

DECLASSIFIED

DAIM-FAR-RR # 19-mm DATE: 17 June 1987

HEADQUARTERS  
1ST AVIATION BRIGADE  
APO 96307

AVBA

27 April 1967

COMMANDER'S NOTES

NUMBER 12

1. GENERAL: The following matters of information, guidance, command interest and policy are published for appropriate action of those concerned. Most of the items were covered at the USARV Aviation Coordination Conference on 15 April 1967.

2. PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION:

a. Aviator Selection Rate for Promotion to LTC: We ran an analysis on the number of aviators vs non-aviators selected for promotion to LTC on this latest list. The aviators come out on top. Seventeen percent of the entire promotion list was made up of aviators. We do not know the overall proportion of people on the recommended list but the indications are that the selection rate of aviators was very high.

b. Savings and Insurance Programs: There has been some improvement in the various savings and insurance programs. I am mentioning this because all these programs require continuing command attention. I know you are getting your programs well underway and appreciate the efforts you are making.

c. Serious Incidents and PR's: I have noticed a decrease in correspondence regarding our people being involved in serious incidents. This shows that you are staying right on top of the program to reduce serious incidents. We have, however, started receiving more DR's pertaining to curfew violations; especially in the Saigon area. I'm told that the MP's who used to give the guys a few minutes after 2300 hours to get in the gate are no longer permitted to be so generous. Warn your people to be sure that they are back in their billets by 2300 hours, or whatever time is specified in your particular local area.

d. Reenlistment Program: The reenlistment rate within the Brigade isn't too good. We are falling way behind the divisions and other combat units. My people tell me that there are several causes for this; such as the lack of a fulltime career counselor in my headquarters who can assist you with your reenlistment program; the shortage of qualified aviation maintenance personnel causing subsequent tours back here after a short period out of country; and the higher paying civilian aviation outfits draining off our experienced personnel. One way that

## COMMANDER'S NOTES

NUMBER 12

we can counteract this is by beefing up our young officers and warrants to "sell" the Army Aviation career program. The more reenlistments we can get the longer these lads will have between tours here in Vietnam. From the dollar standpoint, most of our aviation mechanics are qualified for the Variable Reenlistment Bonus Multiplier 4 which gives them a big hunk of cash. By reenlisting here in Vietnam it is all tax free. With this plus the retirement angle we can compete with civilian industry on the money side. Take a look at your reenlistment program and give it a "shot in the arm".

e. Subsequent Tour Returnees: I think when a guy comes back over here on a subsequent tour we should do whatever we can to assign him to the job he wants. When at all possible, I want you to give them as much help as you can.

f. Volunteer Battalion Command Program: A requirement exists periodically for Headquarters, USARV, to provide qualified lieutenant colonels to assume command of aviation battalions as a result of the command rotation program or an unprogrammed loss. Accordingly, commanders are requested to encourage lieutenant colonels to volunteer for command. Applicants should be graduates of the Command and General Staff College; not more than 40 years of age; in excellent physical condition; and have demonstrated ability to command by periodic troop and staff assignments throughout their careers. When possible, applications should be submitted at least eight months prior to DEROs. Officers who are willing to extend their tours may also volunteer under the provisions of USARV Regulation 614-30. Voluntary requests for command should be submitted on DA Form 1049, through channels, to Headquarters, USARV, ATTN: AVHGA-PO, accompanied by a copy of the officer's DA Form 66.

g. Direct Appointments for Warrant Officers: Recent communications from Department of the Army indicate concern for the quality and possible questionable suitability of some of the warrant officers who were selected for direct appointment to second lieutenants, USAR in Vietnam. Since the preponderance of these guys have been aviators, we have been asked to screen our applicants more closely. Specifically, our screening boards will be instructed to probe deeply into the qualifications, motivation, and character of each applicant. Commanders down to company level must make sure that an applicant recommended by them does not possess any undesirable traits which would make his suitability as a commissioned officer questionable.

h. Aviation Warrant Career Program: The Chief of Staff recently approved a career development program for aviation warrants

## COMMANDER'S NOTES

NUMBER 12

which provides for two career courses similar to the career courses for commissioned officers at branch schools. New promotion lists will have a higher selection rate and include a secondary zone. Additionally, warrant officers' assignments will increase heavily in the fields of aviation safety, instrument examiners, and standardization pilots.

