

and quickly went into a formation of two Vs of five aircraft each turn at a hover in the [illegible]

designated as ALPHA flight and BRAVO flight respectively. It was the flight leader aircraft [illegible]

responsibility of the trail aircraft to tell "Tiger Lead" who was in the [illegible] flight passed the [illegible]

the first aircraft in the ALPHA flight when all aircraft were caught Lead" the [illegible]

up and in their correct positions in the formation. At that time [illegible]

Lead discontinued his climbing orbit over the secure stage field area, [illegible]

increased his air speed, and proceeded to the RP.
[illegible]

The entire flight was conducted in close formation giving "Tiger aircraft [illegible]

Lead" positive control over all the aircraft in the formation and [illegible]

assuring that they all would land in the landing zone close together and by [illegible]

at the same time. Once in the area of the LZ all aircraft were [illegible]

still in tight formation upon landing thus minimizing the ground [illegible]

unit leader's difficulty in grouping his forces and forming them for [illegible]

his intended assault.
[illegible]

On taking off from the landing zone, one of several different provided [illegible]

methods was utilized. The first of these was a take off in formation [illegible]

on the same heading as the approach and gaining altitude as rapidly as at the end of the [illegible]

possible, still maintaining the integrity of the formation. Another [illegible]

method was taking off to the front and making a hard right or left break

"slicks" were brought into landing zone in well
as soon as all aircraft had gained translational lift. This right or
then loaded aboard they were then returned to
left turn was often aided by all aircraft making a partial pedal turn
charged. Following an extraction all personnel
at a hover before take off. The final method used by the "Tigers"
been brought in for the CP and logistical
was a 180 degree reversal of the formation in the landing zone and
home stations and the "Tigers" and "Vikings"
departing on the opposite heading from the one used to come in, thus
"home plate".
flying out over the same terrain the aircraft had approached over.
The formation has been
This was accomplished by all of the ships making a 180 degree pedal
The arrival of Company A, 101st
turn at a hover in the landing zone and taking off with the BRAVO
described shift in the 101st formation
flight lead aircraft leading the formation out. Once at altitude
direct support of the 1st
the ALPHA flight passed the BRAVO flight once again giving "Tiger
Army of Korea, together with the
Lead" the foremost position. The 180 degree turn was practiced and
ations, saw the "Tigers" and "Vikings"
perfected by the "Tigers" in September and successfully utilized
companies of the Delta Battalion
throughout the remainder of the year. Upon reaching the vicinity of the
summer of 1951 and were
stage field "Tiger Lead" would call for the flight to "go trail" and each
used in support of an operation
aircraft would fall into single file, one behind the other for landing.
the operation.

After all the initial lifts were completed the "slicks" would stand-
on the whole company of
by for possible utilization for resupply of the friendly combat troops
from the 1st Battalion
on the ground, evacuation of dead and/or wounded, or to haul out captured
and for the
enemy prisoners, supplies, or arms and ammunition. When ships were
needed for this type of mission "Tiger 6" called "Tiger Lead", specifying
of
how many ships were needed and where they were to go. The "Vikings"
back and forth between the
provided armed escort if necessary.
companies.

Finally, on many operations it was necessary to extract the troops
at the end of the operation. The troops were lined up and grouped
according to how many could ride in an aircraft, and the

"slicks" were brought into landing zone in trail formation. Having them loaded aboard they were then returned to the stage field and discharged. Following an extraction all personnel and equipment that had been brought in for the CP and logistical support were flown back to their home stations and the "Tigers" and "Vikings" were released for return to "home plate".

The foregoing has been a description of a company sized operation. The arrival of Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion and the previously described shift in the 121st Aviation Company's mission from that of direct support of the 21st Division (ARVN) to general support of the ARVN IV Corps, coupled with the ever increasing size of airmobile operations, saw the "Tigers" and "Vikings" joining forces with other airmobile companies of the Delta Battalion and other aviation units attached for support a great deal more frequently. When more than one company was used in support of an operation one company was designated to command the operation and the other unit or units were attached to it. The company whose commanding officer was designated as the aviation mission commander had the responsibility for planning the mission in accordance with the ground force commander's plans and desires. That company provided the C & C ship and was responsible for the actions of all aviation elements involved. This responsibility was passed back and forth between the 13th Aviation Battalion's four airmobile companies.

The procedures followed were much the same as those in the company si operation except on a much larger scale. Each company had its flight of ten "slicks" and two or more armed platoons were available. In cases where a company could not provide a full complement of "slicks" the required number of aircraft from other companies were attached to its flight. There was no set number of "slicks" required to make up a flight. Some RF s had flights of five or eight or perhaps as many as fifteen, but ten was the number most normally utilized and is a good guide line figure.

Each "slick" flight was directed to its intended landing zone and often the same LZ was used for all flights on a given lift. On subsequent lifts the same LZ or an entirely different one might have been utilized by one or all flights.

