

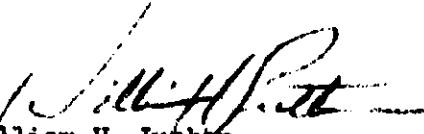
JUL Aug Sep 1969

INTRODUCTION

This is the quarter that WAS in the Tomahawk Unit History! We experienced a complete change of command and staff, had several accidents and one unfortunate fatality, and then fell before the CMII onslaught. All of these events make this period of our service a most unforgettable one.

On the other side of the coin, we proved at Duc Phoung that we were united in spirit and effort when the NVA tried to disrupt us, and we have the concrete proof of our service and allegiance pinned on the chests of several Tomahawks. We have worked harder, more continuously toward raising the standards of our maintenance. The results of your dedicated and untiring efforts are already being seen.

I look forward to the next three months in the same spirit of cooperation and dedication that you have demonstrated. We have just begun to prove that in every aspect, we will be the "Best Damn Outfit in Vietnam." Drive on, Tomahawks!


William H. Luther
MAJ, Inf
Commanding

128 AH C

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VHPA64

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HERALDRY

The 128th Assault Helicopter Company adopted the Tomahawk as its unit insignia and its official call sign for a variety of reasons. The Tomahawk for centuries has been representative of the first Americans on the North American continent. The 128th Assault Helicopter Company prefers to think of itself as the first Americans in the Republic of Vietnam. First, not in the sense of having been the first unit deployed to the Republic of Vietnam, but rather in the sense that the Tomahawks are first in spirit, first in accomplishment, and first in pride.

However, there is another part of the Tomahawks insignia that cannot be ignored: The Peace Pipe. We realize that this land is not peaceful now; however with judicious use of the Tomahawk, we hope to be able to turn to the otherside of the insignia and use the Peace Pipe.

Command and Control 1969
-1 JUL

Commanding Officer (T6)	(1July-15July)	MAJ. Donald R Kelsey Maj. Monte R. Veal
	(15July-30Sept)	Maj. William H. Luther
Executive Officer (T5)	(1July-26July)	CPT Richard B. Kerkow
	(26July-30Sept)	CPT Arthur W. Kelsey
First Sergeant	(1July-9Aug)	SFC Melvin L. Coon
	(9Aug-30Sept)	1SG Clarence J. Peterson
Operations Officer (T3)	(1July-22July)	CPT Gregory C. Engel
	(22July-30 Sept)	CPT Robert E. White
Asst. Operations Officer (T3A)	(1July-15Sept)	CPT Richard R. Carlson
	(15Sept-30Sept)	WOL John J. Foley
1st Platoon Leader	(1July-30Sept)	CPT Landon C. Brake
2nd Platoon Leader	(1July-15July)	CPT Freddie Robbins
	(15 July-30Sept)	CPT Clarence Gibson Jr.
3rd Platoon Leader (T36)	(1July-30Sept)	CPT Charles J. Watkins
Maintenance Officer (WD8)	(1July-22July)	CPT Leroy E. Rust
	(22July-22Sept)	CPT Eugene F. Strupe
	(22Sept-30Sept)	CPT Ronald D. Covington

UNIT OPERATIONS

A. EMPLOYMENT :	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
Total number of sorties	9,635	8,721	6,599
Total number of troops carried	17,352	16,212	12,837
Total Flight hours	2,848	2,833	2,605

B. OPERATIONS FOR THE MONTH OF JULY

July was a busy month for the Tomahawks. The majority of the missions were daylight combat assaults with only a few night missions. During July the Tomahawks flew in support of First Infantry Division, 5th Special Forces Group, 82nd Airborne Division, and 199th Light Infantry Brigade.

On the 3rd of July the Tomahawks and Gunslingers flew for First Infantry Division. Working in an area north of Phu Cuong along the Saigon River the Tomahawks and 1st Division troops had contact with VC, who were hidden in water and stream banks approximately two hundred meters from the first insertion. The Tomahawks immediately flew in reinforcements into the area of contact and during the action managed to kill five VC. The Gunslingers killed three of them in the stream while the command and control aircraft got the other two. One Tomahawk doorgunner was slightly wounded in the right leg during the reinforcement insertion; otherwise all the Tomahawks returned safely to Phu Loi after a successful mission.