3. OPERATIONS:

a. Requests for Spaces: We are still receiving requests from units for additional spaces. Spaces just are not to be had. If you have urgent requirements for special skills in a particular unit there are only two ways you can get them. You can redistribute among units or you can recommend a change in organization which will drop the same number of spaces you want to add. With current space limitations, we simply cannot add spaces. If you request them, we have no choice but to say "NO".

b. Common Use Frequencies: Some people are not getting the word on common use frequencies at uncontrolled airfields. The Army Flight Following System and VFR Pilotage Chart, the one-page mimeographed sheet put out regularly by the 125th Air Traffic Control Company, lists these frequencies at the bottom of the sheet. Common contact at uncontrolled airfields is on 329.1. Air Force and Army common use at tactical airfields is on 47.3; 117.0; or 329.1. Be sure your people know and use these frequencies.

c. Reemphasis of Combat Fundamentals: We must continually reemphasize the basic fundamentals of combat. The principles of proper provision of security around staging areas, immediate availability of individual weapons, and the use of bunkers and aircraft revetments for personnel and aircraft safety should be a matter of command interest at all levels. The Viet Cong are dedicated combatants. They have not relaxed their vigilance, nor will they fail to capitalize on our mistakes. Emphasis on these practices serves to improve discipline, military professionalism, and to save lives. Get with it!

d. Gunship Utilization: The use of gunships is down throughout the theater. Some of the newer units in-country have shown a reluctance to employ them. I want you to sell the commanders you are supporting on the fact that these birds can do them a lot of good. One area where you can put them to use is in reconnaissance. You might consider running first light and last light reconnaissance missions with them. Let's use our gunships more.

e. Preparation of ORLL's: The preparation of ORLL's is to serve specific purposes. USARV Regulation 1-19 specifically states

COMMANDER'S NOTES  
NUMBER 12

that the report will not be used as a sounding board for airing inconsequential complaints; yet, reports continue to be received which are used for this very purpose. ORLL's, if properly prepared and documented, can provide an invaluable service to like units and higher headquarters. Hastily prepared ORLL's with trivial content wastes the time of all who process them.

f. Instrument Proficiency: The monsoon season is approaching. People will inevitably get caught. Start a program for your aviators to keep up their instrument proficiency. Apply command pressure and make your people carry a hood and take advantage of every opportunity to practice.

g. Air Traffic Discipline: We are in the process of getting more air traffic controllers and more control teams over here to try to operate these forward airstrips, but we are never going to have enough to put traffic control at all of them. So, in keeping with the common use frequencies, keep bearing down on your people to adhere to existing patterns and to use common sense around these forward fields.

h. Use of USARV Helipad: The Headquarters, USARV Helipad located on the northeast end of the headquarters building is for the exclusive use of LIEUTENANT GENERALS or higher and equivalent civilian grades. No EXCEPTIONS will be granted. Passengers of lower grades who desire to visit USARV headquarters will be landed at Saigon Heliport and will utilize ground transportation to the headquarters. As a reminder, also avoid over-flying the Headquarters USARV headquarters building or within 500 feet horizontally.

i. Use of Flex (Free) Guns: We had another pilot accidentally shot by a door gunner who was using a free gun. We have had several people shot this way. There are two things wrong with free guns:

(1) Accidents such as the one cited here where the gunner gets thrown off balance and inadvertently sweeps the inside of the ship.

(2) They do more damage to tail rotors than the ones with ejection bags or other devices which catch the brass.

Now I know your people are going to use these weapons and I don't blame them -- it gives them a lot more flexibility when they are firing -- but have them put up a litter pole or some other type of device as a safety stop so they can't shoot back into the aircraft. Also, have them make some kind of a deflection device to keep the brass out of the tail rotor.

## COMMANDER'S NOTES

NUMBER 12

j. Body Armor: New tests have been completed which definitely confirm that the flak vest may be worn over the chest protector without reducing the protection provided by the chest protector. Tests have further proven that a majority of ceramic and projectile fragments will be caught in the flak vest. Recommend you have your guys wear the flak vest over the body armor, recognizing that on long days, fatigue may be increased by wearing both and they may feel the flak vest is too much. If only one is worn it must be the chest protector.

k. Increased Troop Lifts: We are still having too many people hit on successive lifts. In the face of the current shortage of birds over here people are prone to throw planning out the window by sending out ten (10) birds to lift a battalion, using six (6) or eight (8) lifts. But this is where we are getting into trouble. Very rarely do we lose a ship on the initial lift. Normally it is on subsequent lifts where the ships are using the same flight path. I want you to plan bigger initial lifts. If it takes outside resources and the rapid shift of units, then plan it this way. You will find that it will not only help our people but also the infantry types. A platoon of infantry gets pinned down a lot easier than an entire battalion.