The armed platoons often relieved each other on station in the same manner as the fire teams on a company sized operation. Each armed platoon may have worked as a platoon or may have been broken down into fire teams and assigned a particular area to work.

Due to the fuel limitations of the UH-1D aircraft it was often advisable to have an alternative C & C ship to take over while the primary C & C ship had to pull off station to refuel. The changer over was planned to take place at such a time as to not disrupt the conduct of the operation at a critical moment. The alternate C & C ship was normally flown by another company commander and his operations officer who were quite familiar with procedures and plans and had followed developments carefully.

The maintenance aircraft and "Dust Off" aircraft remained airborne at such times as their assistance might be needed on a moments notice. This position during an assault was normally orbiting the operational area

higher altitude than the other aircraft. Between lifts and during standby periods they too were on standby in the staging area.

During 1965 the 121st Aviation Company was called upon on several occasions to travel north to help support units in both the II and III Corps areas. During these operations they were attached to other aviation units in support of both ARVN and US ground forces. The abilities of the Company's personnel enabled them to adapt to different conditions encountered with a minimum of difficulty and to accomplish their missions in a superior manner.

Thus it is easily seen how complicated both the company sized and larger operations the 121st Aviation Company was involved in during 1965 were. Careful planning and professional competance on the part of all members of the team made possible the Company's outstanding performance and laudable record.

Sector Support

Command and Logistic Missions

The second of the four basic catagories of missions the 121st Aviation Company conducted in the course of its combat flying activities was the command and logistics mission. These were direct combat support missions covering a wide range of different activities which varied in nature from routine matters to tasks of an emergency nature. The "slicks" were utilized for C & L missions, but the "Vikings" were sometimes used to escort them into a particularly hot area. Here a brief description of the general nature of each type mission which fell within this catagory will lend a good deal of insight into the Company's overall functioning and how its aircraft were utilized.

Division Senior Advisor

When assigned the senior advisor mission for either the 21st Division Senior Advisor stationed at Bac Lieu, the 7th Division Senior Advisor stationed at My Tho, or the 9th Division Senior Advisor stationed at Sadec, the pilots flew to the designated location so as to arrive at the appointed time. During the day the aircraft was utilized at the descretion of the Senior Advisor. The pilots flew him anywhere he wanted to go or took his staff members or other designated personnel to any designated location. If the senior advisor did not want to go anywhere he might turn the aircraft over to a sector to be used at their descretion. Otherwise the pilots were on standby at the Senior Advisor's headquarters until their release time.

Sector Support

When assigned a sector mission the aircraft was flown to the airfield at the sector headquarters. This was an airfield at which Caribous, C123s, and other large fixed wing cargo carrying aircraft could land. These aircraft brought in logistical supplies of all kinds as well as troops and passengers. In the sector headquarters town was found a logistical depot responsible for supplying all outposts and compounds within the sector with all the supplies and equipment they might need. There also was found a personnel center responsible for supplying replacement personnel to the outposts and acting as a transient personnel center for the outposts.

At the airfield an NCO was normally in charge of all loading and scheduling of aircraft flights to the outposts. The pilots of the sector aircraft received their instructions from him. Loads on these runs normally included supplies, ammunition, food, medical supplies, payrolls, mail, replacement troops, personnel returning from leave, and new equipment. Almost every conceivable item capable of being lifted by a UH-1 helicopter was hauled by the Company's aircraft. Return trips from the outposts included American Advisors, troops going on leave, parachutes being returned after LOLEX operations, outgoing mail, captured weapons and supplies, captured Viet Cong, women and children going visiting or shopping, and sick and wounded personnel. The NCO at the airfield might have given the aircraft and pilot a schedule at the beginning of the day or might just have told them where he wanted them to go next for each mission. Normally an hour was allowed for lunch for the pilots and crew at the American compound. When assigned a sector mission one could almost always count on a full days flying

right up to release time.

Staff or Specific Unit Cadre Support

This type mission was designed to provide members of the IV Corps staff, Division's staffs, or specific advisory teams with air transportation or aerial surveillance when they had need of it. In most cases it provided transportation to these people pertaining to matters of official business such as going to or from briefings or conferences. It also gave the opportunity to make reconnaissances of selected areas. Whatever their needs the "Tigers" were able to fulfill their aircraft requirements.

Special Forces Support

When assigned to the Special Forces run the aircraft was flown to Can Tho where it was met by a representative from the Special Force B Team who gave the aircraft instructions as to where he was to go and what or whom he was to carry. Normally a run would be conducted to the outposts along the Cambodian border carrying mail, supplies, and such personnel as wanted to go to a particular Special Forces camp. During the course of the day a pilot or crew member on a Special Forces mission could have expected to pay a call at BTT, Cai Cai, Chau Doc, An Long, An Phu, and several other Special Forces Camps. It is likely that he might have had lunch with the B Team at Moc Hoa. The "Tigers" always looked forward to a special mission because they had a good chance of picking up a captured VC weapon or flag.

