

DISMANTLING OF THE ARVN  
12th Combat Aviation Group  
F Troop, 8th Cavalry  
AIC San Francisco 96388

AVIAU-PLC

28 February 1973

SUBJECT: After Action Report - Lessons Learned, F Troop, 8th Cavalry, 1 November 1972 through Demobilization

Commander  
12th Combat Aviation Group  
AIC: C-3  
AIC San Francisco 96388

1. Purpose: To report significant activities during all phases of stand-down of F Troop, 8th Cavalry, 12th Combat Aviation Group, 1st Aviation Brigade.

2. General: During the period 1 November 1972 through 28 January 1973 F Troop, 8th Cavalry was under the operational control of the Commanding General, Third Regional Assistance Command (3RAC), to provide security for key installation and US personnel in Military Region III. The mission involved conducting visual reconnaissance mission along major avenues of approach into the key installations of Saigon, Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa. The troop had been moved from Da Nang to Bien Hoa beginning 15 October 1972 and was concurrently conducting tactical missions and improving the cantonment area.

a. Section 1: Significant Organizational Activity.

(1) Pre X-Day: From the period 1 November 1972 through 27 January 1973 plans were made for the stand down of the Troop. Checklists for functional areas provided by higher staff agencies were reviewed and personnel were briefed on the expected actions that would be required in relation to X-Day.

(2) Stand-Down Phase: Standdown was accomplished between 270000 January 1973 and 281000 January 1973. All UH-1H's with crews and sidearms required to support the International Control Commission for Supervision (ICCS) and the Joint Military Commission (JMC) were relocated to Saigon. The Troop Operations Center was discontinued and proper disposition was made on all classified documents and materials. One VRC 46 radio set was relocated to the orderly room for administrative communications.

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1 November 1972 through Decategorization (Cont'd)

(3) Withdrawal Phase: RCM and TDA equipment, to include equipment found on port, was turned in to the proper agencies. Recovery of the entire troop area continued throughout this phase. The 11th ARB Post was inspected; post, camp and station (10CS) property was turned over to ARVN representatives; and buildings were jointly inventoried and turned over to the JASCI Real Estate Section and the ARVN representative. Remaining vehicles and weapons were turned in as the rear detachment moved by bus to Camp Alpha, Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base, for redeployment to COMUS.

(4) Roll-up Phase: The Troop Command Post was established at Headquarters 12th Combat Aviation Group. A deactivation ceremony was conducted on 14 February 1973. The remaining few members of the unit were outprocessed. The morning report was reduced by attrition to zero balance.

#### b. Section 2: Commanders Observations and Recommendations.

(1) Pre-N-Day: The prohibition against the use of the Acro-Sifile Platoon in a ground role and the non-availability of ready US reaction forces dictated that only serial visual reconnaissance techniques be employed. The Acro-Sifile Platoon was employed as a full time base security force. Maintenance availability of the AH-1G helicopters, was also a limiting factor. The age of the AH-1G fleet, the aged condition of the weapons and the stabilization systems, the lack of personnel qualified in AH-1G maintenance, resulted in low availability and seriously affected the capability of the entire troop. The sophistication of the AH-1G makes it imperative that school trained mechanics be made available to maintain the system to meet high availability requirements.

(2) Stand Down Phase: Immediate transfer of some key personnel to support the JOC/10CS required that each man be cleared in a short period of time. Clearance papers, efficiency reports, awards and decorations, and all other possible actions had been prepared in advance. Selection of aviators for the JDC/10CS turns was made on the basis of RIMCS. Consequently, it was not possible to hold platoon leaders until all aircraft were turned in or transferred.

(3) Withdrawal Phase: Orders were completed according to prepared deployment roster submitted on N42, allowing a gradual phase out of unit personnel. Maximum efficiency of the remaining personnel was obtained by assigning specific areas of responsibility and daily objectives to complete standdown.

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(4) Roll-up Phase: All personnel except two were released to return to COMTAC. Two men were serving on Article 25. The Commander and the Morale Report Clerk decided to clear the morale report of all personnel.