BIGS  
UPTS

1. Use of the Term "Direct-Fire Support": The Chief of Staff of the Army has approved the term "Direct-Fire Support" to describe the fires delivered by armed helicopters in support of land operations. Action is being taken to change appropriate Army regulations and directives to include this term.

m. Security of Combat Assault Operations: When you become involved in planning or executing combat assaults or other airmobile operations, keep an eye on the aspects which might tip the Viet Cong off on our intentions. Following is a list which is not by any means the complete answer. While a lot of this work must be done, a little more attention must be paid to deception planning:

- (1) Construction of new operating bases.
- (2) Improvement of existing bases.
- (3) Advertising, visually or by radio, large formations of aircraft.
- (4) Reconnaissance flights.
- (5) Prepositioning of fuel and ammunition.
- (6) Prepositioning (marshalling) of aircraft and troops.

Advance  
Warning to  
VC

AW

BLIF

## COMMANDER'S NOTES

NUMBER 12

(7) New code names and call signs on FM - UHF - VHF frequencies.

(8) Increased LOGAIR traffic (C130 O CH-47, etc.).

(9) Advanced Air Force Prep (B52 - etc.).

4. SAFETY:

a. March accident experience reflects a drop of over 50 percent in accidents due to lost RPM and dust. This is indicative to me that positive command action has been taken to prevent accidents of this type. Your guys deserve a pat on the back for this substantial improvement.

b. The Brigade had a wire strike during March with the loss of all on board. A recent incident could have had the same results when a UH-1D flying at low level along the coastline struck a pole used for drying fishnets, causing damage to the underside of the fuselage. I consider any aviator involved in mishaps such as this to be seriously lacking in the judgment and maturity required to accept the responsibility for the safe keeping of a quarter million dollar piece of government property and the lives of people on board. In the case of deliberate violation of policy or directives your course of action as commanders is obvious. I expect positive command action to be taken to eliminate such occurrences.

c. An increase in engine failures was experienced in March. Out of a total of fifteen, nine resulted in accidents. As noted in my January commander's conference some of our materiel failures are the result of human mistakes, i.e., failure to properly lubricate the short shaft, exceeding engine operating limitations, hot starts, failure to keep down after take off, improper "tweaking" of the fuel control, etc. Fortunately, all of these factors are subject to correction by command supervision, education, and training. PROVIDE IT!

d. A recent random check of UH-1 helicopters operating in and out of the Saigon heliport revealed the following GO-NO-GO discrepancies:

(1) Nine (9) UH-1D's - No topping date.

(2) One (1) UH-1D - Date of last topping check 26 October 1966 (date of last PE March 1967).

(3) Two (3) UH-1B's - GO-NO-GO placard not in aircraft.

COMMANDER'S NOTES  
NUMBER 12

- (4) One (1) UH-1B - GO-NO-GO placard not filled out.
- (5) One (1) UH-1B - Date of last topping check May 1965.
- (6) One (1) UH-1B - Date of last topping check September 1966.

This would indicate there is considerable laxity on complying with provisions of USARV Regulation 388-30 dated 12 April 1966. Check your units to insure they are not guilty of this.

e. Downed Aircraft Reports (USARV FORM 193): USARV Regulation 385-10 provides instruction for submitting downed aircraft reports. Recently, several reports have been received containing only sketchy information with no follow up supplement. Since this is the media used to keep the command group informed on aircraft mishaps, it is imperative that they be timely and complete.

f. Staff Assistance Visits: Any unit desiring a safety assistance visit may request this assistance by contacting the Chief of Army Aviation Safety, USARV, Telephone: Army 377 or TSN 4586. The assistance available is Aviation Safety and Flight Standardization personnel and G-4 POL and Ammunition Assistance Teams.

g. Flying Hour Program: The object of the 140 hours maximum flying hours per 30 consecutive day period, per aviator, was to establish a figure not to be exceeded. An analysis by company for the month of March indicates considerable disparity within the units, as well as between like-type units. When you let your guys fly more than the 140-hour maximum you are grinding them right into the ground. This boils down to the commander's management of his resources. Let's get with the program and stay with it!

