



VOL II NO 5

16TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP, CHU LAI, RVN

MARCH 4, 1969

174th AHC, "A" Co. DEFEAT ENEMY

DUC PHO, RVN, 174th AHC-IO

It had been a long night for the "Shark" gunships of the 174th Assault Helicopter Company, two scrambles, a rocket and mortar attack on LZ Bronco and finally a first light visual reconnaissance mission.

At 0800 hours on Feb. 23rd, the "Shark" crews were looking forward to some much needed rest. As they were talking from the flight line, they heard the familiar sound of incoming enemy rockets.

Minutes later, four 174th AHC gunships were off the ground and scrambling toward the enemy positions which had been spotted from Landing Zone Liz, three miles northwest of LZ Bronco.

"We were rolling in on the rocket positions before the smoke cleared from the last launch," said Captain Robert Gumber, Collingswood, N.J., leader of one of the two "Shark" teams.

Warrant Officer Robert Thomas, Birmingham, Ala. noted, "Their launchers weren't in sight but it was the right area. We took fire on our first pass."

The enemy occupied area, about five miles west of Duc Pho, was hit hard by the gunships. Troops on LZ Liz directed one gun team to a woodline where

X CHU LAI, RVN, "A" Company-IO

Twenty-nine enemy were killed, six enemy soldiers including an NVA battalion commander captured, and numerous weapons and packs plus a 51 caliber anti-aircraft weapon were confiscated as a result of quick action by the 123rd Aviation Battalion's "A" Company "Pelicans," on Feb. 23rd about one mile west of Tam Ky.

An UH-1D Huey "slick" commanded by 2nd Platoon's Warrant Officer Walter Seger, Warren, Mich., was flying a visual reconnaissance mission in support of the Americal Division's 1st Squadron of the 1st Cavalry when he discovered a large mass of enemy soldiers being flushed from a tree line a short distance from the advancing cavalrymen.

"Enemy troops were moving down the opposite side of the hill, just out of range of the Cav," stated WO Seger, "they all appeared to have weapons, back packs, and were well camouflaged. They had tree twigs attached to their helmets and back packs; they ran in a crouching, doubled-over position, so there appeared to be 35 or 40 tumbleweeds blowing in many directions over the side of the hill.

(Continued on page two)

174TH (CONT'D)

they had spotted enemy troops in fortified bunkers.

The other "Shark" team led by First Lieutenant James Towle, Palo Alto, Calif. was busy with an NVA twin-thirty caliber machine gun position.

"When we found that twin-thirty, we had expended all our ordnance but we stayed on station to mark it for the jets," stated WO Warren Smith, St. Louis, Mo.

When the 174th gunships finally broke station, they had been credited with 50 enemy killed and 20 structures destroyed.

MARCH IS RED CROSS MONTH

RED CROSS...
at his side in Viet-Nam

help us help

THE FALCON

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PELICANS (CONT'D)

The chopper made its first pass through the center of the disorganized mass killing several enemy troops and continued circling the hill. By that time, having gained some semblance of order, the Communists tried to work their way down the hill to a forested area.

"They didn't have a chance of getting away," pointed out Specialist Four Terry Bennet, Veneta, Ore., crewchief of the "Pelican" chopper.

"The NVA had to cross an open rice paddy to get to the trees, but our M-60 machine gun fire made it impossible."

The helicopter made several passes around the hill until SP4 Bennet had expended all of his ammunition; then the helicopter was turned around so gunner SP5 Randy Parks, Seattle, Wash. on the opposite side of the craft from Bennet, had a clear lane of fire. As SP5 Parks began to get low on ammunition pilot WO1 Garry Raymond, Mt. Clemens, Mich., took control of the aircraft while chopper commander Seger called Cobra gunships of "F" Troop, 8th Cavalry to finish the operation.

Firing as they retreated, the enemy tried to hide in some hootches at the top of the hill.

The "A" Company "slick" took several hits as the action continued.

"We could feel the ship shudder as the rounds hit," said SP4 Bennet, "they were firing armor-piercing 30-caliber shells and it appeared as if thousands of rounds were directed at us. I took one round through the sleeve of my jacket and Mr. Raymond's neck was grazed as a bullet went through the roof."

"After we expended our machine gun ammo we continued to fire with our M-16 rifles until the Cobras arrived."

Crewchief Bennet continued, "Then I dropped smoke grenades marking the hootches containing the NVA and the Cobras completely devastated them with rockets."