### 3. Specific:

#### a. Section 1: Significant Activities.

##### (1) Pre-U-Day:

###### (a) Personnel:

1. Personnel strength had dropped to approximately 80% and only the concentrated efforts of the Group Commander kept the aviator strength at a minimum acceptable level. The combat casualty, family emergencies and normal COMS's combined to require replacements of all platoon leaders and key staff officers except the CO and XO. The strength of the ME, non rifle platoon, personnel, dropped to the point that twenty two men from other sections were required to complete the unit guard detail requirement of thirty six men each day. In addition, a lack of experienced AH-1G mechanics and a shortage of technical injectors caused a poor LHMG availability.

2. Standby ME's and COM's were written, all voluntary personnel actions were requested, and preference statements were submitted.

3. During this period the Human Relations Program and the Drug Control Program were major areas of endeavor.

(b) Equipment retrograde/turnover: Equipment designated by higher headquarters was transferred to ARH and then hand received back to the Property Book Officer. The avionics fleet equipment was reduced to twenty per cent.

(c) Intelligence/Security: Energy intelligence was provided by daily visits from TAC C-2 personnel, intelligence summaries prepared at TAC, and the 12th CIC S-2. The TAC C-2 personnel debriefed the scout pilots each day and provided valuable additional information to that already available from spot reports. The troop also provided its own local security.

(d) Operations: During the period 1 November 1972 through 28 January 1973, F Troop, 8th Cavalry, conducted Air Cavalry Reconnaissance operations in the Tay Ninh, Linh Dong, and Linh Long Provinces around the Michelin Plantation. Use of USAF Tactical Air Support was emphasized. This additional factor proved a great asset since the Forward Air Controller used fighter-bombers on significant targets once discovered. TAC air was also used to open up holes in triple canopy jungle, enabling the scout helicopters

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recent in more detail. This interservice relationship proved to be a great asset to both services and an excellent weapon against the enemy. The US Air Force obtained detailed descriptions and locations of targets plus an immediate loss damage assessment. The US Army received heavy ordnance on known targets in a short period of time, enabling further development of the situation. While involved in these operations, the unit had light aircraft losses and casualties. From 1 November 1972 to standdown, two aviators were hedged as a result of hostile actions and two aircraft were downed and destroyed in place. In all cases recovery of the downed crews was immediate utilizing organic assets.

(e) Logistics: Since the unit had recently arrived in this area, logistics relationships were still being established at the beginning of the period. In general, logistics support provided by ARVN or VPA was difficult to establish and maintain, while support provided by US military or US controlled contractors was smooth and efficient.

1. The shortage of US equipment, especially generators and special tools, continued to hamper the mission effectiveness of the unit. Ammunition resupply and operation of the ammunition resupply point by organic personnel was an area of major effort.

2. The maintenance availability of vehicles continued downward until early January and in some cases lack of vehicles hindered the efficiency of the sections within the unit. Availability of spare parts was the primary problem.

2. All members of the unit were encouraged to ship large valuable possessions to COMUS by hold baggage in mid November. In early January more emphasis was put on this area and transportation was set up on a regular basis enabling all members of the unit to ship hold baggage.

(f) Transfer of control of air combatant assets: P/A

(g) Transfer of functions and reporting: Plans were made for transfer of functions to officers, NCO's or N1 who would remain in the unit until 1975. All normal reports continued.

(h) Transfer of billeting, bases, installed property and equipment and other real property: All buildings and installed property were jointly inventoried and hand receipts were signed by the Property Room Officer in early December. ARVN representatives accompanied the inventory team.

(2) Stand Down Phase: Since the entire unit was intact at the beginning of the stand down phase, each platoon was tasked to prepare aircraft and personnel for the designated agency. As NH-1H aircraft became available they were flown out by personnel who would compose the special ICCS and JMC teams.

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SUBJECT: After Action Report - 1st Reconnaissance Troop, 5th Cavalry  
1 November 1972 through Deactivation (Cont'd)

(a) Personnel:

1. Individuals were tasked to clear assigned areas. Officer areas were cleared by platoon leaders and enlisted areas were cleared by platoon sergeants. When each man had completed clearing and had signed out, he reported to operations and waited for movement.

2. TIN's were issued to individuals to be placed in ZOI files later. Flight duty forms were not available, so verbal drafts were completed and turned in to the administrative officer. A list of personnel on TDY, NK or on leave in COMUS was submitted to 12th CMR with a request that all personnel remain in COMUS to await reassignment.

(b) Equipment Disposition/Turnover:

1. All UH-1H aircraft were immediately transferred, as were all vehicles. However, vehicles were held on hand receipt and utilized until close out of the unit.

2. The requirement to clear out excess containers forced disposition of military equipment to the proper place within the troop.

3. Weapons systems were removed from all UH-1C and CH-47 helicopters although packing boxes were not available. All non-flying aircraft were reported to 12th CMR AMU. The first of many loads of ammunition, aircraft parts, vehicle parts, and TEC equipment were moved to Long Binh and Daigon.

(c) Intelligence/security: Civilian personnel, except mess personnel, were released at the end of the working day without prior notice to prevent last minute rifling. They were given a date to return for their final pay. The normal guard commitment was reduced to six men on two bunkers and one tower, and one man roving on the helipad. One aircraft (with no M-60's mounted) received fire and sustained three hits at approximately 0630 on 28 January 1973.

(d) Operations: Normal missions continued through 220600 January 1973, and a first light reconnaissance of the Bien Hoa Army Base was conducted until 210000 January 1973. The secure-voice FM and all other tactical FMs were terminated at 220800 January 1973.

(e) Logistics: Initial turn-in of equipment and supplies was begun. Maximum available equipment was moved by organic transportation.

(f) Transfer of Control of air combatant assets: N/A.

AVENUE-P

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SUBJECT: After Action Report - Lessons Learned, F Troop, 8th Cavalry  
1 November 1972 through Decidation (Cont.)

(a) Transfer of functions and reporting: All departing personnel with key functions briefed the individual assuming his responsibility.

(b) Transfer of billeting, lesson, installed property and equipment and other real property: N/A.

(3) Withdrawal Plan: Two major tasks; the turn in of the remaining aircraft equipment and supplies, and the clean up of the unit area while the personnel strength was declining, were accomplished.

(a) Personnel: The initial deployment of personnel was executed in accordance with release rosters previously submitted. After VCL requirements changed on a daily basis. The XO was appointed to coordinate personnel shipments with the S-1. Supervisory personnel who were needed to close out certain functions were retained until their responsibilities ended. Some personnel with family emergencies were deployed earlier than planned rather than use the emergency leave system. Vacancies for several NCO's were filled to complete the J1C team and to redistribute personnel within 12th CAG.

(b) Equipment retrograde/turnover: All A-10C and OH-6 aircraft were delivered to Newport for retrograde 25 January 1973, the first day that Newport was open. One A-10C and one OH-6A were encumbered as sling loads. Required property adjustments were completed later. The Keystone Officer, assisted by the Transportation Coordination Officer (TCC), was responsible for the retrograde of all US Government equipment. The responsible officer reported the equipment ready for turn in the Property Book Officer, who coordinated with the Keystone Officer. The TCC was delegated the responsibility for turning in all empty conex containers. The additional capability afforded by the daily use of five ton and ten ton flat bed trucks, tractors trailer trucks and a contractor operated fork lift was invaluable. All declined organic vehicles were turned in and other vehicles that developed major problems during this period were turned in. Three 2 1/2 ton trucks, three 3 ton trucks and twenty M-16 rifles were retained for the use of the troop. One bus, provided on a daily basis, was used to move personnel to out processing at the MACV Annex and then to Camp Alpha.

(c) Intelligence/Security: One 3/4 ton truck was hit by one round of small arms fire on CL 1 near Long Phu on 744. A 2 1/2 ton truck was stopped near the Lien Hoa ARVN gate and the driver was held up while three ARVN's attempted to steal his truck. Employment of house maids was kept to a minimum and all daily hire employees were kept under continuous supervision. No civilians or ARVN's were allowed to enter the post unless they were escorted by US personnel. On the day of departure extra effort was required to keep VN personnel out of the troop area.

