

6th Signal Detachment  
615th Transportation Detachment  
822nd Signal Detachment  
662nd Transportation Detachment

(3) Additional Aviation Support Elements, OPCON to the 52d CAB during Operation Matthews were:

Light Fire Team 281st Assault Helicopter Company  
92nd Assault Helicopter Company  
243rd Assault Support Helicopter Company (-)  
180th Assault Support Helicopter Company (-)  
196th Assault Support Helicopter Company (-)

2. (C) Intelligence

a. As early as the second week in May PCW's captured by 3/8th Inf vic YB 877 291 confirmed the presence of the 101D Regt of the 325C NVA Division. Intelligence reports indicated the possible presence of two other regiments from the 325C in Western Kontum Province. During the period 15-21 May activity began to increase. Two members of the 101D Regiment rallied to CVN troops in Kontum.

b. During the period 22-28 May, enemy initiated activity increased significantly in Kontum Province, with the efforts directed almost exclusively against 4th Division fire support bases.

(1) On 22 May, Ben Het SF Camp (vic YB 863 256) received five rounds of 60mm mortar, and 1/8th FSB (vic YB 855 188) received 3 rounds of 82mm, and an unknown number of 120mm mortar rounds.

(2) The 1/12th FSB (vic YB 963 855) received 16 rounds of 82mm mortar fire from the west. During the afternoon and early evening, the FSB received 40 rounds of 60mm, 82mm, and 120mm mortar, and over 100 rounds of 75mm RR, 60% of which landed inside of the perimeter. Friendly elements reported hearing a bugle blowing during the attack. Gunships, arty, and airstrikes supported. Results: friendly - 10 US WIA; enemy - 2 KIA.

(3) FSB 29, 22km west of Dak To (vic YB 839 223) received mortar, B-40 rockets, S/A fire, and a ground attack by an estimated NVA battalion. At one point the enemy occupied six bunkers within the perimeter. The perimeter was reestablished by friendly forces in the early morning hours of 26 May, with fighting continuing throughout most of the day. Approximately 308 rounds of mixed 75mm RR, 60mm, 82mm, and 120mm mortar fire was received. Results: friendly - 14 KIA, 1 MIA, 56 WIA all US; enemy - 129KIA (BC), 1 PW, 56 S/A and 3 C/S weapons CIA. One PW identified his unit as the K-2 Bn/101D Regt.

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(4) On 25 May 1/35th FSB, 15km SW of Dak To (vic YB 859 137) received 75 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. Six of the rounds contained CS gas. Results: friendly - neg; enemy unknown. FSB 15 (vic YB 853 187) received an unknown number of 82mm mortar rounds and 75mm RR, fire resulting in 3 US WIA.

(5) On 25 May elements of 2/1st Cav. received B-40 and S/A fire from an estimated company size force 12km NW of Dak To (vic YB 895 272). Arty, gunships, and airstrikes supported. Gunships, received heavy ground Arty, gunships, and airstrikes supported. Gunships, received heavy ground fire during the contact. Results: friendly - 2 KIA, 11 WIA all US; enemy - 48 NVA KIA (BG). Estimated more enemy casualties that could not be confirmed. Negative casualties or damage in these incidents. Elements from 3/12th Inf found seven 122mm rockets at vic YB 959 171 completely set up and ready to fire from the ground.

(6) On 28 May, FSB 29, 20km west of Dak To (vic YB 839 223) received 20-22 rounds of mixed 60mm and 82mm, and 3 rounds of 120mm mortar fire from the south. Arty fired, results: friendly - 1 US KIA, 1 US WIA; enemy - unknown.

