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14Jan67-AVN Unit Has Pool

NHA TRANG (1st AVN-IO) Helicopter crews of the 17th Combat Aviation Group's 155th Assault Company, 52nd Battalion, have a flair for civilization despite the rough board-and-canvas surroundings of their central highland base camp.

The Army unit, famous for its "eouth tables" to re-humanize combat aviators nearing their stateside rotation dates recently added a 40-foot square swimming pool to its cultural effects - this one open to roughly 900 troops of various units stationed at Van M Thuot, 723 miles northwest of here.

Long on the drawing board, pool plans were finally pushed into the construction phase in early October by 155th commander, Maj. Robert V. Atkinson. It was opened late last month to a formation fly-by of smoke streaming 155th Hueys.

It is made of a heavy plastic attached to a framework of metal steps, anchored by steel stanchions embedded in cement, all resting a foundation of packed sand.

Private First Class Robert Spuller, a former YMCA swimming instructor, stands by to prevent non-battle losses among the splashing soldiers.

Planned additions to the eight foot deep pool, include two dressing rooms, a weight-lifting room and a five-foot wide poolside apron enclosed by a fence.

25Jan67-3 **Signalmen Become Mortarmen At Night**

BAN ME THUOT, (1st AVN-IO) -Three men of the 208th Signal Detachment assigned to the 155th Assault Helicopter Company have a unique assignment each night following their regular day's tour of duty. They man an 81mm mortar as part of the compound's night defense plan.

Specialist Fives Peter L. Cloutier and Harry G. Vogler and PFC Lawrence A. Esparaza man their mortar pit near the combat operations center switchboard as one of the several mortar crews in the 155th's defense network.

The team received its first firing opportunity in mid-December during a II corps wide alert. They sent mortar flares into the sky to illuminate the surrounding country-side so the infantry could locate nearby Viet Cong.

Cloutier, Vogler and Esparaza attended the Southeastern Signal School at Ft. Gordon, Ga., before coming to Vietnam.

Cloutier has worn the crossed rifles of an infantryman and fired the mortars before. Vogler has also been trained in the techniques of mortar firing. But Esparaza went to signal school straight from basic and is now getting his first taste of mortar gunnery.

"They may have received quite diversified training," says Capt. Raymond L. Kervahn, 208th Signal Detachment commander, "but they certainly worked well as a mortar team the other night."

11Feb67-Falcons Command Respect

BAN ME THUOT, (1st AVN-IO)-Serving the central highlands of Vietnam as the only armed helicopter platoon in a wide area around this city, the Falcons of the 155th Assault Helicopter Company command country wide respect.

Participation in many operations from Da Nang to Soc Trang and from Nha Trang to the Vietnamese border has earned the Falcon gun platoon a reputation for conspicuous fire support from any element it flies with in the 52d Combat Aviation Battalion. Escorting convoys, flying cover for ground units and providing suppressive fire support for the company's two helicopter airlift platoons are but a few of the Falcon's regular assignments.

Occasional dusk patrols - low level reconnaissance missions flown at dusk to spot enemy activity - and attachments away from home base have led the armed helicopters far afield in combat support missions.

Commanding the unit is Maj. Jack Doyle. He has eleven pilot to fly the new UH-1C helicopters in the platoon. Two section leaders assist him in maintaining platoon training and combat status.

Doyle believes that everyone in the platoon should work together as a cohesive team, enlisted men and officers alike. This way, "The best possible armed support for our aircraft and suppressive fire for supported troops is possible" he states.

25Mar67-Aviation Camp Dedicated to WO Coryell

BAN ME THUOT, (1st AVN-IO) - Camp Coryell dedication ceremonies were held here recently in honor of a warrant officer who was shot down last Oct. 30 on a resupply flight.

Warrant Officer Michael N. Coryell, his co-pilot, and his crew lost their lives when shot down by enemy small arms fire on a mission near Plei Djereng, 25 miles west of Pleiku.

Unit orders naming the 155th Assault Helicopter Company compound were read and the 23rd Infantry Division (ARVN) band began the Star Spangled Banner as the American colors were raised over Camp Coryell for the first time.

The band played the Vietnamese national anthem as the Republic of Vietnam flag was also hoisted above the aviation compound.

29Apr67-4 Avn Cos Set Records

PLEIKU, (1st AVN-IO) - Flying more than 15,000 hours in 52 consecutive accident-free days, four helicopters of the 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion shattered all safety records of the 1st Aviation Brigade.

The units are the 119th, 155th, and 170th Assault Helicopter Companies, and the 179th CH-47 Assault Support Helicopter Company.

Flying combat and support missions from their central highland bases during January, February, and March, air and ground crews fought enemy ground fire, bad weather, hazardous night flying conditions.

During the 52-day period the four companies had an average of 95 Hueys and 12 CH-47 Chinook helicopters flying daily.

13May67-VN Pulls Gunner From Fiery Craft

BAN ME THUOT, (1st AVN-IO) - A Vietnamese civilian helped save the lives of four Americans from the burning wreckage of an Army helicopter here recently.

The helicopter mishap occurred when a UH-1C gunship was attempting a takeoff from Ban Me Thuot City Airfield. It lost power and crashed in a sparsely populated area. No civilians were hurt.

Phan Van Ngong, an employee of Pacific Architects and Engineers, was the first to arrive at the crash scene. A few moments later the crash rescue unit from nearby Camp Coryell arrived and started to put out the fire.

Ignoring the flames from the burning chopper, two members of the crash rescue team, Sp4 Douglas Ellis nad Sp4 Leonard Jones started to pull the crew members to safety, Mr. Ngong joined them and rescued the gunner just as the intense heat of the fire detonated the chopper's ammunition.

Major Charlie P. Fleming, company commander of the 155th Assault Helicopter Company, forwarded a letter of appreciation to Mr. Ngong through the Pacific Architects and Engineers manager at Ban Me Thuot. It read in part:

"I would like to take this opportunity to extend to you my deepest gratitude for your heroic efforts on behalf of the crew of the helicopter that crashed at Ban Me Thuot. You valiant display of courage while rescuing the crew members from the burning wreckage was a source of admiration to myself and to the many friends of these men."

13May67-Three Are Rescued After Jungle Crash

PLEIKU, (1st AVN-IO) - "I saw the ship going down with flames billowing from the engine compartment. Then it hit the trees and fell through the canopy." This is how 1st Lt. Richard Sperling described the crash of a sister Huey helicopter after a combat assault operation near here recently.

Lieutenant Sperling, of the 155th Assault Helicopter Company, was piloting a UH-1D "slick" in support of a 4th Infantry Division assault during Operation Sam Houston. The 155th had deposited the assault troops in a "hot" landing zone and were taking off when the other ship was hit. It managed to fly only about 800 meters before crashing.

"We noticed a small clearing about 300 meters from the downed ship, took a chance and landed," the lieutenant said, describing the rescue that followed. Sperling and his crewchief, PFC Michael Baucom grabbed their weapons and rushed through the jungle to the crash site.

Remaining behind with the helicopter, WO William Christobal, the copilot, and Sp4 Thomas Desimore, the door gunner, waited hoping for their safe return.

Lieutenant Sperling described the crash site saying, "One man was dead, two wounded and one uninjured. Mortars, rockets and small arms fire were hitting all around us but we managed to get the three crewmembers back to my ship. We flew them out of the small clearing in a maximum performance takeoff and back to the base for medical help."

"It's things like this that make us all proud to be members of the 155th 'dragons'," said WO Jerry Johns, pilot of the downed chopper after the day's action was over.

20May67-Huey Pilots Slay 5 'Green' Enemy

BAN ME THOUT, (1ST AVN-IO) - As elements of the Vietnamese 23rd Infantry Division swung into operations east of Ban Me Thuot in conjunction with the 101st Airborne Division, pilots of the 155th Assault Helicopter Company, who began supporting them in early April, found they had some training to conduct.

It seemed the Viet Cong the aviators encountered here were not the veterans they were accustomed to during their support of Operations Paul Revere and "Sam Houston" in the Pleiku area. There VC were green to the power of Army aviation.

Warrant Officer Jack L. Finn initiated the training program while flying a command and control ship for Colonel Anh of the 23rd Division. Earlier in the morning the helicopter company had lifted two platoons of Civilian Irregular Defense group (CIDG) forces into a position along a heavily mined road southeast of Ban Me Thuot. Anh wanted to check on the progress of the action, so Finn flew him to the landing zone about 55 yards from the zone he spotted five VC in the open.

His crew chief began to fire at them, but they did not run. "They just walked down the road, casually taking pot shots at us," Finn said.

Finn took the enemy's assault as a personal affront to his aircraft's capabilities. But wanting to endanger his passengers, he took evasive action. Then he turned to his most powerful weapon-his radio. Calling in an artillery spotter who was in the vicinity, he directed the pilot to the target. Within five minutes the nearby Vietnamese artillery had registered and destroyed the unwary enemy.

"Sure, I've been fired at before, and taken hits," Finn reported. "But these Cong didn't show the least respect. They've got a lot to learn about our innocent looking Huey."

27May67-VC Learn Of Power Of Hueys

BAN ME THUOT, (1st AVN-IO) -While supporting the Vietnamese 23rd Division, WO Jack Finn, pilot with the 155th Assault Helicopter Company, discovered there are some Viet Cong that are not aware of the power and capabilities of Army aviation.

Flying the command and control ship, he was taking the ground commander to a landing zone to observe the progress of a troop lift when he spotted five VC. His crewchief immediately opened fire as Finn maneuvered the aircraft safely out of small arms range. In relating the story, Finn said, "They didn't fun. They just walked down the road casually taking pot shots at us."

Turning to his most powerful weapon, Finn radioed an Air Force Forward Air Controller and directed him to the area.

"Sure, I've been fired at before, and taken hits," Finn reported, "But these Viet Cong didn't show the least respect. They've got a lot to learn about our innocent looking Huey's."

30Jun67-Chopper Lands On Sea Craft

BAN ME THUOT, (1st AVN-IO) - First Lieutenant Richard A. Sperling, a member of the 155th Assault Helicopter Company, recently showed the versatility of his chopper when he landed on a disabled junk at sea.

Sperling was on a routine flight to Cam Ranh Bay early one evening. As he swung out over the water on his approach to the airfield, he noticed a Vietnamese junk bobbing in the breakers about a mile out from shore. The men on the junk shot a hand flare.

Sperling decided to get some information about the junk's possible mission before plunging to its aid. Orbiting the boat, he contacted the local flight operations center. Minutes later the center called back with word that Navy sources had requested him to check the situation out. Making a low pass over the junk, he noticed a white flag flying. The sailors waved frantically at him and pointed to their engine.

The flat roof of the cabin offered enough room for his skids, but what about the rocking motion of the small craft - and its drift?

Sperling carefully approached the rolling junk. Hovering over it, he gently placed his skids on the cabin floor. A smiling U.S. Navy lieutenant scrambled aboard. The engine was dead, fuel line broken, and the prospect of spending the night alone in these waters was apparently not too pleasing.

Contacting the Navy officer's headquarters, Sperling relayed the request for help. He then flew the lieutenant to port and returned to his home base here.

10Jun67-'Mayday' Brings Quick Help For Downed Chopper Crew

BAN ME THUOT, (1st AVN-IO) - It was 7:40 p.m. as the hurried words, "Mayday," came over the radio at the 155th Assault Helicopter Company Headquarters at Camp Coryell.

Warrant Officer Dennis M. Trux, commander of the UH-1D Huey helicopter, and his pilot, Robert D. Muldoon, gave their position as 20 miles southeast of here. The aircraft had a power failure at 9500 feet.

Within a few minutes the Camp Coryell standby flare ship, a wrecker ship, a standby gunship, and a medical evacuation helicopter became airborne.

Meanwhile, Trux was desperately trying to bring his craft down in the safest possible manner under the trying conditions. Determined to salvage the helicopter as best he could Trux maneuvered the aircraft to the only opening, a tight one in some trees. With his rotor blades clearing the bushy branches by inches, he made a successful touchdown.

On the ground, Trux tried to make radio contact but the choppers electrical system was dead. He next tried the survival radio from the aircraft's survival kit, but it was on the blink.

Since there had been reports that 400 hard-core enemy regulars were in the immediate vicinity, Trux marked the down ship's position with a blinking light and the crew moved away from the ship to take up defensive positions. Trux and his crew members did not come into contact with the VC although they spent more than an hour on the ground.

At 8:30 the wrecker ship spotted the light. Flying closer, the chopper encountered enemy ground fire but confirmed the downed ship's location.

At 8:45 the flare ship began to illuminate the area. The pilot reported that the aircraft was spotted intact, and the crew had escaped unhurt.

The minutes later a chopper of the 498th Medical Company began its approach to the dimly blinking light.

Trux originally tried to wave the rescue craft off, electing to brave the hostile jungle rather than allow the ship to attempt such a hazardous landing. But the dust-off made it and the uninjured crew was safely extracted. The downed ship was recovered the next day.

24Jun67-Aviators Support II Corps

BAN ME THUOT, (1st AVN-IO) -The 155th Assault Helicopter Company, has been in direct combat support of the II Corps advisory effort and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces in the central highlands.

During a three-day period recently, the 155th Stagecoach transport Hueys and Falcon gunships, complemented by a detachment of four Big Windy Chinooks of the 180th Assault Support Helicopter Company conducted combat assaults in three widely spaced areas.

On the first day, the 155th, under the direction of the company operations officer, Capt. Charles T. Pease, moved 331 Special Forces and ARVN Ranger Battalion troops into two blocking locations north of Tan Rai, 100 miles northeast of Saigon.

On the second day, 155th commander, Maj. Charlie P. Fleming, took the choppers to Cheo Reo, 50 miles southeast of Pleiku, and airlifted 785 troops of the 22nd ARVN Battalion.

The last day, 203 combat soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division were transported to field positions.

During the three days, the choppers recorded the following totals: 1319 troops transported, five tons of cargo hauled, 510 sorties logged, and 230 total hours in the air.

A total of six med-evacs were made by Stagecoaches while the Falcons received credit for eight enemy killed.

Following the last troop lift on the last day, WO Larry Craft and a chinook extracted an ARVN H-34 helicopter which force landed the day before. The aircraft was recovered with no difficulty.

08Jul67-2nd VN Year For Aviators

BAN ME THUOT, (1st AVN-10) - The 155th Assault Helicopter Company celebrated the anniversary of its second year in Vietnam recently, but there was no holiday or ceremony to mark the occasion as the company logged a full day in the air.

The advanced party of the company, then Company A, 1st Infantry Division, arrived here in April 1965. The company was settled on its new compound at the city airfield and declared an operational unit of the 52nd Aviation Battalion on June 1, 1965.

Company A was redesignated the 155th Aviation Company on Nov. 20, 1965 and has recently been renamed the 155th Assault Helicopter Company.

28Oct67-**Chopper Company Celebrates Canada's 100th Anniversary**

BAN ME THUOT, (1st AVN-10), The officers of the 155th Assault Helicopter Company were not surprised to find the Canadian Flag displayed prominently in their club here recently. The 155th proudly claims a Canadian among its ranks and helped him celebrate his country's hundredth anniversary as a Commonwealth.

The pilot, WO Stephen B. Birchall, has been flying with the company since September 1966 and has always insisted on his identity as a Canadian. "In combat we're all brothers," he said. "I just happen to be a Canadian brother."

Birchall was born in England, but his parents moved to Canada after his birth, and it is that country which he considers his home.

He joined the Army five years ago as a helicopter mechanic, and his ambitions took him to rotary wing flight school in November, 1965. He was assigned to the 155th immediately after he graduated from flight school.

He is presently flying an armed helicopter on combat missions throughout the II Corps tactical zone. He was decorated only two months after his arrival in Vietnam for his heroic rescue of an Air Force pilot who had been shot down and forced to eject deep in enemy territory.

"I don't think I have to prove anything to the Yanks," Birchall said of his fellow pilots. "We've flown and fought together too long for that."