July 6, 1969, The Tomahawks were flying for 5th Special Forces northeast of Tay Ninh when several aircraft including Command and Control took rounds at altitude wounding one gunner in the right leg and one aircraft commander in the elbow. The LZ's that day were far ideal with great distances between friendly forces and inadequate refueling facilities, but the Tomahawks came through with a professional job of flying all the combat assaults. Two days later the 128th Tomahawks received a letter of commendation from the commanding officer of Company A, 5th Special Forces for our outstanding performance of duty that day.

July 7, 1969, found the Tomahawks flying for First Division from Tan Uyen on the south to north of An Loc. Two USARV personnel were on board the lead aircraft that day to film the Tomahawks flying combat assaults, and they must have got some good shots when the Tomahawks ran into contact with a VC unit four miles north of Tan Uyen. The First Division had three of their soldiers killed in this action and five others were wounded. The wounded were immediately medevaced by the 128th to Long Binh while the Gunslingers worked over the immediate area and covered for the medevac operation.

On the 10th of July the Gunslingers were scrambled at 05:30 in the morning as Phu Loi base operations thought the perimeter may have been infiltrated. But the Gunslingers could find no VC and returned to the TeePee.

Later on the tenth, the Tomahawks flew for the Australians south of Bearcat. The Gunslingers spotted VC in the open and rolled in while being covered by a Cobra and got one confirmed kill. The Gunslingers destroyed a large hootch and one sampan later that afternoon when the Tomahawks were flying for the 82nd Airborne north of Ben Luc.

On the 15th of July the Tomahawks had a maintenance stand down; so all personnel in the company were present when Major William H. Luther received the Tomahawk and War Bonnet, traditional symbols of the 128th Assault Helicopter Company presented to each new commanding officer of the Tomahawks. Lt. Colonel Reid, Commanding Officer of the 11th Combat aviation Battalion presented these symbols to Major Luther and also presented him with the guidon of the company as Major Monte R. Veal stepped down from the command of the Tomahawks to return to the United States.

On July 16, 1969, Tomahawk ash and trash flew sniffer missions out of fire support base Aum. Then on the following day July 17, 1969, chalk nine had the sniffer equipment on board when the Tomahawks flew for CMAC in the area north of Ben Luc. Working and area west of fire support base Barbara chalk nine would break off from the rest of the flight and fly low level in order to find areas which had been populated recently and then the rest of the flight would bring in the CMAC troops to search the area. The Gunslingers also destroyed three bunkers that day for a very successful day.

July 19, 1969, The Gunslingers got an ASAP mission around 21:00. The mission called for gunship cover as Chinooks from the 205th Assault Helicopter Company were on a helibucket mission west of Saigon.

On July 23, 1969, The Tomahawks used pathfinders in a few of their missions for First Division in the area south of Dau Tieng. The use of the pathfinders was helpful. The Gunslingers got two confirmed kills that day and damaged one bunker.

While the Tomahawks flew for First Division again on the 24th of July, Captain Engle, Operations Officer, flew aircraft 612 to Vung Tau for a Volume modification. The aircraft had a tail rotor strike in a revetment and Captain Engle died as a result of injuries suffered in the crash.

On the 26th of July the Tomahawks medevaced quite a few men from 1st Division working in an area north of Tan Uyen. Three of the 1st Division troops medevacted had been wounded as a result of boobytraps.

On July 30, 1969, the Tomahawks flew late into the night for 199th Light Infantry Brigade outside of Xuan Loc. Gunsmoke was along on the missions and made five smoke runs during the troops insertions and extractions. The smoke screens were excellent even though there was no contact with VC.

Finishing out the month of July, the Tomahawks flew for 1st Infantry Division. Working around fire support base Gela, south of Dau Tieng, the Gunslingers got three confirmed kills and captured two AK-47's. Aircraft 622 received fire but their aircraft systems weren't damaged.