#### 5. LOGISTICS:

a. Ballistic Helmets: A total of 978 medium and 1,000 large ballistic helmets have been issued to 1st Aviation Brigade units as of 22 March 1967. 1st Logistical Command is having difficulty in determining quantities available at 506th FD for issue. These should be forthcoming shortly.

b. Aircraft Tool Sets: Aircraft tool sets were received on 3 April 1967 and distributed the same date to units of this Brigade:

<u>SETS/KITS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SETS/KITS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Tool Sets GM aircraft	181	Tool Kits Airframe	19
Tool Sets Tech insp	29	Tool Kits Elec Rpr	4

## COMMANDER'S NOTES

NUMBER 12

Report has been requested from all units on shortages still existing on these sets, to determine if our requirements have been satisfied. Action is also being initiated with 1st Logistical Command to insure adequate quantities of these sets are maintained in stock at the various depots to insure an immediate issue can be effected when a combat loss occurs. The fact still remains that too many mechanics tool sets are being lost.

c. RT 10-A Survival Radio: Recently 400 each of these radios were received bringing the total quantity issued to date by this Brigade to 967 (this figure does not include OV-10s). More radios will be released by 1st Logistical Command as soon as sufficient quantities are received.

d. Reports of Survey - Weapons/Vehicles:

(1) Surveys are still being received by this headquarters reflecting weapons accidentally being lost from aircraft in flight. Indicators point to the lack of written SOP's in the units. Aircraft commanders are not checking to insure adequate means are available in their aircraft for securing these weapons, i.e., a rope, snap, hook, or any means available should be used to secure these weapons. If the leaders don't check and enforce this, it will continue. Weapons are not that plentiful in the supply system, not to mention "Charlie" using them against you.

(2) Recently, the USARV Commander's Notes contained an article on vehicle losses due to theft/damage. During the 3d Quarter, FY 67, USARV lost over \$1,000,000 due to vehicle losses; of the total lost during this period, the 1st Aviation Brigade contributed \$47,087.89. Commanders must take action to insure that corrective measures are established to minimize these losses. Surveying officers of junior grade who lack the experience, cannot properly defend the government's interest. Where negligence and misconduct are involved, the individual should be held pecuniarily liable. April's Supply and Maintenance Newsletter will cover this much more comprehensively.

g. Peneprime Distributor: The expedient peneprime distributor demonstrated at the last Commander's Conference appears to be a worthwhile item. USARV has requested 34th General Support Group to fabricate one of these for each helicopter company in Vietnam. Details are now being worked out and the distributors should be forthcoming in the near future.

h. Brigade Patches: We have received all of the 70,000 Brigade patches which were made in Korea. The Brigade S-4 is making a breakout

## COMMANDER'S NOTES

NUMBER 12

to all subordinate units. You should receive them within the next two weeks.

1. Replacement Aircraft: Replacement aircraft are issued against losses which are confirmed by a turn-in voucher from the owning unit to the support unit. In order to fill the requirements for UH-1 shortages it is necessary that every effort be made by unit commanders to effect the turn-in of unserviceable aircraft as expeditiously as possible.

j. Sagami Mounts and Ejection Control Bags: The 34th General Support Group prepared a study which indicated USARV may expect to lose over 2,100 tail rotor blades at a cost of approximately \$840,000.00 during CY 1967, due to damage by expended brass from hand-held door guns on UH-1B/C helicopters. USARV concurred in this study and has initiated ENSURE action for Ejection Control Bags and Sagami Mounts to be used with M-60D machine guns in order to help eliminate this problem.

Prel  
Guns  
pt 2

6. INFORMATION:

a. AAAA Chapter - Scholarship Fund: Information recently received from Art Kesten of the Quad A indicates that the Brigade can establish a fund within the framework of the Quad A Fund for the surviving sons of Army aviators killed in action here in Vietnam. I will take this up with all commanders later. We need to decide whether or not to give the money to the widow on the death of the aviator or have the money put in trust to be given to the widow, or dependents at a later date for use in continuing education. Closely related is the business of establishing a Brigade Chapter of the Quad A. If such a chapter is established, we would have a rebate for each Quad A member in the Brigade which could be put into the scholarship fund. My headquarters has begun the leg work on both of these.