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Subject: After Action Report - Exercise Lorraine, 1973, (SA) (Conf) 1 February 1973 Manual Reception Team (CMBT)

(d) Operations: A requirement for three friendly aircraft and crews was received on 15 January 1973. This unit was tasked for two friendly crews to fly off and on stand alert 12 hours. The crews were tasked for friendly identification from 20 Jan up 1973 through 31 January 1973 for a specific mission. The personnel were designated and equipped with weapons, as required, and ready for combat. They returned the unit on 1 February 1973.

(e) Logistics: The vehicle comprised the major equipment required by the team. The unit was not cleared on 1-7 and personnel authorized at the 5/6 base until departure.

(f) Transfer of control of air combatant assets: N/A.

(g) Transfer of functions and reporting: Final monthly reports were submitted at the end of January as required reports. All fund audits were completed. All files and records were packed in boxes and held until departure.

(h) Transfer of billeting, lanes, installed property and equipment and other real property: Preparation of all files and clean up of the bilime base conditions. The CMBT, accompanied by a Base Closure team, visited on 30 January 1973 and provided detailed guidance on standards of condition for base closure.

#### (4) Roll-up Rpt:

(a) Personnel: The rear detachment personnel proceeded to Camp Alpha and were shipped within two days. The SC and the Morning Report Clerk stayed behind to zero out the morning report.

(b) Equipment rework/turnover: N/A.

(c) Intelligence/security: N/A.

(d) Operations: N/A.

(e) Logistics: N/A

(f) Transfer of control of air combatant assets: N/A

(g) Transfer of functions and reporting: N/A

(h) Transfer of billeting, lanes, installed property and equipment and other real property: N/A.

ATTACHMENT

26 February 1972

SUBJECT: After Action Report - 1st and 2nd Troops, 7th Cavalry  
1 December 1971 through Declassification (Cont'd)

b. Section 3: Commanders comments on 1st and 2nd Troops.

(1) Civilian employees.

(a) Observation: Civilian workers were a valuable asset to the unit.

(b) Evaluation: The 1st and 2nd Troops civilian employees in the areas and those encountered were well qualified and enthusiastic workers who fit well into a fixed base operation.

(c) Recommendation: That foreign nationals be utilized to the maximum extent available.

(2) Air crew recovery by CH-46 helicopters.

(a) Observation: The CH-46 helicopter made two recoveries during normal recon operations.

(b) Evaluation: The CH-46 scout helicopter was usually near the ground and close to any enemy activity directed against aircraft. It proved an excellent aircraft for recovery of one or two crew members, particularly if an area where the vegetation allowed sufficient room for the CH-46 to land or hover low enough to make a pickup. The OH-6A presented a small target. With its high speed and maneuverability, the CH-46 is an ideal aircraft for this type of operation.

(c) Recommendation: That the CH-46 scout helicopter be used to extract downed crews during air cavalry reconnaissance missions.

(d) Command Action: N/A

(3) Excess Property

(a) Observation: Much excess property from aircraft parts to individual weapons was on hand in the unit.

(b) Evaluation: Only the officer or XO signed for the property knows what is accountable and what is not, which could result in unauthorized disposal. When excess is on hand it endangers the accountability of authorized accountable items because personnel tend to avoid documentation of excess. Officers are prone to sign for anything when there is excess available. Weapons control is difficult when excess weapons are on hand.

(c) Recommendation: That higher command spot check units to insure that all government property is accounted for properly and that all excess is turned in to the proper agency during standdown.

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1 November 1972 through Decidivition (Cont'd)

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(d) Command Action: N/A

(4) Standard procedure

(a) Operation: Checklists and COI's from higher commands and support agencies were an excellent means of orienting personnel on required standard actions.

(b) Evaluation: In some cases, especially in aircraft maintenance, the pressure of daily maintenance problems provided the aircraft maintenance platoon leader and his supervisors for detailed study, planning and preparation for the turning in of helicopters and aviation support equipment. Once the helicopters were physically deposited with the tailing agency, considerable work was required to complete the property accountability records for the aircraft and support equipment. In other cases, especially in the area of dissolution of funds, inadequate check lists were received.

(c) Recommendation: That issuing agencies check to insure that the COI or checklist is understood and that plans have been made to comply with the guidance provided.

(c) Command Action: N/A

WILLIAM D. MONTZIER  
Maj, USA  
Commanding