Aircraft 622 received fire, but their aircraft systems weren't damaged. The Tomahawks returned home to attend the memorial services for Captain Engle.

C. OPERATIONS FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

During the month of August the Tomahawks saw a lot of action as numerous aircraft were shot at and received damage. The Tomahawks divided their flying time between First Division and CMAC with a few exciting missions for 5th Special Forces.

On the 2nd of August, the Tomahawks while flying for First Infantry Division had three aircraft shot down working in the areas around fire support base Normandy three, east of Lai Khe. One pilot, WO1 Benjamin, was wounded in the action. One of the aircraft shot down landed at Normandy III, another returned to Lai Khe, and the third required Pipesmoke.

On 12, August, 1969 a red alert had the Gunslingers scrambled. They then flew over the vicinity of the Headquarters of the 82nd Airborne at Phu Loi, but the registered no kills, and found no enemy activity.

August 15, 1969, when the Tomahawks flew for First Infantry Division, the Gunslingers got four confirmed kills west of Phu Coung and destroyed one houch. During the operation the Tomahawks also had fire support provided by the Rebels and Crossbows.

August 25, 1969, The Tomahawks had a scramble mission for 5th Special Forces around 09:00. The mission was a troop insertion north of Duc Phuoc.

On the night of August 26, 1969, the Tomahawks flew their only night mission of the month. The mission was for Hardcore, 82nd Airborne, west of Saigon, and one aircraft commander became disoriented during a night approach and flew the aircraft into the ground. No one was killed.

On the 29th of August the Tomahawks flew their last combat assault missions for the Ninth Division troops. The operations took place southwest of Saigon in the Delta area. Most of the Ninth Division was back in the states by then and these troops would soon follow.

Finishing out the month on the 31st of August while the Tomahawks were working for 5th Special Forces north of Song Be and Duc Phuoc, they received a late add-on mission. The mission was to transport a 400 man company from a single-ship PZ to another single-ship LZ. Poor visibility, darkness, and a thunderstorm advancing from the north added to the problems of the Tomahawks as the LZ's seemed to have stumps and "tail rotor grabbers" everywhere. Finally darkness and the advancing storm threatened the safety of the aircraft; so the mission was called off just as the Tomahawks had managed to transfer about half of the company. So the split company occupied two LZ's that night.

D. OPERATIONS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

During the first part of the month of September the Tomahawks saw plenty of action, but as the month wore on, there was less contact with the enemy. The Tomahawks spent most of the month flying for the First Division and 5th Special Forces.

The action began on September 5, when the Tomahawks were flying out of Duc Phuong and to the north. During an early morning insertion Gunslingers aircraft 973 came under heavy automatic weapons fire. Taking numerous 50 caliber hits it crashed and burned. Tomahawk aircraft in the area with troops on board immediately inserted their troops near the crash site to protect the evacuation of the crew of the downed aircraft by its wing ship. After taking off from this LZ numerous Tomahawk aircraft also came under heavy 50 caliber fire. Later in the day another gunship sustained enough bullet damage to require PipeSmoke out of Quan Loi. In an afternoon mission another Tomahawk aircraft had to shut down in a fire support base because it took some 50 caliber hits also. The Tomahawks returned to the Tee Pee that night without loss of a single man.

On the 15th of September the Tomahawks were again flying for 5th Special Forces when the Command and Control aircraft took 50 Caliber hits through the cockpit floorboard. Again the Tomahawks were extracting about 200 personnel out of two-ship LZ's with high grass and "tail rotor grabbers".

September 19, 1969, while flying for CMAC today one aircraft went off on a search and rescue mission. A Chinook from the 205th Assault Helicopter Company was missing; so Warrant Officers Reese and Fleming searched north and south of Phouc Vinh for the aircraft. The search was finally called off when the Chinook was found shut down at Duc Phuong.

September 24, 1969, as the Tomahawks were flying for First Division, a Crossbow aircraft flew with the Gunslingers due to the serious loss of gunships earlier in the month and maintenance difficulties.

September 26, 1969, the Tomahawks flew for First Division west of Phu Cuong and the Gunslingers got one confirmed kill for the day.