c. During the period 29 May - 4 June, the FSB of the 4th Div (US) received sporadic attacks by fire throughout the week with the most significant attack coming at 0450 hours on 30 May. FSB 29, loc vic YB 839 223 (16km W of Dak To), received 12 x 120mm mortar rounds and 6 rounds of 105mm Howitzer fire. Two km NW of there (YB 817 248) on 30 May at 0230 hours, B/3/12th Inf was attacked by an unknown number of enemy troops. Results were: friendly - 8 KIA, 47 WIA; enemy - 42 KIA, 1 NVAC. The POW was later identified as a member of the K-1 Bn/101D Regt.

d. During the period 5 June-11 June, attacks by fire against FSB in NW Kontum Province continued. Near the end of this period the operations by American units in this area began to have a telling effect. Attacks by fire began to decrease and POW's and Ralliers from the 325C Division told of rapidly deteriorating morale among the NVA troops in this area.

### 3. (C) Operations:

a. The 52d CAB was the principal supporting aviation element during Operation Matthews. The battalion's normal daily operational commitment to the 4th Infantry Division was 36 UH-1Hs, 15 UH-1Cs, 10 CH-47s, and 1 CH-54, the majority of which was allocated to the 1st Brigade at Dak To.

b. Significant Events. A day by day account of significant events is listed below. Operation Matthews was characterized by a majority of combat troops being moved from secure to secure bases. This was especially true in the Dak Pek area where infantry elements were air-lifted from the Dak Pek Airfield to surrounding Fire Support Bases. Although there were numerous combat assaults during this operation, the majority of troops

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hailed were in Air Transport Category rather than Combat Assault Category. Due to the heat of battle and the maximum effort required, only the most important events are recorded. Single ship operations and miscellaneous missions will only be reflected in the overall statistics.

(1) 25 May 68 - The 57th Assault Helicopter Company and the 119th Assault Helicopter Company participated in a Combat Assault (CA) for the 3/8th and 1/10th Infantry. A 119th Assault Helicopter Company aircraft was hit by ground fire while on a Med Evac with a result of one crewmember WIA.

(2) 26 May 68 - Again the 57th Assault Helicopter Company and 119th Assault Helicopter Company combined their assets to airlift (AL) the 1/22nd Inf to Fire Support Base (FSB) 3. This airlift resulted in 61 hours being flown by UH-1 Aircraft of these two companies.

(3) 27 May 68 - On the third day of the operation the 57th AHC, 92nd ANC, and the 119th AHC flew 159 hours in support of tactical troop lifts. The 57th AHC airlifted C Co, 3/8th Infantry to FSB 3. This was followed by a CA of B and D Co's of 3/8th Inf. The 92nd ANC participated in a CA for the 1/8th Inf while the 119th AHC AL the 2/506th Abn to FSB 12 and the 3/187th Abn to FSB 22. The 57th ANC had one UH-1H loss to heavy ground fire and the aircraft was later destroyed. This was one of the major days of Operation Matthews from an aviation standpoint.

(4) 28 May 68 - 134 hours were flown by aviation assets of the 52d CAB. The 57th AHC, 92nd ANC, and 119th ANC participated in an AL for the 1/8th Inf plus two CA's for the 2/506th Abn. One UH-1H aircraft from the 57th AHC was hit by ground fire.

(5) 29 May 68 - The 57th AHC, 92nd ANC, and 119th AHC flew 60 hours while participating in a CA for 2/35th Inf.

(6) 30 May 68 - The 119th ANC participated in a CA for 3/8th Inf, with support from the 57th AHC and 92nd ANC, 79 hours were flown on this date.

(7) 31 May 68 - Once again the 57th AHC, 92nd AHC and 119th ANC combined assets to AL the 3/187th Abn and the 2/506th Abn.

(8) 1 June 68 - The 57th AHC participated in a CA for the 1/12. The 92nd AHC and 119th ANC airlifted the 2/506th Abn, 3/187th Abn, and the 2/35th Inf. A total of 85 CA hours were flown.

(9) 2 June 68 - The 92nd ANC participated in a CA for the 1/35th Inf, while the 57th AHC and 119th AHC combined assets to AL 2/506th Abn and 3/187th Abn. One UH-1H of the 92nd ANC was hit by heavy ground fire and crash landed in the LZ. This aircraft was later recovered.