7. MEDICAL:

a. 1st Aviation Brigade Casualty Reporting System: Several weeks ago, Brigade put out a regulation (no. 600-10), requiring that certain designated units report daily to the Brigade surgeon on the presence of Brigade personnel in medical facilities adjacent to them. The purpose of this reporting system is to establish a central file from which commanders can readily determine where their wounded guys are located and what shape they are in. It will facilitate visits by commanders and on-the-spot presentation of awards. It will also have obvious advantages for personnel sections, especially in the case of those of our guys being prepared for evacuation out of country. Since this regulation was put out we haven't received a single report from

## COMMANDER'S NOTES

NUMBER 12

anybody. This situation has to be corrected immediately. The procedure is simple enough. The commander just assigns some individual in his unit the responsibility of checking every day with the nearby medical facility to see if there are any 1st Aviation Brigade people hospitalized there and that they are being properly looked after. Then this information is transmitted by telephone that afternoon or evening to the Brigade headquarters. I want you all to check over this regulation and if you are one of the units designated in it as responsible for reporting casualties, get on the ball and get this information rolling in. This thing is designed to help us take care of our people.

b. Wound Evaluation and Analysis Reporting: Whenever an air crewmember is killed or wounded during flight, we want to know where he was hit, how badly he was hurt, and whether or not protective armor did him any good. We need this information for the design of improved protective equipment. The people in Washington and all the research and development agencies are constantly on our backs to provide them with this information. To get this reporting job done, USARV Regulation 40-42 was put out which makes flight surgeons and medical facility commanders responsible for filling out USARV Form 295 on every air crewmember who is wounded in flight. The form is a quick and easy one to fill out, but for some reason the job is not getting done. We have hit this problem through medical channels with little success, and it has come to the point that we are either going to have to put command emphasis on this reporting or we are going to let this data go uncollected. I want you to get together with your flight surgeons and subordinate commanders and make it loud and clear that this job will be done.

c. Transfer of Medical Detachments within the Command: In order to be able to spread out scarce medical resources so that everyone gets their fair share of what is available, the Brigade surgeon is going to have to transfer several medical detachments and flight surgeons from one unit and place to another. I know that you all feel that you own the medical resources that are assigned to you, but the fact of the matter is that these medical detachments will have to be reallocated from time to time so that we can get the most mileage out of them and so that we can extend our medical coverage to new locations requiring it. The Brigade surgeon will always coordinate such reassessments with everyone concerned but he will need your full cooperation and understanding, especially if you happen to have the unit that is losing the medical detachment. The reassessments of a medical detachment away from your unit may at times create a problem, but the reason it is done is that there is a worse problem somewhere else.

d. Ballistic Helmet Evaluation: Most of your units by now have been issued the new ballistic helmet. Without going into any

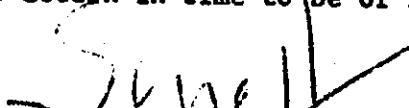
## COMMANDER'S NOTES

NUMBER 12

details, I think it is fair to say that we are going to have some problems with this piece of equipment. The Brigade surgeon is conducting an evaluation of this helmet using a questionnaire survey which has been distributed to all of your flight surgeons. I want you to take a look at the survey forms to become familiar with what has to be done and then back up your "Doc" in getting these things filled out. The survey evaluates the helmet from the points of view of ballistic protection, crash protection, and comfort. Whatever the faults or shortcomings of the helmet may be, getting this survey done properly and on time will enable us to get fixes on the way so that those helmets still to be produced can be improved. In the meanwhile, if people work on fitting them they can be made comfortable and people should wear them. We have already had three lives saved by this helmet.

e. Assistance to Dustoff: The Dustoff people just don't have enough aircraft to do the job. Because of this they are going to have to call on our people to give them help. Advise your people to give a hand when called upon. And have aidmen or surgeons in forward operational areas to assist.

8. I would like to remind the Group Commanders and the Battalion Commanders of the importance of keeping me informed of what is happening in your area. In the past few days, one of the units got into a hot fight which I was not aware of until after-the-fact. Even though I may not have been able to directly influence the action, I like to be on the scene where one of our units is involved or becomes involved in any hot action. So when anything develops during a tactical mission such as aircraft being shot down or hot LZ's, I want myself or my staff notified as soon as possible. They will be able to get the information to me so that I can get to the scene of the action in time to be of some help.

  
G. P. SENEFF, JR.  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding