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ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT
HISTORY OF THE
61ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY
268TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

1 January 1968 - 31 December 1968

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Commanding

LZ English
Republic of Vietnam
APO 96226

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FORWARD

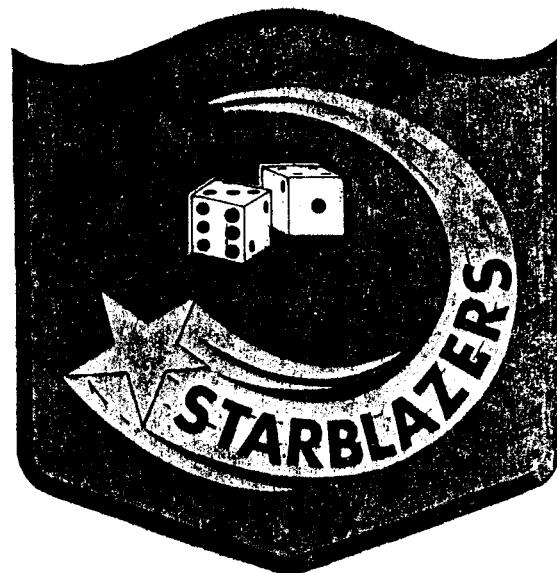
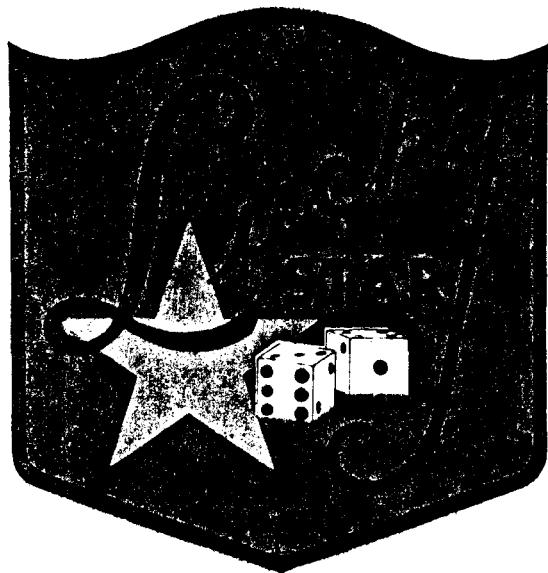
The 61st Assault Helicopter Company was activated on 8 February 1967 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky as an Air Mobile Light Helicopter Company. An extensive training program was undertaken from June 1967 thru September of 1967 in preparation for the company's deployment to the Republic of South Vietnam which was completed on 21 November 1967. The unit initially set up housekeeping at Lane Army Heliport, An Son, RVN, and on 28 February 1968 moved to LZ English, Bong Son, RVN.

By the end of 1968 the 61st had flown in excess of 100,000 sorties and had air lifted approximately 2,000 tons of cargo thus exemplifying its capability as a combat assault helicopter company.

This Unit History Supplement is dedicated to the Officers and men who have contributed to make the 61st Assault Helicopter Company a dependable and efficient unit.

61ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY UNIT CREST

The colors of the 61st Assault Helicopter Company Unit Crest, Blue and Gold, denotes Army Aviation Units. The dice with 6-1 showing denotes the unit designation 61st and also adds up to seven meaning Good Luck, thus the word "LUCKY" is used. The "STAR" comes from the senior aviators badge. For compatibility the Armed Platoon or Gun Platoon also uses the Star. "Blazers" is added to denote the swiftness and fire power of the gun ships.



LINEAGE AND HONORS

The unit was constituted on 3 April 1962, in the Regular Army as the 61st Aviation Company. It was activated 1 May 1962 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as a light transport (Otter) company, (becoming a Caribou company later on in the year).

The 61st was inactivated 1 January 1967, in Vietnam, when the Caribou Aircraft were turned over to the United States Air Force.

On 1 February 1967, the 61st was again activated at Fort Campbell, Kentucky as an Air Mobile Light (Helicopter) Company.

The 61st received the Meritorious Unit Commendation, with a streamer embroidered "Vietnam -Oct 1964 - Dec 1965" which was presented to the unit on the 12th of July 1967.

