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STAND DOWN
187 AKC

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
187TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY
11TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96289

AVBAUT-AT

SUBJECT: After Action Report on Unit Stand-Down of 187th Assault
Helicopter Company

THRU: Commanding Officer
11th Cbt Avn Bn
APO SF 96289

Commanding Officer
12th Cbt Avn Gp
APO SF 96266

TO: Commanding General
1st Avn Bde
APO SF 96384

SECTION I

SIGNIFICANT PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

1. Prior to stand-down a 100% inventory was conducted noting shortages and excesses.
2. The required lists of personnel and equipment were submitted to Battalion after official notification.
3. Upon official notification of stand-down, we received a Keystone briefing from Battalion and an appointment was made with the Keystone Processing Point to allow us to familiarize ourselves with the procedures. The PBO, Supply Officer, Assistant Supply Officer, Supply Sergeant, Motor Officer, Aircraft Maintenance Officer, Keystone Liaison Officer, Avionics Officer, Communications Officer, and I went and received a thorough briefing from the Keystone personnel.

The following after action report recounts by section significant problems and lessons learned during unit deactivation. The stand-down of the 187th Assault Helicopter Company was unique in several respects. First and foremost, there was no free turn in period proceeding the actual Keystone designation. PDO was used to the fullest when we received a hint that we would stand-down. Three

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days later - Keystone only. Second we began stand-down on 21 January 1972 with a zero date of 14 February 1972 -- 25 days total. Third, a major move from Di An to Phu Loi was accomplished during the stand-down, during which we moved 114 people, beds, and weapons.

SECTION II

SPECIFIC AREAS

1. ADMINISTRATIVE: Even though the stand-down notice was abrupt, we had been expecting to stand-down for a short time and had prepared stencils in advance; then, when the official stand-down notice came we ran them off and made distribution. These stencils included: Personnel actions checklist (Appendix II, USARV Manual 600-1), R & R Certificate (Appendix, USARV Manual 600-1), and Officer/Senior NCO Preference sheets. Thus when we were required to furnish information at short notice, we were prepared and often had the information in advance of the requests.

Each officer assigned had to have an OER written on him. So, in anticipation, we had copied DA Form 67-6 on to stencils and reproduced them; and shortly after receiving official notice the majority of the OER's were written. After that it was a simple matter to finalize them. We had found through experience that most errors are made in the narrative portion of the form; yet, most of the typing time involved lies in the rest of the form. So to eliminate wasted time I recommend that the forms be proofed after the narrative portion is completed, then sent back to the typist for completion of the remaining parts.

A great deal of emphasis had been placed on rosters. We typed one master roster listing all of the people assigned on the announcement day. Since no one else could be assigned to the unit, the only annotation needed to keep it current was a line through the departed personnel. Then whenever a roster was needed, we had the master roster reproduced. Additional information, if required, was added, and it was sent out, thus freeing the typist from a tedious chore.

Awards and Decorations presented the biggest administrative headache. As far ahead as we were on the OER's, we were that far behind on the Awards and Decorations. I recommend that a strong A & D program be initiated with firm suspense dates established and enforced. The suspense dates should be staggered so as not to arrive at the A & D section at any one time. One officer should be appointed with A & D as a full time additional duty. The typing load is phenomenal; do it right the first time.

Domestic employees kept two officers busy for the entire period of time. To make dismissal more orderly, we computed the amount of severance pay and Tet bonus due each individual and put it in sealed envelopes to be distributed at pay call. Paying still required three hours to accomplish.

We found the platoon concept to be viable in the accomplishment of tasks. Instead of pulling people out of a mass formation to complete details, we assigned missions

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to the platoon commander and he supervised their accomplishment! This concept continued to work well until reduced numbers rendered the platoons ineffective. The keynote of administration during unit stand-down is prior planning, typing, and meeting suspense dates while men and equipment are departing.

2. OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS: On 21 January 1972 the company operations section initiated the necessary action to close all flight records and dispose of all material kept on file. The operations section was completely closed out by 24 January 1972. A major problem encountered during the stand-down was in the communications section. Our unit was required to maintain radio and telephonic communications with battalion headquarters. To accomplish this it was necessary to hand receipt equipment from another unit. Transportation was limited and the pick up was delayed; hence, this delayed considerably the turn in of communications equipment. Due to personnel rotating home, operators were not readily available, imposing an unnecessary work load on the trained personnel remaining. I recommend that upon notification of stand-down the next higher headquarters relieve the subordinate unit of this communications responsibility by providing equipment and personnel to maintain it.

3. AVIONICS: The turn in of the Avionics was accomplished with very little difficulty. The Avionics Officer met with the AVEL personnel and coordinated a turn in schedule. Confusion and delay were kept at an absolute minimum by strictly adhering to the Keystone Standing Operating Procedures. Because of this guidance, avionics had no equipment turned back due to the poor preparation of paperwork, or equipment that was not cleaned or properly prepared. To avoid delays and confusion it is strongly recommended that the officer in charge of avionics make personal contact with the Keystone representatives, get a thorough briefing on exactly what is required, and that he adhere very closely to the SOP that he will be given.

4. AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE: Prior to the mission termination date of 20 January 1972 aircraft were scheduled to insure a minimum of twenty five hours remained until the next periodic inspection. When the mission terminated date arrived this unit had only one UH-1H aircraft in scheduled maintenance. First priority for stand-down was to turn in all aircraft to the 388th Transportation Company at Vung Tau for retrograde. Each flight platoon was responsible for cleaning its own aircraft with maintenance establishing, by serial number, the order in which the aircraft would arrive at Vung Tau. On 23 January 1972, the first group of aircraft departed the unit for Vung Tau. A team was organized consisting of the most efficient and best qualified personnel to accompany the aircraft to Vung Tau and to remain there until all aircraft were turned in. This team maintained a 24 hour work day at the retrograde point. Because we were the only unit working there at night, we had full use of the steam cleaning facility. As a result of sending the most outstanding personnel, 20 UH-1H and 6 AH-1G aircraft were retrograded in only four and one half days, a mark which has surpassed all previous units.

The only confusion existing during aircraft turn in was on the AH-1G armament systems. We were informed at the stand-down briefing on 22 January 1972 to

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remove all armament for turn in at Phu Loi. However, we later had to send the XM28 systems to Vung Tau prior to aircraft acceptance. The battalion AMO personnel as well as the inspection team from the 520th Transportation Battalion furnished exceptional assistance on aircraft records and equipment.

The major problem encountered during maintenance stand-down was the forced acceptance of two AH-1G aircraft from F Troop, 4th US Cavalry; early in the stand-down F Troop, 4th US Cavalry laterally accepted our two best AH-1G aircraft. The aircraft were in no way prepared for turn in by the owning unit and necessitated our furnishing personnel to clean another unit's aircraft.

The smooth and timely turn in of equipment and supplies attained by this unit is directly attributed to utilization of personnel. We found it to be beneficial to work with the company headquarters and use officers from the flight platoon as liaison personnel for turn in of various equipment, eg. armament, tool kits, and shop sets. The SOP's available from turn in points are explicit and will expedite all equipment turn in if adhered to by the unit personnel.

5. VEHICLES: Upon notification of stand-down we began to plan the useage of vehicles and the rate at which they could be turned in. A walk through of the Keystone points was arranged and conducted for key personnel. Keystone SOP's were passed out which told exactly how all paperwork should be filled out. To begin with we turned in miscellaneous items of equipment that were not essential to the unit. The vehicles were held until after all the other sections had just about completed turn in of their equipment. At that point we began to turn in the vehicles. There were several important factors in the efficient turn in of equipment: vehicles must be cleaned, and the forms must be completed according to the Keystone SOP. During the first few days of turn in the OIC took a typewriter and a supply of forms to the Keystone Point with him to insure that mistakes would be corrected on the spot. Vehicles must be inspected several times to insure that no brass or ammunition is in the vehicle. I recommend that the same individual do this each time since he soon learns all the possible places in which a piece of brass can lodge.

The 4th Transportation Battalion lent us three lowboy 5-ton trailers to supplement our own 5-ton. By placing the trailers in various locations throughout the company area we were able to meet movement requirement with minimal assistance from nonorganic sources. We accomplished this by making shuttle runs, often accomplishing three such trips per day.

One final word of caution: be sure the vehicle documents are all accurate and serial numbers match.

6. SUPPLY: Upon official notification of stand-down, a complete review of all platoon and section hand receipts was made. A 100% inventory of all accountable unit property was conducted immediately with all shortages submitted on DA Form 444. All excesses were turned in through the Keystone Processing Point. A current listing of VARP loan equipment presently assigned to the company was obtained through ICCV in Long Binh. All hand receipt holders were notified that the Property Book Officer and his supply personnel would personally turn in most of the company property. An exception to this was the turn in of all aircraft and aircraft related items, all of

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which were turned in by the Maintenance Officer.

All of the accountable documents were personally held by the Property Book Officer throughout the stand-down phase. Only the Property Book Officer was permitted to make entries in the document register, property book, and the supporting document files. After the completion of each day's turn in, he personally reviewed, corrected, and audited each transaction entered in the document register and property book. This unit continued to turn in equipment and supplies until ground to a halt by the failure to ship personnel. Had we shipped all our personnel we could have zeroed the property book by 5 February -- 16 days after starting stand-down.

7. PERSONNEL: Personnel shipment represented the largest single problem encountered. Curtailment requirements were not established and thus orders could not be cut with certainty. The unit turned in equipment until we were down to beds, personal equipment, weapons; then we waited. Constant coordination is the key to success in this area. Take a strong NCO and appoint him Field First, then free the First Sergeant to coordinate with personnel on a daily basis.

During the first days with three units standing-down simultaneously, the volume of personnel actions requiring orders created a bottleneck. A solution to this overload on Battalion Personnel would be the cutting of stencils by battalion, and the individual companies tasked to produce and disseminate the orders.

