

1st Avn Bde marks third year

May 19, 1969

Mobility makes a difference

The 1st Aviation Brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. Allen M. Burdett Jr., celebrates its third anniversary May 24.

During its 3 years as the Army's non-divisional aviation fleet in the Republic of Vietnam, its more than 2,000 rotary and fixed-wing aircraft have flown tactical combat assaults, direct fire support missions, aerial reconnaissance, medevacs, troop and cargo heli-lifts, and have evacuated Vietnamese civilians from VC-terrorized areas.

In 1968, the wings and rotor blades of the Golden Hawks flew 5 million troops, the equivalent of 313 infantry divisions, in more than 2.9 million sorties and 1.2 million air hours. These troops, transported by the Army's largest aviation command, included not only American and South Vietnamese combat infantrymen, but also the Free World Assistance Forces from the Republic of Korea, the Commonwealth of Australia and Thailand.

From Hué-Phu Bai near the 17th Parallel to Soc Trang in the rice-rich Mekong Delta, more than 100 aviation units of the Brigade have, in 1968, killed 10,556 Viet Cong and NVA; sunk more than 10,000 supply sampans; and destroyed more than 10,000 enemy structures and fortifications. Aircraft from the Brigade airlifted a staggering 564,929 tons of cargo ranging from artillery pieces and ammunition to pigs and rice.

The brigade has participated in virtually all major actions of the war, including Operations Junction City, Malheur, Wheeler, Attleboro, Coronado, Klamath Falls, Pershing, Thayer, Hawthorne, the 1968 Tet Offensive and the 1969 Post Tet Offensive.

During the 1968 Tet Offensive, the 1st Aviation Brigade's AH-1G Hueycobra attack helicopters and Huey gunships flew more than 18,000 sorties, killed 2,000 enemy, destroyed more than 2,500 structures and fortifications and blunted innumerable attacks throughout South Vietnam.

The Brigade's air fleet consists of the UH-1 turbojet powered helicopter which serves as a troop-carrier, command and control aircraft and gunship; the AH-1G Hueycobra armed assault helicopter; the OH-6A Cayuse light observation helicopter; the CH-47 Chinook assault support helicopter; the CH-54 Skycrane helicopter; the turbojet OV-10 Mohawk surveillance aircraft; the O-1 Birddog observation airplane and the U-21 Ute, a twin turboprop utility airplane used in command support of ground forces.

Brigade air crewmen and ground support crews have designed, tested and used many items of equipment and weaponry which are now, or soon shall become, standard equipment.

A smoke-producing device, for example, was in response to a brigade request, developed by the Limited War Laboratory for attachment to the engine exhaust of the UH-1. This innovation

permits the emission of smoke to screen the landing zone of airborne assault operations from the enemy.

Brigade units have developed and perfected techniques for night combat assaults which have proved successful throughout the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

Through close liaison with such agencies as the Army Concept Team in Vietnam (ACTIV), the US Army Limited War Laboratory, the Natick Laboratories and the Army Materiel Command (AMC), lead time on new equipment development has been reduced. This equipment includes the Nomex fire retardant flight suit, individual and installed protective armor for aviators and crewmen, a new ballistic helmet, improved navigational aids, avionics gear and airfield control equipment.

With Brigade units dispersed from the DMZ to the Delta, centralized direction of civic action projects is impractical. However, Brigade units under the operational control of Field Force Commanders, the 3rd Marine Amphibious Force Commander, and the Senior Advisor IV Corps have moved entire populations of Vietnamese villages with their belongings from enemy infiltrated areas to safe resettlement camps. School buildings have been repaired, clinics have been constructed and new water systems developed by the Golden Hawks.

Through the Brigade's Medical Civic Action Program (MED-CAP), hundreds of villagers have been given medical and dental aid and instruction in proper sanitation procedures.

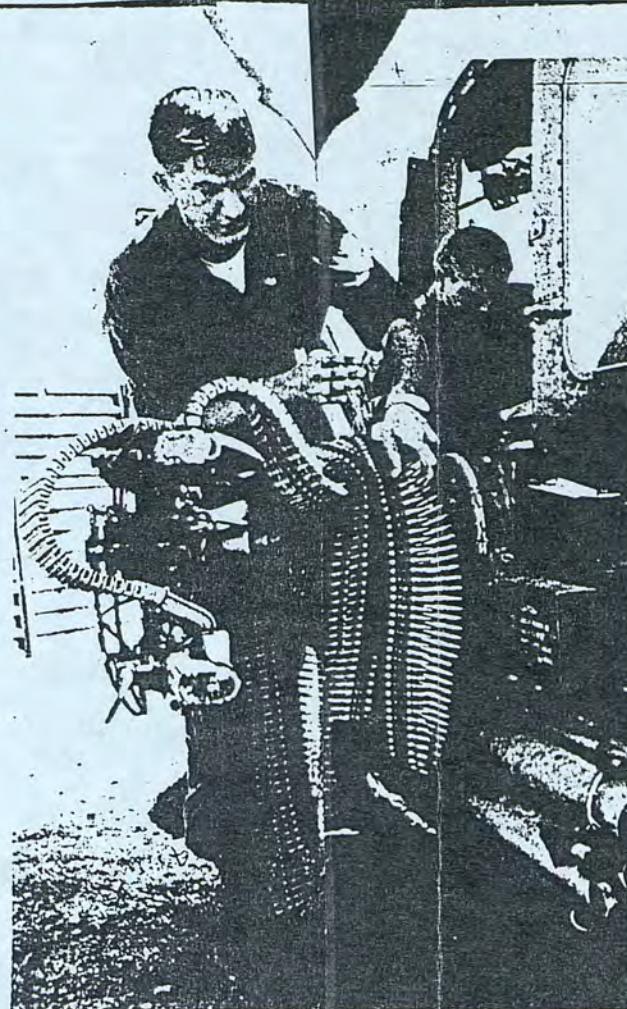
In this war fought in swamps, swollen rice paddies, jungles and mountains, in a climate exacting of men and machines, the flexible support provided by the 25,000 officers and men of the brigade enable the ground commander to take the war to the enemy, even within his most obscure base areas.

In recognition of its accomplishments since its activation, the brigade was selected as the Army Aviation Association of America's Outstanding Aviation Unit of 1967. On May 21, 1967, General Cao Van Vien, then Minister of Defense, Republic of Vietnam, presented the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, to the brigade.

During May, 1968, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam awarded a second Cross of Gallantry.

On the second anniversary of the 1st Aviation Brigade, General Creighton W. Abrams, commander of the US Military Assistance Command Vietnam paid the Golden Hawks an impressive tribute:

"....The aviators and men of this brigade have been taken into the brotherhood of the combat arms not by regulation and not by policy. They have been voted in by the Infantry who are the charter members of that exclusive group—the combat arms. You have made great history for Army Aviation and great history for the US Army."



A 1st Aviation Brigadegunner loads a minigun.



A 1st Aviation Huey Cobra flies over the Delta.