COMMANDERS AND PERIOD OF ASSIGNMENT

61ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY

Major Clarence B. Brooker, Arty, Commanded the 61st Assault Helicopter Company from 1 May 1967 thru 3 February 1968 at which time Major Alvin E. Walker, Inf, reported into the company and took over command. Major Walker commanded the 61st for the following four months. On 29 May 1968 Major William T. Wade, Inf, became the new Commanding Officer with a change of command ceremony held at LZ English. The commander of the 10th CAB, LT. COL. England officiated. On 21 October 1968 Major Wade turned the reins of command over to Major Kenneth E. Hebrank, Arty, with ceremonies conducted at LZ English.

616TH TRANSPORTATION DETACHMENT

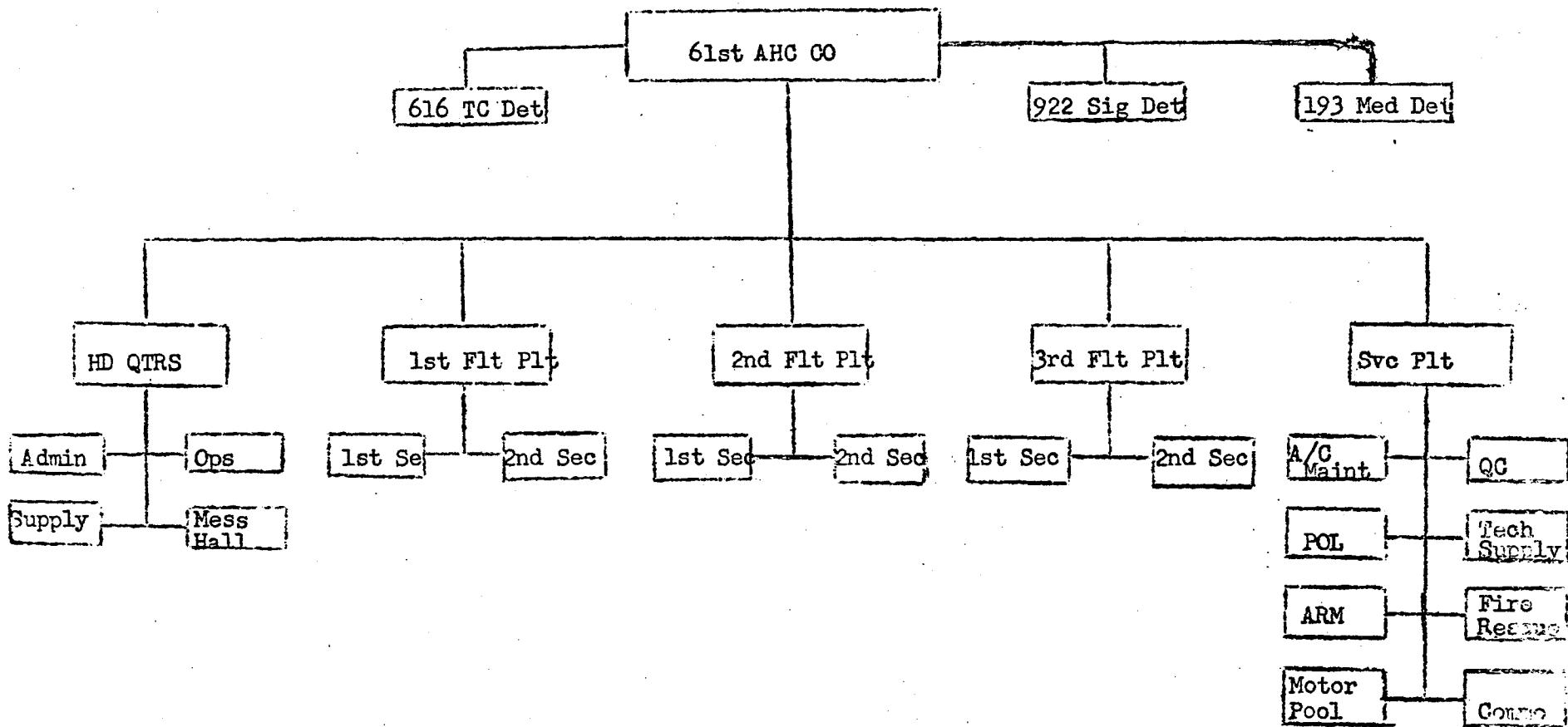
The 616th Transportation Detachment was commanded by Major Alvin E. Walker from January 1968 thru 3 February 1968 when he was assigned as Commanding Officer of the 61st Assault Helicopter Company. Captain Alfred L. Hamilton, Inf, Commanded the 616th from February 1968 until 16 June 1968 when he became Executive Officer of the 61st and turned his command over to Captain Clifford C. Schaaf, TC. Captain Schaaf was in command from 17 June 1968 to 2 Nov 1968. LT Arthur Landorf was Acting Commander from 3 Nov until 30 Nov 1968 when Captain James E. Moulton, TC, reported in and took command.