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(10) 3 June 68 - The 57th AHC and 119th AHC participated in an AL  
for the 2/42nd ARVN Bn.

(11) 4 June 68 - The 119th AHC conducted a CA for the 2/506th Abn.  
The 57th AHC participated in a CA for the 3/8th Inf. The 92nd AHC conduct-  
ed an airlift for the 1/35th Inf and the 1/12th Inf. A total of 72 CA  
hours were flown by battalion aircraft.

(12) 5 June 68 - Two airlifts were conducted for the 1/12th Inf  
and the 1/35th Inf respectively. The 57th AHC, 92nd AHC, and 119th AHC  
were the participating units and a total of 108 CA hours were flown.

(13) 6 June 68 - A total of 80 CA hours were flown by the 57th  
AHC, 92nd AHC, 119th AHC, and 170th AHC. An airlift and a combat assault  
were conducted for the 3/12th Inf.

(14) 7 June 68 - The 119th AHC conducted a CA in support of the  
3/187th Abn followed by a final extraction of the same force that evening.  
The 92nd AHC and the 170th AHC combined assets to airlift the 1/22nd Inf.  
In addition, a CA was conducted for the 1/35th Inf.

(15) 8 June 68 - The 119th AHC, supported by elements of the 170th  
AHC, conducted an airlift of the 3/187th Abn and the 1/22nd Inf. The 57th  
AHC participated in an AL for the 3/8th Inf and the 3/12th Inf.

(16) 9 June 68 - Nearing termination of Operation Matthews, this  
day was characterized by a large AL of the 2/506th Abn and 2 Co's of the  
1/506th Abn back to Dak To. CA's were conducted for 2 Co's of the 1/506th  
Abn and the 1/8th Inf respectively.

(17) 10 June 68 - The infantry elements participating in Operation  
Matthews continued to close on Dak To with the AL of the 3/8th Inf and  
3/12th respectively. The 119th AHC conducted a CA for the 1/506th Abn.

(18) 11 June 68 - From an aviation viewpoint, Operation Matthews  
closed with a massive reshuffle of troops. There were numerous AL's  
as infantry elements were repositioned to continue Operation Mac Arthur.  
Supporting units from the 52d CAB were 57th AHC and 119th AHC. A total  
of 131 CA hours were flown this date.

(19) 12 June 68 - Operation Matthews officially terminated per 4th  
Division order. On this last day of the operation the 119th AHC conducted  
a CA for the 3/8th Inf.

c. Operational Statistics. The following is a resume of statistics  
compiled by the 52d CAB during Operation Matthews, and reflects total sup-  
port to 4th Division. These totals do include the performance of the

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92nd AHC, and the other units attached or OPCON to the battalion during the operation.

<u>CBT SORTIES</u>	<u>UH-1 HRS</u>	<u>CH-47 HRS</u>	<u>TOTAL HRS</u>
25,500	4,460	1,347	5,072
<u>CBT ASLTS</u>	<u>AIR LIFTS</u>	<u>BATT MOVES</u>	<u>TOTAL PAX</u>
18	29	17	37,683
<u>CGO TONS</u>	<u>MED EVACS</u>	<u>EN CBA</u>	<u>A/C HITS</u>
5,540	255	UNKNOWN	17
<u>A/C DMGE</u>	<u>A/C DEST</u>	<u>A/C RECOVERED</u>	
22	1	7	

4. (C) Maintenance

a. During the period 25 May - 12 June 1968, elements of the 52d CAB flew in excess of 5,000 hours, the majority of which were flown in support of Task Force Matthews. The aviation units performed 191 PMI and 93 PMP inspections during this period.

b. The 179th Assault Support Helicopter Company recovered 7 aircraft in and around the Dak To area during this operation. All aircraft were damaged by hostile fire or confined area operations.

c. Approximately 35,000 maintenance man hours were required to perform the inspections mentioned in paragraph 4a. Additionally, it took an estimated 12,000 maintenance man hours to perform unscheduled maintenance. Maintenance crews were often called on to go to Dak To or Dak Pek to perform maintenance so that the operation might continue or the aircraft could be flown back to established maintenance facilities. The battalion was able to maintain an availability rate of 66.4% on UH-1H's and 65.7% on UH-1C's throughout the operation.