Psychological Warfare

On a psy war mission a loud speaker system was mounted on a "slick" which was flown over known Viet Cong controlled areas or contested areas spreading propaganda. Often propaganda leaflets were dropped on villages or groups of people in an effort to get the villagers to evict the VC and to let them know what the Americans and ARVN were trying to do, and thereby win them over to the side of the Government. Both tape recordings and people talking over microphones were utilized to spread propaganda. The talking was all in Vietnamese and normally both a man and a woman did the talking. The speaker ship was used both in the day time and at night. Many times it drew Viet Cong fire. This system proved quite effective in certain areas and instances.

Chaplain Flight

The Chaplain flight was a regular Sunday run which was passed around between companies when all aircraft were not involved in an operation. The aircraft flew the IV Corps Chaplains around to the various outposts and compounds where there was no permanent Chaplain to conduct religious services. The aircraft waited at each place for the services to be conducted and then proceeded to the next place on the schedule.

Medical Evacuation

The "slicks" were used for medical evacuation of both Americans and ARVNs when a "Dust Off" ship was not available or there were too many

for them to handle. On several occasions they were called upon to evacuate wounded from an outposts which the Viet Cong had attacked or over-run. Sometimes the "Vikings" were needed to escort the "slicks" in to make the pickup.

USO Shows and Entertainers

The "slicks" were called upon to provide transportation for entertainers and shows in Vietnam to entertain personnel. Among the more prominent figures carried in "Tiger" aircraft during 1965 were commedience Martha Raye and Hugh O'Brien who played Wyatt Earp in the nationwide TV series. The "Tigers" transported Vietnamese entertainers on occasion.

VIP Flights

The "Tigers" were called on several occasions to provide transportation for visiting dignitaries and Congressmen on inspection tours in Vietnam. The "Vikings" always provided armed escort for these flights. Outstanding among VIPs carried by the "Tigers" in 1965 was the party of US Senator Teddy Kennedy which included two Senators, two Representatives, and numerous newspapermen and photographers.

For USOM

A final C & L type mission was that of transporting personnel, supplies, and equipment for USOM. This agency of the US Government provided goods and supplies to the Vietnamese people in an effort to raise their economic levels and standard of living.

C & L missions were all assigned by IV Corps COC at Can Tho and each

ship had a specific release time. Ships going into certain areas were employed in pairs to facilitate rescue operations should one of them go down. Only CCC could authorize an extension to a release time. Over all, the Company provided tremendous support to the IV Corps during 1965 through the numbers of R & R missions its aircraft flew.

Administrative Missions

A fourth catagory of missions which "The Famed Soc Trang Tigers" conducted was administrative. This catagory included all those missions which were in support of the Company itself and which contributed to the functioning of the unit.

The only regularly scheduled administrative mission was that of the "Snooper" which was sent up every night to fly around the airfield and drop flares on Viet Cong positions in case of a mortar attack. This policy was instigated following the mortar attack on the evening of 7 February and was continued throughout the year. From their airborne position the pilots and crew members were better able to spot the flashes of the VC mortars and could direct the "armed ships" to them once they became airborne. The "Snooper" responsibility was shared with the "Warriors" once they became operational, each company taking a two hour shift each night. The Company also scheduled a standby flare ship to be ready to assist the "Snooper" in case of attack.

Another type of administrative mission was the R & R run to Vung Tau which normally went every three days when a ship was available. The people going on R & R flew the ship up and those returning from R & R flew it back often returning by way of Saigon to pick up mail, supplies or personnel going to Soc Trang.

by Administrative runs also included courier runs to Can Tho and Saigon for personnel on company business. A pay run was made regularly each month between Saigon and Soc Trang to pick up the Company's payroll. Ships going to Can Tho or Saigon often carried outgoing PCS personnel as well as those going on emergency leave or out of the country R & R. Returning ships carried replacements coming to the Company or other units at Soc Trang as well as people returning to duty. They also carried mail not delivered by the Air Force, PX supplies, aircraft parts, and anything or anybody else needing transportation to Soc Trang or the Delta.

All of the types of work described above were administrative missions which helped the Company support itself and its attached units as well as the other units at Soc Trang. While the primary responsibility for logistical and administrative support belonged to Army Caribou units and the USAF, the Company's scheduling of its own administrative missions contributed significantly and insured smooth and continuous operation.

Armed Combat Missions.

The final catagory of missions performed by members of the 121st Aviation Company was armed aerial combat. These missions were conducted by the "Viking" armed platoon whose members were equipped and trained to perform a wide variety of armed combat tasks.

The "Viking" were often called upon to provide armed escort for VIP flights, "slicks" going into dangerous areas, CV-2 Caribous on [illegible] missions in dangerous areas, and motor convoys. Another type of mission which fell into this catagory was lending close tactical fire support against the VC to friendly units on the ground or a friendly outposts under attack

by Charlie. The "Viking" were on primary standbly a large portion of the time they were not engaged in some other mission, and at the sound of the "Viking" alert siren there was less than a two minute time lapse before the "armed ships" were airborne and enroute to the distress area.