When the Cobras finished, 1st Cavalry armored personnel carriers assaulted the hill, and completed the job.

SEND THE
(P R O N T O)
FALCON HOME

16TH CAG GETS AH-1G

CHU LAI, RVN, 123rd AB-IO

In July, 1965 the United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, issued an urgent request for a two-place, high performance, and maneuverable helicopter as a replacement for the UH-1B and C model gunships being used exclusively at that time. As a result of the request, a new helicopter gunship, the AH-1G Cobra was developed and later tested in Vietnam.

During the week of Feb. 2, 1969 pilots of "B" Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion, brought six new Cobras from Lung Tau to Ky Ha Army heliport in Chu Lai, thus becoming the first unit in the 16th Combat Aviation Group to receive the advanced gunship.

Cobras are now being used by the "B" Company "Warlords" for visual reconnaissance missions and occasional gunship support in the Americal area of operation.

Helicopters employed in a visual recon mission consist of two Cobras, one OH-6 light observation helicopter, and one UH-1H Huey "slick."

The observation chopper flies low and fast, contouring the terrain to find some sign of enemy activity, and then after marking a discovered target with smoke grenades, flies out of the area. The two Cobras move in to engage and neutralize the target; the "slick" moves in with its load of infantrymen "Aeroscouts" who capture survivors or weapons and confiscate or destroy equipment or food caches found.

The new AH-1G gunships greatly surpass the older "Bravo" and "Charlie" models because of a new compensator in the front turret-mounted weapons system which automatically computes forward airspeed, wind, and distance to the target. The gunner looks through a "target pipper" at the objective and fires his guns, eliminating the necessity of leading the target.

Another feature of the Cobra is its greater diving angle which permits most accurate concentration of fire into a target area. In laymen's terms, this means the steeper the dive, the more ammunition can be put into a smaller area, but when the angle of attack is shallower, the projectiles tend to fan out and cover a larger area.

The armament carried in various combinations aboard the Cobra include 76 rockets, 350 rounds of 40 millimeter, and 4,000 rounds of 7.62 caliber am-

munition on the "Hog" model Cobra; 38 rockets, 350 rounds of 40 millimeter, and 7,000 rounds of 7.62 minigun ordnance for the "Heavy Scout" and 52 rockets, 400 rounds of 40 millimeter and 4,000 rounds of 7.62 minigun ammo on the "Mini-hog."

Captain John Barfield, "B" Company executive officer, Atlanta, Ga., explained, "Due to its slender design, only 36 inches in width, the Cobra provides very little target for the enemy and can easily cover itself at the end of a gun run. It's a good ship, fast and maneuverable, and carries twice the load of the older Huey 'Charlie' model gunship."

Captain Barfield noted, "Combined with the capacity to stay in the air for two hours at a time, flying speeds of up to 180-190 knots per hour, and additional heavy protective armor for pilots and engine, the Cobra has proven to be the best fire support helicopter in the Army inventory."



TRANSPLANT — This lovely native of Norway comes to us courtesy of Playboy magazine. Her name is Britt Fredrikson, and as you might have guessed, she had no problem establishing herself in Yankee land, for she soon hopped to fame as a Dunny at the Playboy Clubs in St. Louis and San Francisco.

COMPUTER CORNER ON SPORTS

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THE FALCON

MARCH 4, 1969

By Bud Goode

There's a lot of noise being generated in the Wilt Chamberlain-LA Lakers camp, that the team isn't playing together. Is there dissension? Or is this rumble just the roar of the publicity drums?

Computer Corner has found a statistic which fairly well measures a team's willingness (and ability) to play together--it is the percentage of assists to field goal attempts. If team members are feeding and handing off rather than hogging the ball and going for their own big score, then it is reflected in this team play statistic. And it is an important statistic in helping a team's won/lost record.