5. (C) Commanders Observations, Discussion and Recommendations.

a. Mission Planning

(1) Observation and Discussion. During Operation Matthews, airmobile requirements were seldom known in sufficient time to allow detailed planning by the supporting aviation unit. The tactical situation and resulting lift requirements frequently changed until 2300 hours or later. This would often necessitate a reconnaissance of the area by the Air Mission Commander at first light followed by nothing more than hasty coordination and the conduct of the combat assault during the early morning hours.

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(2) Recommendation. Commanders should place increased emphasis on the need to make airmobile requirements known to the supporting aviation elements as soon as possible. If a CA is to be made at first light, the mission requirement should be made known early enough the day before to provide time for a daylight reconnaissance of landing zone, flight routes, and pick-up zone. Execution of immediate combat assaults should be held to a minimum and used only in the event of a combat emergency.

b. Establishing Priorities

(1) Observation and Discussion. In many instances the lift and re-supply missions planned by ground forces far exceed the capabilities of aviation support allocated.

(2) Recommendation. Ground commanders should determine requirements as early as possible for the following day. When requirements exceed the capabilities of aviation support allocated, priorities must be established as soon as possible and followed so that tactical necessities are accomplished.

c. B-52 Air Strikes (Arc Light)

(1) Observation and Discussion. Operation Matthews made extensive use of Arc Lights, due to heavy enemy concentrations throughout the operational area. This was especially true in the vicinity of Dak Pek. On one occasion safety requirements were waived regarding air advisory warnings and the proximity of friendly troops. In addition, transmissions "on guard" frequency were not always readable when at low altitudes in the Dak Pek area. This lack of information endangered aircraft supporting the operation. In one instance an aircREW had no indication of an Arc Light in the area until the ground commander in a separate C&C aircraft, informed them that they were flying through an Arc Light that was in progress. This needlessly endangered the aircraft and crew.

(2) Recommendation. Ground commanders should inform the supporting aviation elements well in advance of any proposed air strikes. Information of this type should also be included in the daily pilot or mission briefing. In case of immediate air strikes, it is the ground commanders responsibility to insure that all aircraft working in the general area are notified of the time and location of the intended strike.

d. Police of Landing Zones and Load Out Areas.

(1) Observation and Discussion. Numerous incidents involving Foreign Object Damage (FOD) occurred due to lack of police in the landing zones and load out areas. This was especially true on FSB and battery moves accomplished by CH-47's. Loose ponchos, poncho liners, C-ration boxes,

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empty cans, and loose sand bags were to be found in quantity in and around most landing zones. During this operation a total of 6 CH-47 engines were damaged due to FOD. These alone cost the government approximately \$264,000 but more important it denied the ground forces support by aircraft which were in critical demand.

(2) Recommendation. Commanders responsible for landing zones and load out areas take positive command action to insure the proper police of all areas. This action is a must if continued aviation support is to be readily available.

e. Preparation of CH-47 loads.

(1) Observation and Discussion. A continuing problem at Kontum and Dak To CH-47 load-out areas has been the delay in having hook loads prepared so that delivery can begin when CH-47s arrive on station. Almost daily CH-47 flight hour requirements to support 4th Inf Div exceed the total time available. If maximum utilization of available assets is to be gained it is essential that delivery of supplies be continuous throughout the day.

(2) Recommendation. Supported units must have sufficient loads prepared and ready for delivery by 0800 to insure maximum utilization of CH-47 flight hours.

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