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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGDA (M) (9 Feb 70)

FOR OT UT 70B004

13 February 1970

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: MG Allen M. Burdett, Jr.,  
Aviation Officer, USARV and CG, 1st Aviation Brigade, Period  
31 March 1969 through 6 January 1970 (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

*U.S. Dept. of the Army, Assistant Chief of Staff for  
Development*

*Debriefing of senior officers: MG Allen M. Burdett, Jr.*

1. Reference: AR 1-26, subject, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U) dated 4 November 1966.
2. Transmitted herewith is the report of MG Allen M. Burdett, Jr., subject as above.
3. This report is provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized from the experiences of the author. The report should be reviewed in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 1-26; however, it should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
4. Information of actions initiated under provisions of AR 1-26, as a result of subject report, should be provided ACSFOR OT UT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*Kenneth G. Wickham*

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

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as

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96375

28 JAN 1970

AVHGC-DST

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report  
MG Allen M. Burdett, Jr.

Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development  
Department of the Army  
Washington, D.C. 20310

1. Attached are three copies of the Senior Officer Debriefing Report prepared by MG Allen M. Burdett, Jr. The report covers the period 31 March 1969 through 6 January 1970 during which time MG Burdett served as Aviation Officer, USARV, and Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade.
2. MG Burdett is recommended as a candidate guest speaker at appropriate service schools and joint colleges.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl  
as (trip)  
2 cy wd HQ, DA

*J. D. Murray*  
J. D. MURRAY  
CPT, AGC  
Assistant Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96384

AVBA-CG

SUBJECT: Debriefing Report, Major General Allen M. Burdett, Jr.

Commanding General  
United States Army Vietnam  
ATTN: AVHCG-DST  
APO 96375

1. References:

- a. Letter, Headquarters, US Army Vietnam, AVHAG-PO, subject: Senior Officer Debriefing Program, dated 5 May 1969.
- b. AR 1-26, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U), dated 4 November 1966.
- c. USARV Regulation 1-3, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U), dated 1 June 1968.

2. In accordance with reference 1a, my end-of-tour debriefing report is inclosed. The report responds to paragraph 1, reference b, and, in accordance with paragraph 5a of reference c, reflects my views on the problems facing Army Aviation today and tomorrow in a counterinsurgency environment.

*Allen M. Burdett, Jr.*  
ALLEN M. BURDETT, JR.  
Major General, USA  
Commanding

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DEBRIEFING REPORT  
(RCS-CSFOR-74)

COUNTRY: Vietnam

DEBRIEF REPORT BY: Major General Allen M. Burdett, Jr.

DUTY ASSIGNMENT: Aviation Officer, USARV, and Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade

INCLUSIVE DATES: 31 March 1969 to 6 January 1970

DATE OF REPORT: 6 January 1970

1. (U) This report reflects my views on the major problems facing Army Aviation in the operational environment of Vietnam, problems which are of prime interest for the continued development of Army Aviation and which have been isolated during my tenure as Aviation Officer, USARV, and concurrently Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade during the period March 1969 to January 1970. I can add little to the previously expressed role of the US Army in support of the counterinsurgency action in Vietnam, or, for example, to the merits of the Cobra over the Huey gunships which have already been well documented. I will address those continuing and future programs which require a prologue for their successful development in light of inevitable troop reductions and our present situation in Vietnam. In terms of format, each of the following paragraphs addresses a specific topic.

2. (C) Army Aviation in Vietnam.

a. To fully understand and appreciate the complexity and size of Army Aviation currently assigned to Vietnam, one must be aware of the following:

(1) USARV is now authorized over 600 fixed wing aircraft, over 3800 helicopters, over 8000 aviators, and over 20,000 aviation enlisted maintenance personnel. The fixed wing aircraft are represented by seven models, often with more than one series of each model. Shortages exist in many types of fixed wing aircraft, with the O-1 shortage being the most critical. This shortage was relieved somewhat by a complete revamping of the depot overhaul program, with aircraft being retrograded only when their condition requires such action.

(2) The helicopter fleet is made up of five models, with the UH-1 type having five series in-country. Our most critical shortages exist in rotary wing assets, the worst being in LOH aircraft. To more equitably spread these shortages, fill levels were imposed. For example, fill levels for combat units of LOH's were set at 95% while a 50% level was prescribed for FOR OT UT  
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combat support and combat service support units. The shortage of LOH type aircraft is being alleviated with the introduction of the OH-58A aircraft. Current projections indicate a favorable position of LOH assets in May 1970. During my tenure, the USARV gunship fleet has been receiving the AH-1G Cobra to replace the older UH-1 B/C gunships. The total gunship fleet is now 55% Cobra. Our get-well date for UH-1 D/H's is supposedly the end of this month.

(3) The largest portions of the Army Aviation fleet in Vietnam are owned by the divisions and by the 1st Aviation Brigade. Each standard Infantry Division is authorized 88 rotary wing aircraft; each of the two Airmobile Divisions is authorized 412 rotary wing aircraft; the Americal Division, to which we have attached an aviation group, is authorized 255 rotary wing aircraft. The largest unit fleet of Army aircraft is owned and operated by the 1st Aviation Brigade, with a total authorization of 2096 aircraft of all types.

(4) A tremendously important aviation mission in Vietnam is the evacuation of casualties by helicopter. The task is performed admirably by the 44th Medical Brigade's two Air Ambulance Companies and eleven Air Ambulance detachments. Total aircraft authorized for this brigade is 116 UH-1H helicopters.

b. The task of keeping the entire fleet of aircraft operational is accomplished by the 34th General Support Group (AM&S). Maintenance support, to include direct support, back-up direct support, and general support is provided by direct and general support companies strategically located throughout Vietnam. Supply support for all aircraft, armament, and avionics repair parts is provided by the 34th Group's Aviation Materiel Management Center and Direct Support Supply Activities (DSSA's) organic to the direct support companies. Paragraph 7 below further outlines the mission of the 34th Group.

3. (U) Command Relationships.

a. The 1st Aviation Brigade is charged with command, less operational control, of its assigned Army Aviation units; it is responsible for the effective employment of its aircraft, the maintenance necessary to assure operational availability of the fleet, training and proficiency of its aviators, and safety of its operations. The Brigade commands its assets with the exception of daily mission assignments which are made by the senior US headquarters in each Corps Tactical Zone. The basic mechanism for this is outlined in existing LOI's to the Field Forces. In accordance with the LOI's the Combat Aviation Group (CAG) Commander manages the assets of his group to accomplish the missions assigned by the Field Force Commander.

b. The established command relationships specify that the Field Force Commander has operational control of the Brigade aviation assets assigned within his area of responsibility. Within the framework of tactical terminology expressing command relationships (AR 320-5, Dictionary of United States Army Terms) and the operational requirements existing in Vietnam at

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the time (1968, but based upon experience gained through the 1966 and 1967 time frame), the phrase "operational control" was probably the best term available to establish an immediate command relationship. However, based on more recent experience, the command relationship between the Field Force Commander and CAG Commander is not what is normally considered operational control. In my view, the relationship is better expressed by stating that the aviation commander responds to Field Force mission and task assignment.

c. I recognize that there is no established DA doctrine for expressing the command relationship outlined above. Nevertheless, based on the experience of the 1st Aviation Brigade, the most effective command relationship promotes the optimum employment of Army Aviation assets; that condition and command relationship exist when the aviation commander retains all command responsibility but is dedicated to respond to the Field Force Commander's task and aircraft mission assignment. Basic reasons for this follow:

(1) The ability of aviation units to accomplish their missions is dependent primarily upon aircraft availability; availability is dependent upon the management of maintenance resources. These are all command functions of the aviation organization commander. The aviation commander, through management of his resources, can shift or move his units to meet operational requirements and maintain a predetermined level of aviation support. The permanent move of aviation units, which impacts on all functions of maintenance logistics, should be within the purview of the aviation commanders after coordination with supported commanders.

(2) The training, proficiency, and related safety factors of aviation units are primary responsibilities of the aviation commander in controlling aviation units. The Brigade policy emphasizes mission accomplishment but at the same time emphasizes that Army aircraft should be used for those missions for which they were intended and for which the crews have been adequately trained. Through the test of battle, techniques have been developed which have resulted in habitually effective aviation combat support with minimal losses. However, the history of Vietnam has conclusively shown that Army aircraft should not be used for missions which can properly be performed by other and better means or which exceed the capability of a specific aircraft. The latter includes the use of Army aircraft to drop napalm, to dispense defoliants on a large scale, to use weapons not specifically designed for the aircraft, and for extensive night illumination operations.

(3) The most effective command relationship exists when (1) the Field Force Commander integrates a portion of the Aviation Group staff as his own staff's Army Aviation Element, and (2) the Field Force accepts and plans the utilization of aircraft flying hour support on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. By this technique the aviation commander retains the flexibility to accomplish assigned missions with the fine edge of efficiency and still manages his resources to provide the level of optimum support. When

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a Field Force or comparable commander fails to impose or to accept a "flying hour program" and fails to utilize properly the staff of his supporting aviation organization, the level of aviation support fluctuates wildly and may become inadequate. Ground force actions must also reflect and where possible operate within constraints of supporting aviation capabilities.

4. (C) VNAF Improvement and Modernization (I&M)

a. Before my tenure the decision was made that, within the RVNAF, helicopter assets would belong to the VNAF. As a result, the MACV Air Force Advisory Group (AFGP) is the US agency charged with planning and guiding the VNAF helicopter I&M program. The program for I&M of the VNAF helicopter capability is, therefore, essentially the responsibility of the USAF, but the US Army must actively support it if it is to succeed. Thus far the Army has supported the effort in terms of materiel, training, maintenance and supply. As the program progresses, support by the US Army will significantly increase.

b. The US Army, as the single service systems manager for the UH-1 aircraft system, is responsible for the overall management of this system throughout the world. Further, the US Army is the only service with the established capability of training the VNAF helicopter pilots and imparting the tactics, techniques, and experience required for support of combat assaults. Consequently, although the AFGP is responsible for planning and guiding the establishment of a VNAF helicopter capability, it becomes in reality a US Army program for execution. This important program is unnecessarily complicated by having both the US Army and the US Air Force directly involved.

c. The present VNAF I&M Program includes the activation of UH-1H squadrons (31 aircraft/squadron) and CH-47A squadrons (16 aircraft). The USAF has programmed funds for UH-1H aircraft to fill the VNAF squadrons plus additional aircraft for attrition replacements. Four of the UH-1H squadrons have been activated with twenty UH-1H aircraft in each squadron. Forty-four UH-1H aircraft (32 gunships and 12 C&C) are programmed to complete the fill of these squadrons in the early 1970 time frame. All future UH-1H aircraft for the VNAF I&M Program will be provided from USARV in-country assets. A DA approved memorandum of agreement between the AFGP and USARV specifies that the remaining aircraft to be transferred will have less than 1500 flying hours since new or overhaul and the CH-47A aircraft will have less than 1200 flying hours since new or overhaul. USARV will provide VNAF with replacement aircraft for attrition losses as prescribed by the agreement. VNAF aircraft retrograded to in-theater or CONUS repair facilities will not be replaced while undergoing maintenance. The present VNAF I&M Program calls for the transfer of aircraft assets from US assault helicopter companies and US assault support helicopter companies to activate the other VNAF squadrons. Specified US organic ground support equipment and special tools on hand in each unit will be transferred to the VNAF with the aircraft. All transfer of aircraft and support equipment will be on a reimbursable basis between the USAF and the US Army. Maintenance support beyond the capability of VNAF will be provided by the 34th General Support Group on request by the Air Force Logistics Command.

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d. The I&M aspects of helicopter unit support operations have not yet been fully addressed on an organized, country-wide scale.. Employment of the VNAF squadrons, located at the planned locations throughout the country, will necessitate the assumption of operational logistics support, primarily ammunition and POL. In effect, the VNAF will require stage fields at forward operating bases on a large scale to support ARVN airmobile operations.

e. Specifically, the VNAF/ARVN will have to manage and supervise the ammunition and POL stockage levels, provide for replenishment, and supervise the operation of fuel dispensing equipment at ARVN forward operating bases. Aerial replenishment of the forward operating bases will continue to be a necessity. The ARVN/VNAF must be geared to assume on a countrywide basis the combat logistics requirements and responsibilities for their expanded helicopter capability.

5. (U) Aviation Personnel Experience Levels

a. A general lack of experience exists in both enlisted and officer grades in US Army Aviation units. Nearly all officer and enlisted personnel were only recently qualified in their military occupational specialties and lack the experience generally available in similar units in RVN as recently as two years ago. The impact of this reduced level of experience has been felt at all echelons of command. It is especially evident at company level where the commander (generally on his second tour) must shoulder more responsibility for detailed technical training of individuals as well as for all training in the fundamentals of military operations, flying safety, and basic military discipline.

b. Organizational maintenance officers are well trained by the CONUS schooling system. However, being young and inexperienced, they lack the "know-how" of effectively organizing unit level maintenance. Experienced second tour maintenance officers are normally found in organizations having more complicated equipment or which are capable of performing a higher echelon of maintenance (for example, crane companies and the direct support and general support companies of the 34th General Support Group). Although this is understandable, the fact remains that the maintenance experience level of the basic units (such as assault helicopter companies and air cavalry troops) is lower than desirable. This problem is compounded by a shortage of technical inspectors and avionics technicians as well as by the inexperience and limited availability of qualified sheet metal repairmen, electricians, and hydraulics repairmen.

c. The overall problem will not soon disappear. It results from a combination of causes: contract aircraft maintenance in CONUS, short term enlistments, the GI Bill, and opportunities in civilian life for helicopter maintenance skills. To live with the problem we must continue OJT for our people, augment them with some civilian expertise, and retain the centralized, in-country refresher training capability (Army Aviation Refresher Training School presently located in Vung Tau).

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6. (U) Introduction of New Items of Equipment

a. During the past year, the following new systems and major components have been introduced into Vietnam. Experience with them forms the basis for the following discussion:

<u>Systems</u>	<u>Major Components</u>
OH-58A	Environmental control unit AH-1G
CH-47C	Standard light weight avionics equipment
CH-54B (Support Plan)	Lear Siegler Inc. attitude indicators - AH-1G 801 Tail rotor hub - UH-1 series, AH-1G Automatic pilot CH-47C Stabilization assist system (SAS) CH-47C Speed trim system CH-47C

b. The successful introduction of new items of equipment at the user level requires the controlled coordination of a multitude of agencies and offices in CONUS and RVN. Often, however, the preparations for deploying new equipment were premature. In some instances the preparations for New Materiel Introductory Teams (NMIT) and New Equipment Training Teams (NETT) were made so far in advance that an excessive number of changes occurred prior to the arrival of the new equipment. The rapid turnover of personnel in RVN usually negates the effectiveness of arrangements, contacts, briefings, and understanding when the teams come too soon.

c. In general, the best results have been achieved by marrying the new equipment and its support package and keying the rest of the introductory program to a firm, in-country delivery date. The NMIT should be programmed for arrival 180 days prior to the delivery date and NETT should begin its in-country operation 90 days before the delivery of the new equipment with its support package.

d. Determining the optimum time to introduce new equipment is difficult and depends upon many factors. Ideally new equipment should be introduced after thorough testing in CONUS, after all push packages and manuals are available in-country, and after people have been thoroughly trained here in operation and maintenance procedures. The sense of urgency to field new equipment is often so great that the introduction itself is premature. Usually this is unfortunate as the already overtaxed supply system is further strained and user acceptance is degraded. There have been a few instances, however, in which a degree of chance was justified. When determining a date

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for introduction, factors which must be weighed include the relative complexity of the new equipment, the demand from the field for it, and the adequacy of push packages, manuals, and maintenance capability.

7. (C) Maintenance Support

a. The maintenance support of over 4200 aircraft in country is a formidable task. In performing it, our present maintenance organization has proved to be extremely flexible and responsive. Beginning at company/troop level, each aviation unit is organized under the decentralized maintenance concept. This organizational structure is one of the most important lessons learned from our experience in Vietnam. The concept provides to the aviation unit commander the necessary parts, tools, and personnel for direct support maintenance, thereby giving the responsible individual the assets to fully accomplish his task. The 34th General Support Group units provide back-up direct support, general support, and limited depot level maintenance capability. This maintenance and supply group is unique in the US Army structure. The Group is presently organized into four battalions consisting of five general support companies, ten direct support companies, four avionics companies, the Aviation Materiel Management Center, and its two depot (supply) companies. The Aviation Materiel Management Center operates a centralized and automated inventory control center for aircraft, avionics, and air armament repair parts. A floating aircraft maintenance facility (USNS Corpus Christi Bay) is OPCON to the Group; it provides a limited depot rebuild for aircraft components. In essence, the 34th Group is responsible for "one stop" service of aircraft, avionics, and armament to include both maintenance and supply for these systems.

b. When the 34th Group was first conceived, staff supervision of it was assigned to the G-4 USARV; however, this function has since been given to the Aviation Officer. As CG 1st Aviation Brigade, I had only normal user-maintenance facility relationships with the 34th Group (and these relationships could not have been better); as USARV Aviation Officer I was charged with staff supervision of the Group. This arrangement afforded me the ability to place emphasis on any aviation maintenance problem anywhere in the Republic of Vietnam. It also provided knowledgeable personnel on higher staff levels to analyze problem areas, thereby freeing the operators to concentrate on their maintenance operations.

c. Early in the period covered by this report the question was raised concerning the amalgamation of the 34th Group with the 1st Logistical Command. Soon thereafter representatives from the Government Accounting Office surfaced the same issue. Although in theory, a merger of the two organizations appears attractive, in practice it would be a long step backwards. Such a merger would, in my opinion, degrade the present supply visibility of high dollar cost items, lower our relative shipping priorities, and reduce our detailed accounting procedures which have been so successfully demonstrated by the 34th Group/AVSCOM Stovepipe Plan for intensive management of

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aviation materiel. Throughout, our support by AVSCOM (our single point of contact in CONUS for the aircraft STOVEPIPE) has been superb. Based on my experience of the past nine months, I am convinced that the organization and logistical system which I inherited is near optimum.

d. Despite the optimum organization and support, problem areas in our maintenance and supply structure surfaced, but they were, or are being, resolved. While doing so, USARV flying hours and operationally ready rates steadily increased. The outstanding record of Army Aviation in this combat environment is directly attributable to the rapid, flexible, and effective support provided by the present aircraft maintenance and supply system.

8. (U) Joint Air Operations Group (JAOG)

a. A concept that has proved extremely valuable to the safe and orderly conduct of air operations in the Republic of Vietnam has been the Joint Air Operations Group (JAOG). This group is an agency of MACV and consists of members from all US military components in RVN plus representation from Air America and the Civil Aviation Assistance Group for the Directorate of Civil Aviation, RVN. This broad representation of all aviation activities is tasked with the effective identification and resolution of mutual problems in civil and military air operations throughout Vietnam. The JAOG is staffed with five working groups which define and study problems, then recommend solutions. Each of these groups has representatives from all member agencies of the JAOG. The groups are responsible for the publication of a Tactical Aerodrome Directory which provides information to pilots concerning airfields, air traffic control, artillery and air strike warning system, common radio frequencies for uncontrolled airfields, NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) system, and for the education of all interested agencies through comprehensive briefing tours.

b. It is logical to assume that the problems of air traffic control which have surfaced in RVN would arise in any similar counterinsurgency environment, necessitating some type of joint control. As stated earlier, the JAOG concept has proved very effective here in Vietnam, and the early employment of an organization of this type should be considered in any future counterinsurgency conflict.

9. (C) Other Major Activities

a. Aircraft: Since the aircraft inventory has increased to more than 4200, each month a total of over 300 aircraft must be received in-country and retrograded out. Urgent repair and retrofit actions, which corrected U-21 vertical stabilizer deficiencies and replaced OH-6 tail rotor blades, were completed with minimum disruption to operations. Continuing supply surveillance was exercised over all aviation items resulting in the highest sustained availability rate attained to date. Management of non-divisional field maintenance

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personnel and associated tools and equipments contributed directly to achieving an averaged operational readiness rate at an all-time high. Development of a manhour reporting system was initiated in response to Army Audit Agency and Government Accounting Office criticism of aircraft maintenance manhour accounting. This report now provides data for management analysis and support of personnel requirements. Additionally, specific accounting procedures were established to provide positive control and accountability for aircraft repairables. A supplement to AR 711-45 was revised and specific reports were initiated to give commanders at all levels immediate visibility of program successes and weaknesses. FY70 funding restrictions resulted in a reduction of field service representatives and DA civilian support for USARV. A new concept was developed to provide maximum coverage with minimum personnel assets. This concept is based on area responsibility, rather than unit assignment, and will permit greater flexibility in all areas of personnel employment. In the current environment of fewer dollars and decreasing space ceilings (both military and civilian), continued emphasis must be maintained in getting the most from each dollar and the most from the individual filling each space.

b. Armament: The aviation armament inventory increased to more than 3600 subsystems, with a corresponding reduction in maintenance float and depot stock. This necessitated developing improved inventory management controls and an in-depth review of the RVN-wide inventory on a detailed unit basis. The XM-8, 40mm grenade launcher subsystem for the LOH, was introduced, tested and evaluated; BOI and Mission Support Plans were developed and submitted to DA. Mission support action has been completed for the XM-59, caliber .50, subsystem and the XM-19 Aerial Flare Dispenser. Mission support planning for introduction of the XM-35, 20mm gun, subsystem is in process to include evaluation of its impact on 2.75" rocket firepower and rocket production requirements. A study of electromagnetic radiation hazards to aviation armament and ammunition is currently in progress. Development and local manufacture of Night Hawk minigun and search-light systems have been completed, resulting in a significantly improved night interdiction capability. Continuing refinements of on-going studies and projects are required.

c. Avionics:

(1) A Mission Support Plan for Standard Lightweight Avionics Equipment (SLAE) for the LOH was submitted in March 1969, and follow-on equipment was introduced in July 1969. The current configuration, consisting of three radios (VHF, FM, and ADF) and two intercommunication centrals, has been deployed for use. An additional requirement for the companion UHF radio has been forwarded to DA.

(2) Based on a Mission Support Plan developed in April 1969, an AN/URC-68 Survival Radio was introduced in June 1969. This radio provides an enhanced capability for locating and rescuing downed aviators and crewmen, by allowing both UHF and FM communication on three frequencies each. Its internationally recognized CW signal, as well as voice communication, can be used on all frequencies.

(3) A project for fabricating 40 command and control consoles for the OH-6 was established based on designs of prototypes developed by the 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions. An engineering prototype utilizing aircraft power was developed in July 1969 following fabrication of laboratory model by ECOM. Production began aboard the USNS Corpus Christi Bay in August 1969, and the project was completed last month.

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(4) USARPAC GO 726, 8 October 1969, reorganized the current avionics maintenance elements, and activated three general support (GS) avionics maintenance companies. This action culminated a program which was initiated in January 1966, when provisional GS avionics maintenance companies were established.

(5) Although much has been accomplished in the field of avionics, there is much yet to be done by way of follow-up, refinements, and evaluations.

10. (C) Command Relationships Between Army Aviation Units, MACV Advisors, and Supported Units.

The 1st Aviation Brigade "Aviation Operational Procedures Guide" outlines the responsibilities and the command relationships between the Air Mission Commander (AMC) and the Airmobile Task Force Commander (AMTFC). The relationships are centered around the ultimate tactical responsibilities of the "ground force commander" or "tactical commander." The diffusion of this relationship into a US Advisor, a Vietnamese tactical commander, and a US Air Mission Commander raises some doctrinal questions. AMC's usually equate the advisor to the AMTFC when, in fact, the advisor neither commands nor controls the ground assets or the ground tactical plan. Further, the Advisor may logically feel some hesitancy about making decisions on US aviation assets in opposition to his counterpart, since it could have an adverse effect on their relationship and, thus, his effectiveness as an advisor. As the Vietnamese take over more control of their operations and the US presence diminishes, the problem of properly utilizing and safeguarding US aviation personnel and assets may well hinge on a suitable resolution of the responsibilities and relationships of these three parties.

11. (C) Employment of US Air Cavalry Squadrons in Support of the ARVN.

a. A significant factor which should be considered is the absence of any plan to include air cavalry in the RVNAF. The VNAF, which as indicated earlier will own all helicopters, has no plan for air cavalry, or, for that matter, LOH's or Cobras. The absence of such planning in our Vietnamization effort is related to the effectiveness of US Air Cavalry Squadrons in supporting the ARVN.

b. The Delta affords the best insight for addressing the above question. There, our one Air Cav Squadron has been tremendously effective in achieving high body counts -- but not because of ARVN participation. Sometimes there appears to be a reluctance to replace a US Aero Rifle Platoon with an ARVN platoon or for the ARVN to react with the classical "pile-on" tactics when the situation seems to warrant such action. This is not said in a derogatory sense, for I am a great admirer of ARVN capability, determination, and bravery. Nevertheless, the problem will be further complicated in the future since only VNAF has aircraft and ARVN has the troops. The coupling of the two as air cavalry would obviously be difficult. Perhaps the creation of scout and gunship weapons squadrons in VNAF with ARVN troops and VNAF lift ships on strip alert, ready to exploit the scout contacts, would be a step in the right direction. At present, I feel that we have not yet managed to impart

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the advantages and techniques of air cavalry tactics to the RVNAF. This is a fertile field in which we should do more plowing; it is a deficiency in the current RVNAF I&M plan and is an area where a change in the plan will pay handsome dividends.

12. (C) Problems Encountered in Training Support Unit Commanders and Staffs in Employment and Utilization of Army Aviation

a. This training problem is a continuous and recurring one: that of educating new personnel in the capabilities, limitations, and utilization of the aviation unit and its aircraft. Because of the rapid turnover of key personnel in aviation and in ground units, there is a constant need for OJT. The formal program specified in USARV Regulation 95-26 would be ideal but has not worked as envisioned because of the conflicting schedules of aviation and ground personnel, and because the rapid changeover of personnel requiring such training would necessitate almost continuous classes. The training mission is being accomplished by close liaison and daily coordination between supported and supporting units. Realistic training in the employment of Army Aviation for airmobile operations should be an increasingly important aspect of all service schooling.

b. Generally, while in RVN, an adequate OJT period with the departing commander or staff officer supplemented by careful study of pertinent publications, such as the 1st Aviation Brigade Operational Procedures Guide, has imparted the minimum basic essentials to an inexperienced officer for the conduct of airmobile operations.

13. (C) The Ability of Aviation Units to Participate in Base Area Defense

a. Aviation units have an extremely limited defense capability. Sustained base defense requirements placed on an aviation unit result in a deleterious effect on qualitative and quantitative maintenance and on flying safety.

b. When confronted with heavy commitments for defending base areas, some organizations have organized security platoons within each unit to perform guard duty for a specified period of time as a primary duty. In this manner, minimum personnel turbulence is encountered although the maintenance capability is degraded. The employment of highly skilled technicians on the perimeter obviously reduces the available manhours for aircraft repair and maintenance. We must astutely avoid the impression that aviation units can effectively fly all day, maintain all night, while concurrently defending the base perimeter.

c. There are two situations in which it is particularly difficult for aviation units to perform perimeter defense duties: First, when a company/troop size unit is located away from its parent battalion/squadron, there are proportionately fewer aviation personnel who are available for perimeter defense. Second, when only aviation units and aviation maintenance units are stationed on a site (example: Long Thanh Army Airfield), most perimeter and interior guard duties are performed by technical personnel.

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d. If aviation units are to remain in Vietnam to support the ARVN, their security commitments will increase when other US units are withdrawn. For that reason, plans should be made to provide adequate security for aviation units if a significant drawdown is initiated. Such planning might parallel that for the old missile command organizations which were deployed to Korea and Italy with organic mechanized infantry companies to defend high dollar cost items. Regardless of whether the security force be US or ARVN, early planning should be initiated to provide isolated aviation units an effective security force. Preferably this force would be mechanized because of its inherent ability to secure a large area with maximum firepower and mobility.

14. (C) Conclusions. Following are the main conclusions derived from this report.

a. The productivity and effectiveness of Army Aviation are functions of many factors; one of the most important is management -- management of people and hardware assets. The preferred command relationship in which the aviation commander responds to the supported commander for mission and task assignment affords the aviation commander the best chance for managerial success.

b. The VNAF I&M Program is replete with problem areas which will grow in complexity. Although the program provides for no LOH's, the RVNAF should develop a small air cavalry capability.

c. With the relatively low level of experience in Army Aviation, commanders of aviation units must exercise an even greater degree of supervision and managerial expertise to maintain the high standards required for successful mission accomplishment.

d. When introducing new equipment into the theater, the urgency of the requirement must be carefully weighed in conjunction with the status of CONUS testing, the availability of maintenance and supply support, and the status of in-country training for operating and maintaining the new material.

e. USARV's present organization for aircraft maintenance and supply is near optimum; the system is sound and responsive.

f. The JAOG is an effective agency; a similar type organization should prove useful in any future counterinsurgency situation.

g. Plans must be made to provide adequate security elements for aviation units as the drawdown progresses.

15. (U) Epilogue. This concludes the most rewarding assignment of my career. My association with those who made our efforts succeed has been a constant source of inspiration; the clearly apparent appreciation of the supported units was a sustaining tribute to those who kept 'em flying. In spite of the problem areas outlined above, I believe that through the cooperation of all and the magnificent efforts of our splendid people in Army Aviation, the caliber of aviation support for US, RVNAF, and Free World Military Assistance Forces will continue undiminished.

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