A new type of armed combat mission envolved during the fall of 1965. A series of events which included the increased use of the OV-1, "Mohawk", mounted SLAR and infra red equipment, the development of the "Lightening Bug", and a decision to put a curfew on canal and river traffic in certain areas all led to the feasibility of the night hunting mission. The Mohawk would overfly a certain area in hopes of picking up a target with its equipment. Once having identified a target it radied a set of coordinates to "Lightening Bug" and "Viking 26". "Lightening Bug" would then search the area with its spot light system and the "Vikings" would make a target attack. This procedure was used on several occasions resulting in the sinking of numerous VC sampans.

A final type of mission was gathering intelligence information by armed reconnaissance. The platoon or a fire team would fly to a designated area and recon by fire in an attempt to draw fire which would give the VC position away. By performing this type of work and the others described in this section, the "Vikings" of the 121st Aviation Company made a significant contribution to the Free World's war effort in the Mekong Delta.

APPENDIX D

Training Program

A training program for the 121st Aviation Company's pilots was continued during 1965. It was designed to orient newly arrived aviators to the local flying area and to the pecularities of flying in the Republic of Vietnam and more especially in the Mekong Delta, as well as to standardize flying practices of pilots. Immediately upon arrival at Soc Trang UH-1D qualified pilots were given one or more orientation rides with an instructor pilot (IP) in one of the "slicks". The BRAVO models were used until replaced by the DELTA models. During this period, the Company's IPs took the new men through all phases of flying with particular emphasis on emergency procedures, aircraft limitations and capabilities, and rice paddy landings and take-offs.

After receiving his basic checkout, the aviator was cleared to fly as pilot with an Aircraft Commander (AC) who had a great deal more in country flying experience. In the course of flying missions the ACs showed the new pilots as many of the areas as possible first demonstrating the type of approach and take-off required for getting into and out of a particular landing site, then explaining to him why he chose that particular type of maneuver, and finally allowing him to make the maneuvers himself. Through observation, repetition, and critique the new aviators learned how to fly into and out of specific areas and how to best evaluate new areas and new conditions for flying purposes. This training period continued for each man for from two to three months until he had accumulated from 200 to 300 hours

of combat flying time.

All of this training was conducted during the course of normal operations. Schedules were arranged so as to expose a new aviator as rapidly as possible to as many areas and locations as he might reasonably be expected to encounter during his tour. Navigation, combat assault procedures, and continued stress on emergency procedures were all covered during these flights. When in the estimation of his platoon leader acting upon the recommendations of the other ACs an individual was deemed proficient and experienced enough in the aircraft and had demonstrated a working knowledge of the Delta area he was recommended for an AC check ride. Upon successful completion of this ride appropriate orders were cut and he was scheduled to fly as an Aircraft Commander. The learning process was a continuing thing due to the diverse conditions existing in the area of operations.

Occasionally a newly assigned aviator was not qualified in the UH-1 aircraft. This necessitated a period of transition which was given by one of the Company IPs. If the individual concerned was not qualified in a utility catagory helicopter this transition required a 25 hour checkout. If he had previous qualification in a utility helicopter a ten hour period was sufficient to get him UH-1 qualified. Following his UH-1 transition an individual followed the same process described above in working toward becoming an AC.

A schedule for giving each aviator in the Company a monthly standardization ride was followed as closely possible. These rides were designed to insure continued familitarity with emergency procedures and flying procedures, and were administered by the Company

IPs. The training program was under the supervision of the Company's Standardization Pilot.

Training in the "Viking" armed platoon was handled by the Platoon leader and the more experienced pilots. After having flown as a "slick" pilot for three or four months individuals had the opportunity to volunteer to go to the "Vikings". Having volunteered and been selected a pilot was given a ten day trail period flying in the "armed ships". If at the end of this period he had shown potential and desired to remain he continued training in the left seat going to the range and on operations with the platoon and learning their tactics. This stage of his training lasted from six weeks to two months after which he began training in the right seat. Upon becoming right seat qualified and being thoroughtly familiar with all tactics he became an Aircraft Commander in the "Viking" platoon.

This training system was developed over the years and has been refined as dictated by experience. Its success has been substantiated by the professional competance of the "Soc Trang Tigers" and the Company's low accident and incident rate.

APPENDIX E

Decca Navigational System

The Decca Navigational System continued to be utilized by the 121st Aviation Company during 1965. Throughout the first part of the year the Company had four UH-1Bs equipped with Decca. The newly arriving UH-1D aircraft had four ships equipped with factory installed Decca equipment.

The Decca system was composed of four low frequency radio transmitters located in different areas of the Republic of Vietnam. The unit in the aircraft had the capability of receiving, comparing, and interpreting radio signals coming from them. By interpreting the changes in radio signals as the aircraft changed position in relation to the transmitters, the Decca system transferred its interpretations to a device which computed the aircraft's position and pinpointed it on a strip map. Through constant repetition of this process the aircraft's path was traced by a lead pointer on the unrolling map on the Decca console, the head of the pointer consistently indicating the aircraft's location. Dials mounted on the left side of the radio console monitored the changes in transmitted signals and provided a check on the strength and reliability of the signals received.

The phenominal accuracy and capability of the Decca system made it a valuable aid to navigation and was particularly effective during periods of poor weather conditions and conditions of reduced visibility. The system proved itself to be generally quite reliable, however malfunctions sometimes occured. Landing on PSP or wet surfaces

sometimes caused variations in meter settings due to the metal skids which necessitated resetting the dials.

The Decca system was not automatic and required that it be set up correctly prior to the commencement of the flight and a periodic monitoring and check of the dials and pointer be made. Strip maps also had to be changed at the appropriate times. This required instruction of the pilots operating the system which was provided by Mr. John Palmer, an employee of the Decca Corporation, who came to Soc Trang periodically and rode with the "Tigers" on some of their missions giving them either an initial Decca orientation to familiarize them with correct procedures for operating the equipment, or a refresher course.

The four Decca units were serviced by Mr. William E. Sharp, an Englishman who was a technical representative for the Decca Corporation. He lived at the Soc Trang Airfield and also serviced the Decca equipment for the other aviation units on the installation.

APPENDIX F

Navigation Aids and Flight Following Services

Several navigation Aids and flight following services were available to pilots to assist them in their flying in the IV Corps area. These included a Ground Controlled Approach (GCA) facility, several non-directional beacons, three radar flight following services, and two radio flight following services.

The GCA located at the Soc Trang Airfield was operated by Detachment D, 4th Platoon, 125th Air Traffic Control Company and provided an instrument let down facility. A skilled controller operating the TPN-8 Ground Controlled Approach Radar unit had the capability of bringing an aircraft down through the "soup" onto the runway on either a precision or a surveillance approach with a great deal of accuracy. This was particularly beneficial during the wet season when ceilings were low preventing a safe VFR approach.

Non-directional beacons in the Delta were located at Soc-Trang, Can Tho, Vinh Long, Ca Mau, and Vung Tau, as well as several located around Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon. These beacons were valuable for homing inbound to a station, tracking outbound on a desired course, determining a position by the intersection method using two stations, and for making ADF approach to an airfield under IFR conditions.

The three radar flight following services available to pilots of the 121st Aviation Company while flying in the Delta were Paris Control located at Saigon, Paddy Control located at Can Tho, and Playboy Control located at Ca Mau. All three of these were operated by the US Air Force

and each had a tremendous capability for assisting pilots and following flights. While flying in the northern part of the Delta generally north of My Tho, Paris control was utilized. When flying in the central region Paddy control was used for flight following. Paddy became operational in January of 1965 and rendered valuable service throughout the remainder of the year. While flying in the area south of Ca Mau an aircraft was out of the range of Paddy's "weapon" and for most of the year a pilot had to flight follow by radio with either Paddy or Ca Mau Radio but on Christmas Day 1965 Playboy Control came on the air fully operational completing the chain of USAF Radar Flight Following stations and giving one hundred percent radar coverage to the Mekong Delta.

Each of these stations had several radar scopes which had the capability of picking up a coded radio signal emitted from a transponder aboard an aircraft which was called a "parrot". There were several positions which a pilot could select on a switch on the "parrot" and he followed the radar controller's instructions as to which position to select or "squawk" which enabled the controller to establish positive identification. After take off the pilot would call the appropriate controller giving his position and destination, stating his present "squawk" and intended altitude, and then following the controller instructions until radar contact was positively established. The pilot would proceed to his destination and call just prior to landing to notify the controller of the fact that he had the destination insight.

While enroute the controller was able to follow the aircraft's flight path on his "weapon". He also had the capability of giving the pilot "pidgeons" if requested which was a heading and distance from his present location to his destination. Another valuable service rendered

was informing pilots about the presence of other aircraft flying in their vicinity so the crew could be on the lookout for them and avoid possible mid-air collision. He also gave the locations of air strikes and artillery fire thus pointing out areas to avoid flying into. In addition he often relayed messages to aircraft from Company Operations and COC.

Last An emergency "squawk" position was found on the "parrot". If this was switched on the controller immediately saw it on his scope and directed rescue aircraft to the location. The radar flight following services assisted pilots tremendously in accomplishing their missions and contributed significantly to their peace of mind.

As noted there were two major radio flight following service station operating in the Delta. The first of these was Delta Center operated by the US Army at Can Tho. In addition to providing radio flight following for all Army aircraft flying in the region, Delta Center served as a nerve center and a message relay center for all aviation activities within the IV Corps, passing on message between aircraft, COC, and Company Operations. It had the capability of handling up to 250 aircraft simultaneously. Ca Mau Radio provided the same type of service for the southern tip of the Ca Mau peninsula. Like Delta Center they kept a log of all aircraft with which they had made contact, followed flights by audio means, directed rescue aircraft to distress areas when necessary, and provided message relay. The arrival of Playboy Control at Ca Mau brought less reliance on Ca Mau radio, yet it served as a back up system.

APPENDIX G

Puff The Magic Dragon

A significant development affecting the 121st Aviation Company during 1965 was the arrival of several experimental US Air Force C-47 "Gooney Birds", each having mounted on it three Gattling machine guns, in the Republic of Vietnam one of which was based at Can Tho. Testing of this weapons system was begun immediately to see if it would make a significant contribution by giving effective fire support to ground forces. The combined fire power of the three guns was 18,000 rounds per minute and the aircraft's size gave it the capability of carrying large quantities of ammunition and fuel giving it much longer endurance for sustained operations than had been previously possible.

Members of the 121st Aviation Company worked closely with this aircraft's pilot and crew on several occasions during its testing phase. "Tiger 6" from his C & C ship called upon it to engage VC targets on several RF operations and made some suggestions for its tactical employment. The "Vikings" also worked closely with it on some missions, the two elements reinforcing each other's fires. "Lightening Bug" also illuminated targets for it on night missions occasionally. The C-47 was also called to lend aerial fire support during the November and December mortar attacks.

The roar of the Gattling guns and the endless stream of tracers giving the illusion of a monster spitting fire, soon earned the old

"Goony Bird" the name "Puff the Magic Dragon". Its testing proved that it could be used as an effective means of providing aerial fire support for ground forces and December saw the arrival of a new squadron of armed C-47s to be employed throughout the Republic of Vietnam.

APPENDIX H

Awards and Decorations

The many outstanding contributions made members of the 121st Aviation Company during 1965 were recognized by the presentation of numerous awards and decorations to deserving members of the command.

The most outstanding awards presented during the year was the Silver Star to Chief Warrant Officer Jerome R. Daly, USA for his heroic actions against the Viet Cong on 13 May. The persentation was made at an awards ceremony on 11 December by Major Colin W. McKenzie, Jr., Commanding Officer of the 121st Aviation Company. Practically every member of the command was present. Two other recommendations for the Silver Star award were submitted for individuals during the year, but approval was not received for either of them prior to the end of December.

Other awards submitted included one Legion of Merit for Major Millard Whitten, the Company's CO from 4 November 1964 until 15 August 1965. In addition there were submitted and presented a number of Distinguished Flying Crosses (DFC), Soldier's Medals, Bronze Stars with "V" devices for valor and heroism, Bronze Stars for metitorous service or achievement, Air Medals with "V" devices for valor and heroism, Air Medals for meritorious achievement, Army Commendation Medals with "V" devices for valor and heroism, Army Commendation Medals for meritorious service or achievement, and Purple Hearts for wounds received in connection with military operations against a hostile force. More than 1,200 Air Medals and Oak Leaf Clusters were presented to members of the command during the year for meritorious achievement involving sustained operations pertaining to aerial flight. Of these

53 were with the "V" device for valor. Ten DFCs were presented during the period for service above and beyond the call of duty.

A number of Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry were presented by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam to members of the 121st Aviation Company in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments as aviators and crew members in support of combat operations against the Viet Cong. There were several levels of the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry the highest of which was the Army level, being also the highest combat award given by the Vietnamese Government and being distinguished by a palm. Until the latter part of 1965 the US Government did not authorize the wearing of foreign awards and decorations by US personnel, however the approval was received in November. This meant that each recipient of a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry would have to submit his award for approval by the USARV Awards and Decorations Board.

In addition to individual awards the 121st Aviation Company was presented with a Vietnamese Unit Citation for its contribution to the successes of "Dan Chi 92, 100, 129, 134, and 135". This unit Cross of Gallantry with Palm was made effective 3 June 1965 and signed by Brigadier General Nguyen Huu Co, Chief, Joint General Staff, RVNAF on 5 August 1965.

All awards and decorations were processed and submitted by members of the Awards and Decorations Section which was manned by one officer, one clerk, and one Vietnamese typist. Captain William R. Whitworth, Armor served as Awards and Decorations Officer during the last half of the year, while the bulk of the paperwork was handled by Private First Class David H. Althouse. Miss Nancy was the awards and decorations typist.

APPENDIX I

Past Unit Commanders

Grade	Name	Year	Next Assignment
CWO	George Brinton	1954	Aug Other Duty
Capt	James P. Dowling	1954	Transferred
Maj	Walter S. Maluch	1955	Transferred
Capt	Morgan Mathews	1956	Transferred
Maj	Clarence E. Holiday	1957	Transferred
Capt	Joseph Northrup	1958	Transferred
Capt	John Bergner	1958	Transferred
Maj	Robert G. Ogden	1959	Mod. Misc.
Capt	Charles E. Stanely	1960	Transferred
Capt	Charles H. Drummond	1960	Transferred
Maj	Raymond C. Chapman	1960	Retired
Capt	Raymond A. Delahanty	1961	Opns Off
Maj	James E. Gray, Jr.	1962	Transferred
Capt	Charles A. Benedict	1962	Transferred
Maj	Paul R. Ewing	1962 - 4 Mar 63	Transferred
Maj	Edward C. Seymour	4 Mar 63- 7 Oct 63	Transferred
Capt	John H. Anderson	7 Oct 63- 9 Dec 63	Transferred
Maj	Joseph Levinson	9 Dec 63- 4 Nov 64	Transferred
Maj	Millard Whitton	4 Nov 64-15 Aug 65	Transferred
Maj	Colin W. McKenzie, Jr.	15 Aug 65-	

GLOSSARY

TO & E - Table of Organization and Equipment

ADF - Automatic Direction Finding

transitional lift - [illegible]

armed ship - A UH-1B helicopter mounting an armament system (XM-16 or XM-5 and XM-3).

viking - [illegible]

C & C - Command and Control

[illegible] - [illegible]

Charlie - A term meaning Viet Cong.

C & L - Command and Logistic

COC - (Combat Operations Center) The aviation Element co-located with the Corps Tactical Operations Center.

Eagle Flight - A rapid reaction heliborn force composed of ten or more troop carrying helicopters.

EDP - Equipment deadline for parts.

GCA - (Ground Controlled Approach) An instrument approach system using a ground radar set to direct an aircraft to the runway when the aviator has no reference to the ground.

home plate - Term used in air traffic communications to denote the permanent home station.

IFR - Instrument Flight Regulation

LOLEX - (Low Level Extraction) A method of discharging cargo from a "Caribou" without its landing. A parachute pulls the cargo from the aircraft cargo compartment.

MSL - Mean Sea Level

RF - Initials for the two Vietnamese words meaning Airmobile Assault. The initials RF became more commonly termed "Rat Fuck" by the American Troops.

slick - A UH-1D helicopter used to carry troops and cargo.

soup - A term used to denote clouds, thick smoke, etc..

Tiger - Nickname of the Company. All troop carrying helicopters use a Tiger call sign in lieu of aircraft serial numbers.

Tiger 6 - Call sign of the Company Commander.

TO & E - Table of Organization and Equipment

translational lift - That moment when a helicopter is no longer flying in ground effect but is in normal forward flight.

Viking - Nickname for the armed platoon.

weapon - Term used to denote radar screen.

Month	Total R/W Aircraft Time (hours)	[illegible]
Jan	1,511.[illegible]	70.0
Feb	1,497.3	[illegible]
Mar	1,674.1	[illegible]
Apr	1,700.0	[illegible]
May	1,[illegible]1.5	[illegible]
Jun	[illegible]	[illegible]
Jul	[illegible]	[illegible]
Aug	[illegible]	[illegible]
Sep	[illegible]	[illegible]
Oct	[illegible]	[illegible]
Nov	[illegible]	[illegible]
Dec	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

CHARTS

CHART I

Monthly Flying Statistics

Month	Total R/W Aircraft Time (Hours)	Average Time Per R/W Aircraft (Hours)	Sorties	Passengers	Cargo (Tons)
Jan	1,511.0	70.8	5,238	7,071	97.5
Feb	1,697.8	68.3	4,266	5,733	110.8
Mar	1,674.1	77.7	4,415	5,919	111.1
Apr	1,780.0	78.6	4,616	7,960	90.2
May	1,941.5	73.2	4,767	5,524	86.1
Jun	2,006.6	72.3	4,431	7,357	78.6
Jul	2,000.7	93.2	4,809	11,266	87.2
Aug	2,493.8	71.6	4,976	8,395	129.6
Sep	1,935.2	77.5	2,970	7,784	150.0
Oct	1,944.2	88.2	4,279	9,088	120.6
Nov	2,048.0	90.1	3,820	12,380	96.4
Dec	2,035.0	89.7	8,416	15,670	24.6
	23,067.9		57,498	104,747	1,206.7