On the first day of stand-down key personnel must be identified and the Battalion Personnel Officer should be notified not to reassign them. Also, the morning report should be verified by rank and disposition against the master roster. Thereafter daily checks must be made to insure zeroing the morning report. Particular attention should be paid to personnel being dropped in the correct grade.

8. LIAISON: For liaison we selected an officer who not only performed his duties exceptionally well, but who was personable also. We also sent a senior NCO schooled in forms and records. These two comprised our permanent liaison team to the Keystone point. Additionally we utilized officers for other liaison jobs such as: aircraft armament, vehicles, weapons, and aircraft. All liaison personnel worked through the PBO.

The only real problem encountered was the rather slow processing and editing of paperwork. The three slowest processes are initial editing, logging of control numbers, and preparing 1348's for shipment to property disposal. To correct these problem areas I recommend that the liaison have his paperwork completed the night prior. It is imperative that the liaison officer get an early start so as to arrive at the MIPP as early as possible to ensure the editing of 2765-1's, 562's, and 563's, prior to the time the first load arrives. After the items have been inspected, select those items which are destined for property disposal and have your clerk type the 1348's. This should be done prior to submitting the paperwork for the logging of control numbers. This procedure will speed up processing immensely and will prevent having to bring a load

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back to the unit that night. One must establish a rapport with the key personnel by demonstrating a willingness to assist them in their job, and in return they will reward you with their assistance in your job.

9. ARMAMENT: The responsibility of armament liaison officer was to turn in the weapons subsystems for the AH-1G. These included the XM-35 20 millimeter gun, XM-200 rocket launcher, XM-159 rocket launcher, XM-158 rocket launcher, and the armament maintenance set. Problem areas were two fold: communication and cleanliness. There was a lack of communication pertaining to whether the systems should be turned in at Phu Loi or at Long Binh Keystone facility. A solution to this problem would be to establish a list of items and their Keystone disposition location. This would prevent confusion in the beginning phases.

The only cleanliness criterion specified was that the systems would be cleaned at the Keystone facility. This problem could be solved by published criteria pertaining to the cleanliness requirement, thus saving a great deal of time at the Keystone facility processing point. For the most part the armament turn in ran smoothly and efficiently.

10. FACILITIES: The facility turn over was, once again, unique since it required the transfer of the base camp to the Vietnamese and the complete cessation of American use of Di An. As the Installation Coordinator it fell to me to close out all post facilities on the base camp. Once again coordination between the units concerned was the key to success. In addition to unit coordination, it was necessary to coordinate closely with TRAC to insure the necessary paperwork was completed and submitted. We found that the G-4 section of TRAC was more than willing to give advice and assistance. It is important that PA&E also be consulted as soon as possible after notification since all transfer of property is processed through them.

Generally we found that consolidation was not possible until our final three days at Di An. Then a rapid movement of personnel allowed us to close up buildings. An inspection team was formed to check the buildings for fixtures, for cleanliness, and for any residual military equipment. Once a building had been so checked, it was sealed off.

A thorough police of the area is a must. Right up until the last American left Di An we were picking up equipment and trash.

As soon as our stand-down became public knowledge, we were visited by representatives from units all over MR 3, US and ARVN alike. We established a policy that every one must be cleared through the orderly room and that all foreign nationals must be escorted by an American. Any unescorted Vietnamese was to be brought to the orderly room to be released into the custody of MAJ Tuan, the Base Commander. As a residual force we left 20 guards and 6 officers in addition to nailing shut all buildings. The actual turn over of the area

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was uneventful and proceeded even better than had been anticipated by all concerned.

SECTION III

SUMMARY

Prior planning and effective coordination were the keystones in a smooth arch of transition. Daily meetings were conducted with all key unit personnel, including the Platoon Commanders, Keystone Liaisons, supply and maintenance personnel, and the Deputy Installation Coordinator, in attendance. The next day's activities were mapped out to include: vehicle utilization, personnel movement, equipment turn in, and, of course, lessons learned during the day were discussed. Battalion S-4 personnel were invited and attended, thus giving us one more facet of coordination.

The document file and a good personnel management policy are the piers of the arch. The document file must be updated daily, and I recommend that only one person control it: the Property Book Officer. Each night he should review the day's entries, keeping track of the hard copies and which items are still pending some paperwork. By doing it this way needless duplications can be avoided and the man who is accountable will know where his property is going. Personnel management includes efficient utilization of the limited manpower available during stand-down, constant cross checking of rosters and morning reports to prevent inadvertent errors, and regular coordination with higher levels of command to insure orders are requested for all personnel.

Utilization of personnel, though important throughout, became of paramount importance at the end. Aviators, without aircraft to fly, became a major source of manpower for both supervisory and menial tasks. As the enlisted ranks reduced, more tasks were assumed by the assigned aviators.

The awaiting of orders for reassignment has been the only impediment preventing rapid deactivation of this unit.

DONALD K. HIGGINS
MAJ, AR
Commanding

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