922ND SIGNAL DETACHMENT (AVIONICS) (RL)

The 922nd Signal Detachment was commanded by CW2 Louie R. Gott Jr., SIG C, from 17 June 1967 thru 7 November 1968 when CW2 Herbert J. Robinson assumed command.

193RD MEDICAL DETACHMENT

The 193rd Medical Detachment, which arrived in country on 22 May 1968, was command by Captain James A. Schwab, M.C., until 16 November 1968 when Captain Michael Huntington, M.C., arrived and assumed command.

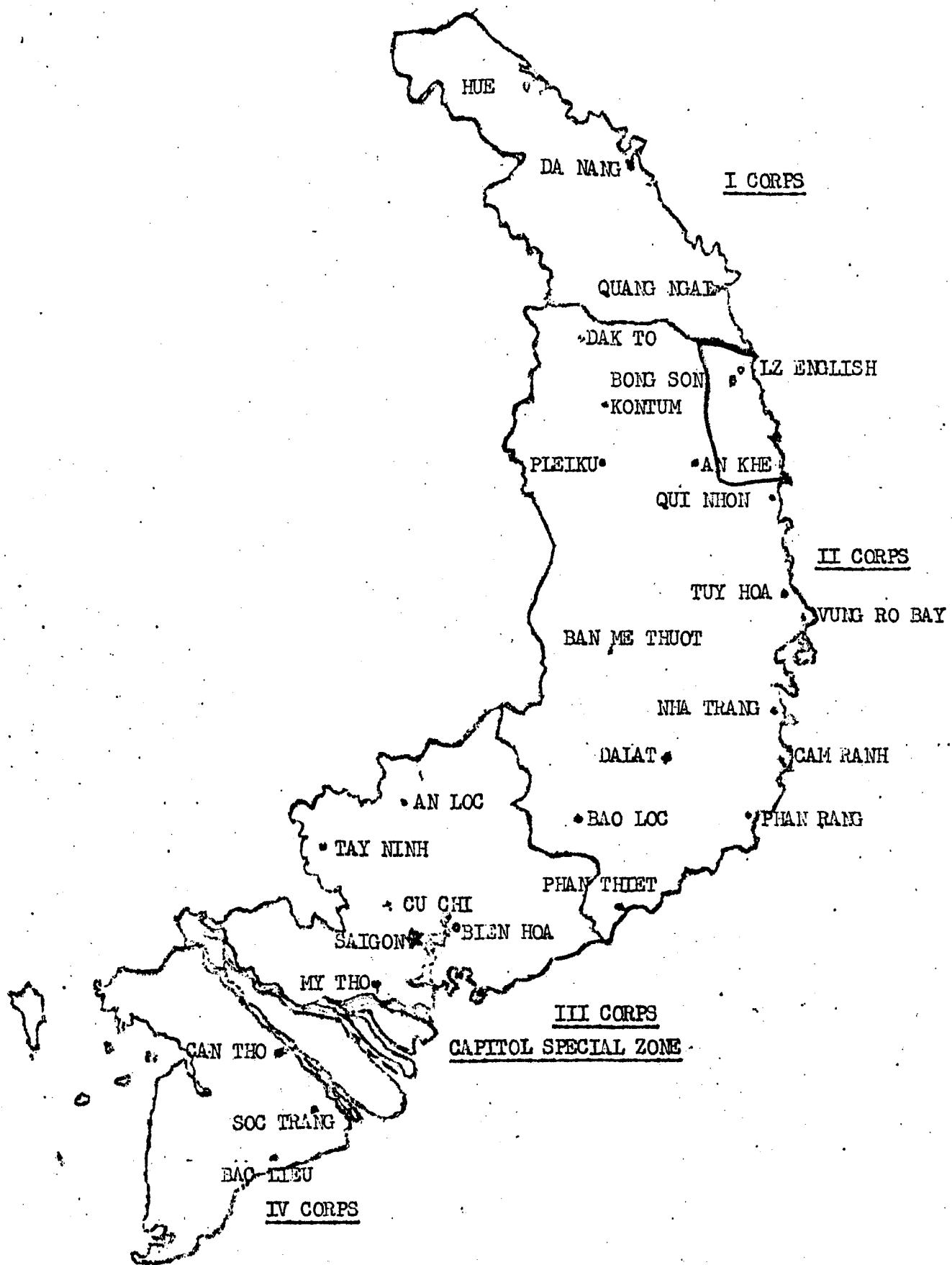


61ST AHC ORGANIZATION

AREA OF OPERATIONS

The 61st Assault Helicopter Company's area of operations for the year of 1968 was the entire Binh Dinh Province (AO Cochise). The two principal urban areas in the province are the cities of Bong Son and Qui Nhon. In the flat coastal plains area, the terrain is typically rice producing; flat with rolling plains, foothills and steep, heavily dissected mountains to the west of the plains area. The predominant vegetation is the rice plant in the coastal lowlands and light to dense under growth in the hills and mountains.

The area outlined in Red on the following page is AO Cochise, 61st area of operation.



JANUARY

On the 1st day of January the 61st Assault Helicopter Company lost its first aircraft and four crew members plus six passengers in a crash on a mountain in the An Khe pass. After this initial blow the 61st settled down to its mission. The first major combat assault mission the 61st AHC participated in was the "Meng Ho" (Fierce Tiger) operation near Phu Cat. For the rest of January the 61st supported the RCK Division in the Qui Nhon area, and flew IRRP missions with the 173rd Airborne Brigade at An Khe on several combat operations.

FEBRUARY

During the Tet offensive, from 30 January to 9 February, two 61st Starblazer gunships were utilized day and night in the Qui Nhon, Camp Lune, area. This included defense of Qui Nhon city on 30 and 31 January and the defense of Qui Nhon Airfield when it came under attack. The highlights of the 61st mission during Tet were:

One slick took rounds wounding the crew chief and gunner: the gunner was able to return to duty but the crew chief was evacuated out of the country. The Starblazers destroyed two VC held reinforced concrete buildings and one service station in the city of Qui Nhon. Units supported by the 61st during the month of February were, 3/503 Infantry (ABN), IFFV Artillery, DSA II Corps, Capital ROK Infantry Division, B/22 5th Special Forces, 22d ARVN Division, 2d Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. On 28 February the 61st AHC moved to LZ English to support the 2d Brigade, 1st Cav. Division (AMBL). On 29 February support shifted again to 3d Brigade, 4th Inf Division. In the move most major items, including vehicles were moved by CH-47 helicopters. A forward CP was established while still maintaining a rear CP and rear support - maintenance.

MARCH

The 61st AHC continued its mission of providing direct support to 3d Bde, 4th Inf Division throughout the month of March. On 10 March the 61st lost an aircraft and crew of four at LZ Uplift. Another aircraft was lost later in the month but no one received serious injury in this case. The 61st AHC performed eight medical evacuations in March. An important med-evac was performed by two Starblazer gunships when they spotted a convoy under attack North of Pleiku. The alert, immediate response of the aviators saved two men's lives by taking them quickly to the 71st Evac Hospital at Pleiku.