How do the NBA teams stand on this assists per Field Goal Attempt stat? We poured the current season figures into our Data Processing Enterprises, Inc., electronic sports analyzer and came up with these results (through Jan. 19):

Eastern Div.	Assists/ Per FGA	% W/L
BALTIMORE	.25	.750
BOSTON	.23	.689
PHILADELPHIA	.23	.682
NEW YORK	.25	.627
CINCINNATI	.24	.532
DETROIT	.22	.413
MILWAUKEE	.21	.292

Western Div.	Assists/ Per FGA	% W/L
LOS ANGELES	.26	.681
ATLANTA	.26	.638
CHICAGO	.21	.438
SAN FRANCISCO	.22	.426
SAN DIEGO	.22	.396
MINNAPOLIS	.22	.300
PHOENIX	.21	.188

It is interesting to note that the leaders of the Eastern and Western Divisions also lead on this team play statistic--the Lakers have an assist on 26 percent of their field goal attempts, and the Baltimore squad, lead by Monroe and Loughery, lead the Eastern Division, with 25 percent of their field goal attempts helped by assists.

The Laker's dissension--a publicity smoke screen. Lakers are on top.

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As You Were Saying

By WOL Peter Dehaan, 132nd ASHC-IO

From the first day of flight training I recall my instructors stressing the importance of good radio procedure. It was emphasized that we should keep our transmissions to a minimum and free of the "uh" and "er" used unconsciously to fill the long, long gaps between phrases.

This is sound advice, but once most of us obtain our wings and get away from the flight school environment, we tend to develop poor habits as we attempt to cultivate a radio voice which will identify us as well, and in as personal a manner, as our signatures. Aviators are a vain group.

In Vietnam I have observed how pilots let this inner self escape. The least subtle among us, if given a microphone, will expound over the air at great length about the most minor thing. Other pilots on the same frequency often shut off their radios in disgust, thereby making it extremely difficult for anyone else to contact them if the need arises.

A second breed of pilot oozes each word, letting the sentences flow out in a steady stream. He exudes self confidence; he exemplifies the master of all situations. Here is the man who is in complete control--until a fire warning light illuminates in the cockpit. Then an excited, high-pitched voice betrays the master, humbling him before his co-pilot and crew.

Still another discloses a radio voice several tones lower than his normal speaking voice; he speaks concisely and distinctly. Radio operators know that the voice of experience is speaking when they hear it. The vision of the seasoned aviator is dispersed however when the pilot's voice cracks and ascends the scale, immediately correctly identifying the speaker as just another novice aviator.

Speaking for myself, I'm not "uh," quite certain in which "er" group I belong.

"CAGERS" DROP 2

CHU LAI, RVN- The 335th TC "Stompers" defeated the 16th CAG "Cagers" in two basketball games last week. The first game, a landslide at 86-52, was easily won by the maintenance men. In the second tilt, the 16th Group headquarters "Cagers" came on strong the first half but faltered later losing 66-62.

BEST ACTION OF 1968

A NIGHT OF TERROR

EDITOR'S NOTE: "I was pulling back on the cyclic, the co-pilot was calling 'Mayday' and we crashed"....8 p.m.

These are the words of Warrant Officer Frank L. Carson, Coral Gables, Fla., a gunship aircraft commander with the Americal Division's 71st Assault Helicopter Company "Firebirds," after spending 18 hours escaping and evading a North Vietnamese and Viet Cong force near Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam.

On Jan. 5, 1968, at approximately 8 p.m., Warrant Officer Carson and his crew were flying an armed helicopter mission in support of Company "C", 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade in Que Son Valley, 40 miles north of Chu Lai. Company "C's" position was in imminent danger of being overrun by the 3rd Regiment, 2nd North Vietnamese Infantry Division.

As Warrant Officer Carson and his crew were placing deadly fire on the enemy's position they came under intense enemy fire taking numerous hits resulting in loss of controls, causing the aircraft to crash in the middle of the enemy's position. The following is a recount of the ordeal that Warrant Officer Carson experienced in the tense 18 hours that followed.

By Warrant Officer Frank L. Carson

I was the first one out of the aircraft and as I got out I realized that we were being fired at from four sides. My wing man in the second helicopter flew overhead and all the fire that was directed at us was diverted to him; the remainder of the crew scrambled with the break in the fire.

We huddled in the mud--a rice paddy against a dike--near the aircraft and waited. Adhering strictly to standard procedures, the co-pilot advised the crew to remain near the aircraft until pick-up.

At this time an AK-47 automatic weapon began shooting directly at us from across the rice paddy--only 40 yards away--there was no conceivable way to escape from this fire. Realizing this, my wing man rolled in and placed four rockets directly on top of this weapon, saving our lives.

As additional aircraft arrived at the scene, the intense ground fire made me realize that pick-up was, in my

opinion, out of the question. At this point we had a hasty meeting and decided that under the circumstances, it would be safer to split up and work our way out individually.