The rest of the month was not quite as hectic as the first as the Tomahawks continued flying routine combat assaults for First Infantry Divisions and CMAC.

MAINTENANCE AND SUPPLY

The Tomahawk Medicinemen worked hard and did a great job in maintaining an aircraft availability rate high enough to complete our missions. Maintenance had the most difficult period in early September as numerous gunships and lift ships were shot down plus the normal maintenance problems with other aircraft. CPT Covington and CPT Strupe took over the leadership of the maintenance hanger from CPT Rust who went up to Battalion duty.

In the area of supply the Tomahawks got in their first shipment of the new "silent" flying helmets, the SPH-4's. The gunslingers were the first to get them and statements came back that new helmets really shut out the noise of the miniguns behind them.

AREA AND FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT

Out door sports seemed to be the theme of projects through the months of July, August, and September as the enlisted men constructed a basketball court next to the aircraft hanger. At the same time the officers constructed a volleyball court between the officers and enlisted men's hootches. Both groups are now sharing in the use of these facilities and are keeping physically fit. The month of July saw the erection of the archway leading into the land of the Tomahawks whose Pride and Professionalism make it the best Damn Outfit in Vietnam (Constructed by SP4 S. DiLorenzo). During September the officers had sand brought in to dry up the swampy areas around their bunkers. The officers of the second platoon completely remediated their bunker with PSP metal sheets and are now in the process of constructing a patio deck on top of it. The front of the Gunslingers Tower became a motion picture screen with the application of white painted plywood to it; so now the whole company watches the nightly movie at the same time, even in the rain.

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

1July 1969- 30 September 1969

	<u>SUBMITTED</u>	<u>RECEIVED*</u>
Distinguished Flying Cross	4	4
Soldiers Medal	4	-
Bronze Star Medal W/"V"	1	-
Bronze Star Medal	13	13
Air Medal W/"V"	12	12
Air Medal (Basic)	45	33
Air Medal (Oak Leaf Cluster)	525	847
Army Commendation Medal W/"V"	-	1
Army Commendation Medal	60	42
Purple Heart	5	6

* Note: Awards are not always received during the same quarter in which submitted. Therefore, there should be no attempt made to correlate the number submitted with those received.

HONOR ROLL

On the 24th of July the Tomahawks were saddened by the loss of their operations officer, CPT Gregory C. Engel who died of injuries suffered in an accident at Vung Tau.

A memorial service was held on July 31, 1969, in the Battalion Chapel and was well attended by a large crowd of Tomahawks who wanted to pay their last respects.

During this period another Tomahawk, Chief Warrant Officer William R. Hartwell, who lost his life in the service of his country was honored at Fort Rucker when the Swimming Pool across from Lyster Army Hospital was designated Hartwell Pool. CW2 Hartwell received a Silver Star as a result of his gallant action on January 10, 1967 when he was shot while covering for a medical evacuation.

APPENDIX

Personal Strength Summary

Authorized	31July	31Aug	30Sept
Off. 19	Off. 27	Off. 24	Off. 24
WO. 51	WO. 45	WO. 54	WO. 55
EM 218	EM 208	EM 197	EM 196

GLOSSARY

ARVN: Army of the Republic of Vietnam

ASAP: As soon as possible

CMAC: Units of the 82nd Airborne, 199th Light Infantry Brigade, and ARVN

CROSSBOW: Call sign and nickname of the armed Helicopter Platoon of the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company

GUNSLINGERS: Call sign and nickname of the Armed Helicopter Platoon of the 128th Assault Helicopter Company.

LZ: Landing Zone

PIPSMOKE: Designation given the evacuation of downed aircraft by CH-47 Chinook medium lift helicopter and UH-1H Helicopters

PIGELS: Call sign and nickname of the Armed Helicopter Platoon of 1st Aviation Battalion, First Infantry Division.

TEE PEE: The home base of Tomahawk aircraft at Phu Loi, Vietnam.

TOMAHAWKS: Call sing and nickname of the 128th Assault Helicopter Company.

USA RV: United States Army Vietnam

VC: Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regulars.