CHART II

Monthly Aircraft Availability

Month	AWPD	Aircraft Available (Percent)	Aircraft NDP (Percent)	Aircraft Down for Maintenance (Percent)
January	F/W	80.7	8.1	11.2
	R/W	87.9	3.1	9.0
February	F/W	66.6	21.2	12.2
	R/W	85.3	4.0	10.7
March	F/W	85.7	2.9	11.4
	R/W	77.7	11.3	11.0
April	F/W	92.0	0	8.0
	R/W	84.9	7.7	7.4
May	F/W	88.1	3.0	8.9
	R/W	90.9	3.3	5.8
June	F/W	72.5	10.7	16.8
	R/W	81.0	12.0	7.0
July	F/W	62.0	26.0	12.0
	UH-1B	83.0	8.0	9.0
	UH-1D	70.0	18.0	12.0
August	F/W	57.0	34.0	9.0
	UH-1B	80.0	8.0	12.0
	UH-1D	66.0	7.0	27.0
Sep	F/W	73.0	0	27.0
	UH-1B	81.0	13.0	6.0
	UH-1D	86.0	9.0	5.0
Oct	F/W	97.0	0	3.0
	UH-1B	78.0	17.0	5.0
	UH-1D	87.0	7.0	6.0
Nov	F/W	19.0	0	81.0
	UH-1B	75.0	17.0	8.0
	UH-1D	80.0	15.0	5.0
Dec	UH-1B	83.0	15.0	2.0
	UH-1D	75.0	18.0	7.0

CHART III

Awards and Decorations

AWARD	NO. SUBMITTED	NO. APPROVED
Legion of Merit	1	0
Silver Star	3	1
Distinguished Flying Cross	29	10
Soldier's Medal	3	1
Bronze Star with "V"	10	0
Bronze Star	22	8
Air Medal with "V"	37	53
Air Medal	2,476	1,136
Army Commendation Medal with "V"	55	25
Army Commendation Medal	63	41
Purple Heart*	22	22

*Submitted by Medical Section

[illegible] OF VIETNAM
[illegible] OF DEFENSE
[illegible] GENERAL STAFF
RVNAF
[illegible] 334/[illegible]

THE CHIEF OF
RVNAF JOINT GENERAL STAFF

[illegible]

- Referring Constitution, [illegible]
- Referring Decision [illegible]
- Referring Decree [illegible] 33 [illegible]
  the [illegible] system of the [illegible]
- Referring [illegible] 1047, [illegible]
  [illegible]

[illegible]

ARTICLE 1. Effective 3 June 1962, [illegible]
the Armed Forces [illegible]

- 121st Aviation [illegible]

The 121st Aviation Company [illegible] [illegible] support of [illegible] [illegible] 121st Aviation [illegible] hearts. [illegible]

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

[illegible] Company has achieved [illegible]

The [illegible] Aviation Company [illegible] Armed Forces.

[illegible]

ARTICLE 2. The Joint General Staff [illegible] [illegible] newspaper.

[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible] 12th [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] Acting Chief of [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] Army [illegible]

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
JOINT GENERAL STAFF
RVNAF
Nr: 334/TTM/ND

THE CHIEF OF
RVNAF JOINT GENERAL STAFF

-Referring: Constitution, 19 June 1965.
-Referring Decision #3-QLVNCH/QD, 14 June 1965.
-Referring Decree # 332/QL, 11 November 1964, specifying the organizing system of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces.
-Referring Bill # 10-b, 15 August 1950, and the following documents specifying the award of the Cross of Gallantry.

D-E-C-R-E-E

ARTICLE 1. Effective 3 June 1965, the unit listed below is cited before the Armed Forces:

- 121st Aviation Company.

The 121st Aviation Company, US Forces, is composed of seasoned, courageous personnel who have willingly and cooperatively flown successful sorties in support of the posts and combat "Eagle Flights". The 121st Aviation Company, despite danger and hardship, committed sorties of troop transport into hostile landing zone, resupply, evacuation, rescue and target attacks The 121st Aviation Company has carried out 47,564 sorties totaling 23, 052 hours. In support sorties of operations, there was a total of 140 aircraft fired at and 29 personnel wounded.

Throughout the period of its assignment to 22nd DTA, the 121st Aviation Company has actively taken place in major operations such as DAN-CHI 12, 100, 129, 134 and 135. The Company supported the infantry in scoring the following victory: 505 VC killed in action, 45 crew-served weapons and 115 individual weapons captured.

The major contribution to the anti-communist struggle by the 121st Aviation Company in South Vietnam reflect the finest tradition of the US Armed Forces.

THE CITATION IS ATTACHED WITH CROSS OF GALLANTRY WITH LEAF

ARTICLE 2. The Joint General Staff of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces endorses this decree which will be published in RVN Public Newspaper.

APO 4002, 5 August 1965

Brig Gen NGUYEN HUU CO
Chief of RVNAF Joint General Staff
(Signed and Sealed)

A TRUE COPY
TO: 13th Avn Bn
MACV/IV Corps
"For Info"

APO 3402, 12 Aug 65
For Brig Gen DANG VAN QUANG
CG IV Corps & IV CTZ
Lt Col PHAM DANG TAM
Actg Chief of Staff

A TRUE COPY:
Robert L. Wheelock
ROBERT L. WHEELOCK
1/Lt, Arty

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
RVN ARMED FORCES
IV CORPS TACTICAL ZONE STAFF
A-3
Nr: 3016/V4CT/TTT/CT/1