APRIL

In April a large influx of both officers and enlisted personnel necessitated an intensified training program. The enlisted crew training consisted of familiarizing the new personnel with aerial machine gun firing techniques, standard operating procedures, and crew duties. In addition to other training, candidates for instructor pilot were screened. On the 1st of April the supported unit changed from the 3d Bde, 4th Inf Division to the 173d Airborne Brigade. Three aircraft were lost in April, two were due to tree strikes while flying low level on the Airborne Personnel Detector (APD) Mission, also known as sniffer mission's. The third aircraft was lost due to engine failure while on a flare mission. Three aircraft also sustained minor damage from ground fire while on low level APD Mission's.

MAY

The 61st AHC participated in 76 combat assaults during May, no aircraft were lost but 6 UH-1C and 3 UH-1H helicopters received combat damage from enemy fire. Also during May the 61st got two detachments: the 364th Aviation Support Detachment (Tower Control) and the 193rd Medical Detachment with a flight surgeon attached. The 364th took control of LZ English Airfield on May 27.

JUNE

During June the 61st AHC continued its support of the 173d Abn Bde in the Cochise AO, in addition to this, aircraft were also provided for general missions and direct support in other AO's in the II Corps area. A total of 61 hours of these additional missions were flown. The 61st also continued in its building of a company area at LZ English. The improvements were designed to better the living conditions in the field. The 364th ASD continued in their building program by completing the English Tower and beginning construction of their living quarters near the tower.

See if MAJOR
damps UH-1H
can be added

Dir
direct
AO CoC
fully

JULY

The 61st AHC continued its mission in
borne Brigade, and other elements in
the 193rd Medical Detachment became
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supplies being late in arriving in country. This delay did allow
the men of the 193rd to build a complete dispensary building prior
to receiving their equipment and becoming operational. During the
month of July the enemy made an offensive push in an effort to over
run Fire Support Base Tom. The 61st reacted and for two nights and
days made combat assaults into the area of contact reinforcing friendly
elements. The troops carried were both US and R.V.N. who succeeded in
repelling the attack. The 61st had nine aircraft which received hits
by hostile fire during the month. One UH-1H received major damage and
had to be retrieved by sling loading back to LZ English. All other hits
caused moderate or minor damage. No casualties were sustained.

AUGUST

In August construction was begun on a new heliport at LZ English
to replace the existing heliport, which had become outdated. The new
facility was planned to be a permanent heliport providing capability
for protecting twenty-four aircraft in revetments constructed to con-
form with MACV standards. A mini-port designed for quick refueling
and an 880 foot runway were also incorporated in the plans to add
more efficiency to the complex. The heliport was scheduled to be-
come fully operational by November 1968. The training program which
was started during the month of June continued on schedule. Aviator
and crew member training continued to occupy the unit I.P.'s. In
country orientations and 90 day standardization rides were given to
all aviators. Whenever possible these check rides were given in con-
junction with operational missions to provide maximum practical app-
lication to the training.

SEPTEMBER

During September units of the 40th ARVN Regiment were hampered
during a battle by approaching darkness. The starblazers, gunships
of the 61st were called in. The ARVN unit was battling an enemy force
of unknown size near Bong Son. Starblazers, Artillery, and Air Force
"Spooky" blasted away at the enemy. After five NVA had been killed, a
wounded NVA threw his hands in the air and surrendered. A passing gun-
ship from the 61st guided the enemy to the nearest friendly troops.
First Lieutenant Robert McElhose and CW2 Ezell Ware were credited
with obtaining the 61st first detainee while still in the air. 61st
continued resupply and medevac missions for the ARVN 40th
Regiment. Flare ships kept the battle area well illuminated,
which was key in the successful operation.

JULY

During the month of July the 61st AHC continued its mission in direct support of the 173d Airborne Brigade, and other elements in AO Cochise Green. On 31 July the 193rd Medical Detachment became fully operational. The long delay was caused by equipment and supplies being late in arriving in country. This delay did allow the men of the 193rd to build a complete dispensary building prior to receiving their equipment and becoming operational. During the month of July the enemy made an offensive push in an effort to over run Fire Support Base Tom. The 61st reacted and for two nights and days made combat assaults into the area of contact reinforcing friendly elements. The troops carried were both US and R.V.N. who succeeded in repelling the attack. The 61st had nine aircraft which received hits by hostile fire during the month. One UH-1H received major damage and had to be retrieved by sling loading back to LZ English. All other hits caused moderate or minor damage. No casualties were sustained.

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OCTOBER

On 21 October command of the 61st Assault Helicopter Company was transferred from Major William T. Wade to Major Kenneth E. Hebrank, the change of command ceremony was held at LZ English.

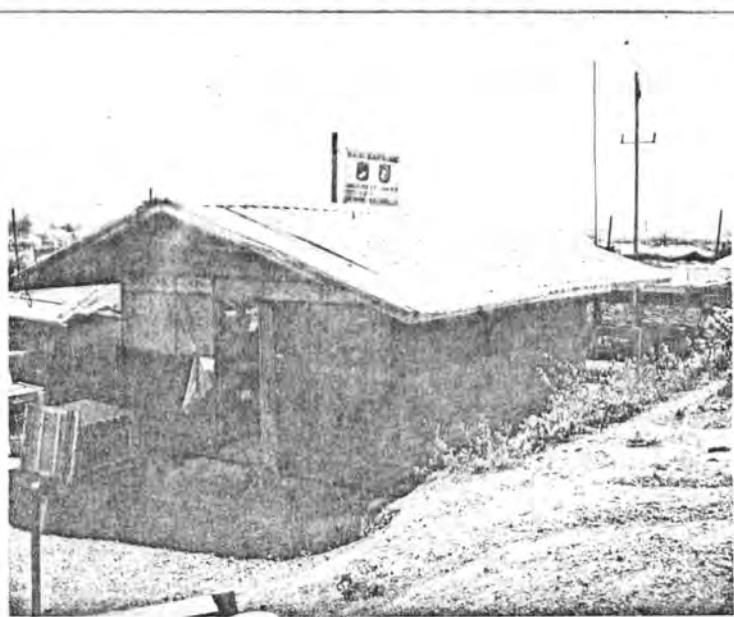
Also during October formal classes were conducted on the care and cleaning of the M-16 rifle for all personnel armed with the weapon. Special Classes were given to enlisted crew members concerning emergency procedures and responsibilities and on aerial machine gun firing techniques. Gunship pilots and crews received classes on the new 17 pound warhead for the 2.75 rockets.

NOVEMBER

The construction of the heliport at LZ English proceeded as planned and the complex became operational in November. A revised POL system was designed and installed yielding the capability to refuel eight aircraft simultaneously. Renovation of the cantonment area at LZ English was initiated in line with the continuing improvement program of the 61st. Construction of permanent billets to replace the tents now being used for billeting personnel was begun. In November the 61st also began conducting "Starlite" missions in conjunction with firefly missions. This reconnaissance mission proved extremely effective in disrupting enemy movement by allowing the engagement of enemy targets at night with relative surprise.

DECEMBER

On December 13th the 61st "starlight-starbright" ship interrupted it's regular nightly mission to go scope the country side around north English. They were under an attack by mortars and small arms fire. The enemy was pinpointed and artillery called in. Within minutes the area was thoroughly worked over, leaving no discernable movement. The 61st finished the year in the holiday spirit. Eleven ships and approximately 90 members of the company journeyed south to Phu Cat AFB and there enjoyed the Bob Hope Christmas show.