Low crawling as each flare died, I made 30 or 40 yards progress to the North when I heard voices in the distance. My shoulder ached from the crash, but I could still move my arm. I began burrowing in a five-foot rice paddy dike, and as I completed my concealment four NVA walked past my position. They all had AK-47s and packs on their hips--side arms or ammunition. A flare ignited to the west, and concealed me in shadow, and revealed them completely.

I waited for one hour and began sliding along the dikes again. I removed my shirt so bubbles wouldn't collect in the sleeves and make additional noise. Only when a flare went out would I chance sliding over each dike. AK-47, 50 caliber machine gun, and rocket fire was intense at the searching aircraft.

I heard moving water to my front and saw foliage. I realized I was coming to a creek or river. Just as I was coming upon the edge of the creek, still behind a dike, the NVA started shooting through the rice paddy dike I was on--a foot in front of my face--and then they stopped.

I didn't move--they started firing over my head and to my rear. They were trying to flush me out but I didn't move...I heard their voices closer and as the flare died out, I rolled into the river. It made a big splash--I went under and was moving with the current.

I came up once and saw a bend in the stream and heard the frantic enemy soldiers yelling.

I went under again and around the bend.

A wall of artillery was falling on the opposite bank and I left the river and began low crawling toward the sound--at this time hundreds of tracers on the ground lit up the area across the river in the direction of the aircraft. Some of the crew must have been putting up a heck of a fight in that area.

I thought if I stayed in the river, moving with the current, it would take

(Continued on next page)

NIGHT OF TERROR (CONT'D)

to the east—but with NVA so close I elected to crawl through the friendly artillery. The concussions battered me, a few pieces of shrapnel hit me, the fumes engulfed me...but it worked; the NVA didn't follow—artillery had saved my life.

About three or four hours had gone by since I had left the aircraft. It was painful to move so I elected to sleep. I checked directions with the constellation Cassiopeia before sleeping and drew an arrow toward east in the dirt. Before I slept I was careful to remove all the leeches I could find, as they were draining my energy—they covered my face and arms.

I awoke with the sound of intense fire. It was early morning and everything was obscured with ground fog. I realized that the battering of what seemed like a thousand automatic weapons was directed upward into the fog toward the returning helicopters—they were continuing their search.

Visibility was about 10-15 meters and I decided it was an excellent time to move. I removed my clothing except for my white boxer trunks and sweat-shirt and buried them. I could not remove my college ring to bury it even though I tried.

I headed toward the brighter haze indicating east and skirted any trees and villages. I hoped that I looked somewhat like a native. I elected to move in the day because I was becoming extremely weak. As I was passing a mound of dirt I noticed a trench and a hole in the mound. Inside, was a stack of AK-47s. I decided they were concealed here to be utilized only at night. Only 20-30 yards ahead an identical hole revealed ammunition in green rectangular boxes, very similar to the U.S. Army ammo boxes.

As the light increased I noticed I was walking parallel to what appeared to be a main trail or road, because many natives were already traversing that route.

A native, with a pole and two baskets, was coming in my direction. I hid in the leaves and as he passed by I considered killing him for his baskets. My existence depended on me looking like a native, but I had no weapon and I felt I didn't have the strength.

As the fog lifted I continued walk-

ing parallel to the trail and stayed far enough away to obscure my facial features from natives on the trail. I walked thusly for hours. Finally I realized I was in a valley directly between American fire-support bases.

I decided not to climb up the mountains for I understood the walls were likely to be heavily mined. Instead, since it appeared I might be in friendly territory, I elected to walk down the main trail.

Immediately I was recognized as being American, and a Popular Forces officer took me up an unmined trail to the top of the mountain, where an American sergeant called for a medivac chopper.

I learned later that I had traveled only five and a half kilometers in a period of 18 hours—a long way through my night of terror.

SGLI CONVERSION INFORMATION

A Veterans Administration pamphlet explaining insurance protection and the conversion privilege under the Serviceman's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) Program will soon be included in a soldier's separation papers.

Information pertaining to SGLI coverage is now contained on DD Form 214 (Discharge certificate) which will be used to establish conversion eligibility. Thus, it will no longer be necessary for an ex-serviceman to send VA Form 29-8234 to the SGLI office to obtain specific authorization to convert to an individual policy.



"COME NOW, SGT. HERKIMER-- THIS FEAR OF HIGH PLACES IS JUST IN YOUR IMAGINATION!"