61st ORDERLY ROOM
LZ ENGLISH
BONG SON RVN



61st OPERATIONS
LZ ENGLISH
BONG SON, RVN



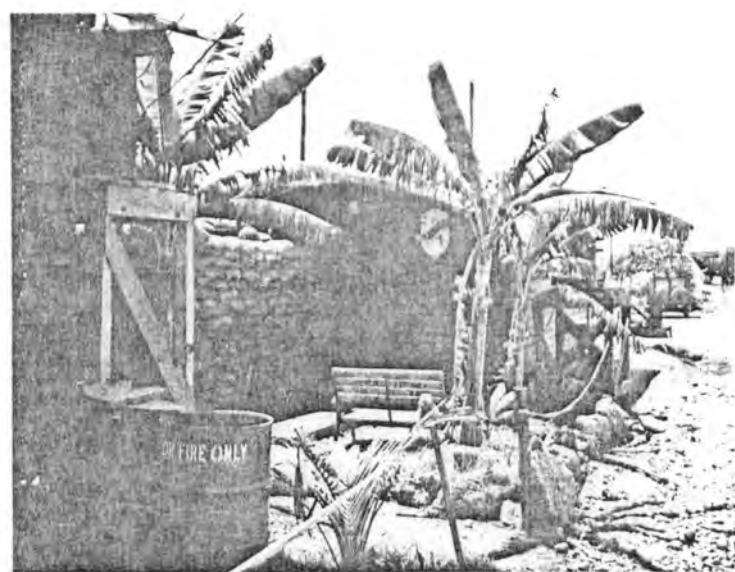
(CRAP TABLE)
61st REVEILLENTS AND LANDING PAD
12. ENGLISH
BONG SON, RVN



61st REAR DETACHMENT
MAINTENANCE AREA
LANE ARMY HELIPORT
AN SON, RVN



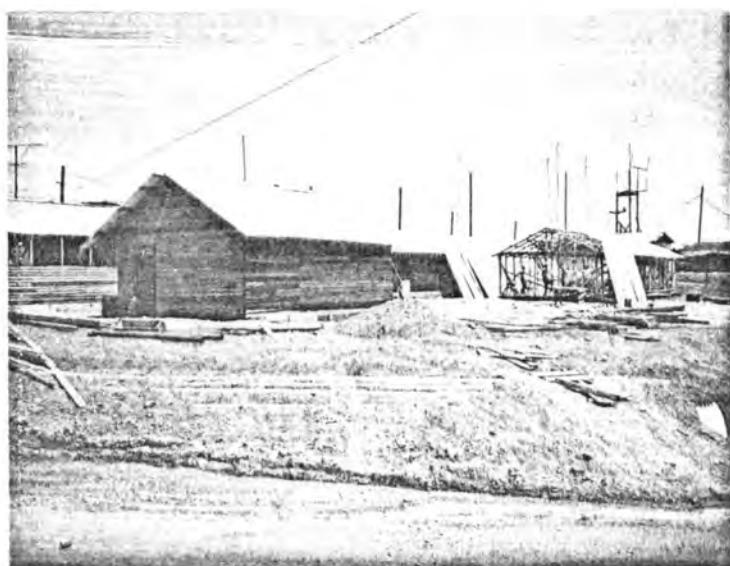
61st MESS HALL
LZ ENGLISH
BONG SON, RVN



222 SIGNAL DETACHMENT (AVIONICS)
LZ ENGLISH
BONG SON, RVN



193RD DISPENSARY
LZ ENGLISH
BONG SON, RVN



BEGINNING OF THE 61st REG BUILDING PROJECT
LZ ENGLISH
BONG SON, RVN

A W A R D S

During the year of 1968, the only awards received, other than Basic Air Medals were as follows:

The Vietnamese Gallantry Cross was awarded to WO1 Peter Chouinard, WO1 Carlisle Veresen, and WO1 Samuel L. Kyle. These men were cited for their brave actions and dedication to duty while in support of the 40th ARVN Regiment in the De-Duc Area in October 1968.

HONOR ROLL

WARRANT OFFICER
WARRANT OFFICER
WARRANT OFFICER
WARRANT OFFICER
SPECIALIST FOUR
SPECIALIST FOUR
SPECIALIST FOUR
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

PETER KRETZCHMAR
RONALD L. MARTIN
STANLEY B. SMITH
WILLIAM W. WEIBURG
CLARENCE H. GENAU
MICHAEL F. GREEN
DAN. L. HERDEBU
PHILIP A. TINGLEY JR.
WILLIAM C. WYMER

To the memory of these men this annual supplement of the History
of the 61st Assault Helicopter Company is dedicated.