BEST ACTION OF 1968**132nd ASHC HELPS WITH INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

CHU LAI, RVN, 132nd ASHC-IO

In May of 1968, a new unit, the 132nd Assault Support Helicopter Company arrived in Chu Lai. Landing welcomed support to the ground commander in the central I Corps Tactical Zone area, the "Hercules" Chinooks soon earned their praise. The unit's impressive performance showed it to be well-suited for an assignment which would be the highlight of 1968.

Moving a bulldozer is not an unusual task for a "Chinook" heavy duty helicopter, but in this instance the bulldozer was located in Surat Thani, Thailand and the person requesting the move was the King of Thailand.

The mission could not be planned from only a logistical approach; there was more involved. An opportunity to further diplomatic relations between Thailand and the United States, the aircraft crew members were chosen for their professionalism, they would represent the Army and their country.

Selected as crew were CW3 Billy Stafford, aircraft commander, Columbus, Ga., CW4 Robert Merkle, pilot, Columbus, Ga., SP5 Mike Deming, flight engineer, Birmingham, Ala., SP5 Mike Borque, Belweck, Me., and SP4 Tom Grillo, Fairlawn, N.J.

On Sept. 30, the crew left Chu Lai enroute to Ubon, Thailand. After reaching the Laotian border, the "Hercules" CH-47B was picked up on radar and escorted across Laos by fighter jets to assure safe passage.

The "Hercules" crew arrived at Bangkok where they were met by United States officials. In a briefing headed by Brigadier General Baer, Military Assistance Command, Thailand Chief of Staff Colonel Gardner pointed out the importance and the political implications of the success of the mission. Protocol in the presence of the King and Queen of Thailand was discussed.

On Oct. 3rd the aircraft flew to Surat Thani. The bulldozer, a gift to the village of Phra Soang from the King and Queen, was hauled some fifty nautical miles, and on completion of the lift, the crew was greeted by the village and received the personal gratitude of the King and Queen. Each member of the crew was given a gift by the King as a token of his appreciation.

It was a job well done and a memorable event in the history of a young hard working 132nd Assault Support Helicopter Company.

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176 AHC BIRTHDAY

CHU LAI, RVN, 176th AHC-IO

Happy birthday to the "Minutemen" of the 176th Assault Helicopter Company!

Feb. 8, 1969, the 176th celebrated its second anniversary in Vietnam, and during the two-year period has built an excellent reputation as an aviation company.

The 176th Assault Helicopter Company arrived in-country on Feb. 3, 1967 at Tuy Hoa Air Force Base and was immediately transported five miles south to its new home at Phu Hiep. Once settled, the men who were to be shopper crewmembers began flying with other companies of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion which provided the instruction in planning airmobile assaults, and aerial gunnery tactics.

On March 8, 1967, Lieutenant Colonel Harry McDaniel led the "Minutemen" on their first combat assault, and by Mar. 25, 1967, the 176th had flown 2200 sorties, over 600 combat hours, and was declared operationally ready.

The first operation was Peak Ma II, in which the "Minutemen" supported the 9th Republic of Korea "White Horse" Infantry Division, and then on to Operation Ojariyo and the Capital ROK Infantry Division. During this operation the "Minutemen" trained five Korean aviators and familiarized them with the complexities of airmobile assault techniques.

Next came the 101st Airborne Division and Operation Malheur II, when the company was moved to Duc Pho. Upon the successful completion of Malheur II the "Minutemen" heli-lifted the 101st to the mountains and river valleys west of Quang Ngai in operation Hood River.

Following the completion of Hood River, the 176th Aviation Company began Operation Benton and again were moved, this time to Chu Lai, the headquarters of Task Force Oregon. After operation Benton it was back to Duc Pho for the 176th and Operations Raid and Cook.

In late November 1967 the 101st was withdrawn from the field and moved to Phan Rang, but this time without the 176th. The old 101st area was taken over by the 198th Light Infantry Brigade, which had recently arrived in-country, and the "Minutemen" were to support the new brigade, now part of the Americal Division.

In all, the "Minutemen" of the 176th have had an exciting two years in Vietnam and have had the privilege of working with two accomplished divisions in the U.S. Army.

FOLD INTO THIRDS AND
SEND THE FALCON HOME

FROM _____

AIR MAIL 10¢
FIRST CLASS 6¢

TO _____

